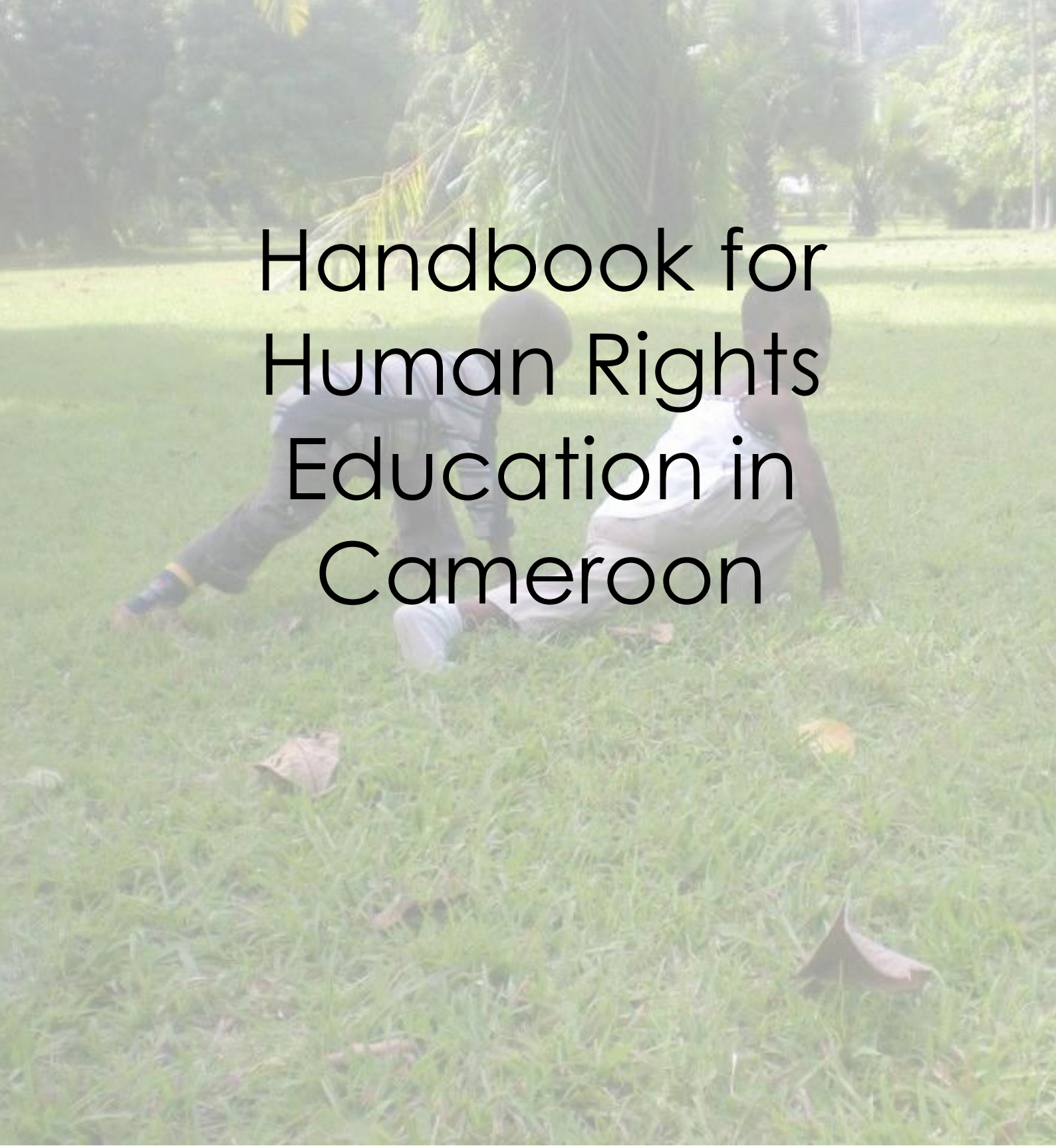

# Handbook for Human Rights Education in Cameroon

**Compiled by Carrie Supple**

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**Photocopying** Feel free to photocopy anything from this handbook but please credit authors or sources where they are named.

**An apology** I am writing this as I prepare to leave Cameroon and so have not had time to proof read or make the necessary amendments. Forgive me if there are any dreadful spelling mistakes or if the pagination is wrong. It would be great if someone could translate the handbook into French and the many languages of Cameroon some day.

**I dedicate this book to the children of Molyko, who are a joy.**

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*Freedom is so much a part of the human makeup that it is not too far fetched to say that an un-free human being is in a sense a contradiction in terms…We are made to have freedom of expression, of association, of movement, the freedom to choose who will rule over us and how. This is what tyrants and unjust rulers have to contend with. Their unjust regimes ultimately fall because they seek to deny something that cannot be denied*

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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**A tale from Judaism** which is part of my tradition: A rabbi asked his students when one can tell the moment night ends and the day begins. They replied:

'When from a distance you can tell the difference between a sheep and a dog?' 'No.'

'When you can tell the difference between a fig tree and a grapevine?' 'No.'

'We don't know…'

The rabbi replied. 'It is when you can look into the face of human beings and you have enough light in you to recognise them as your brothers and sisters. Up until then it is night and darkness is still with us.'

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**Albert Mukong** was a pioneer of human rights activism in the Cameroons. He was detained in brutal prisons for six years during the 1970s and died in 2004. Writing in 1987 in the preface to the second edition of his book, *Prisoner Without a Crime*, he said:

"I lament for my country Cameroon; a nation of highly talented children who cannot provide proof of their talents…Intellectual attainment in Cameroon is much hampered and hindered by the fear of arrest and detention through arbitrary action. The only right they have for arresting you and detaining you is that they are in power – 'Might is right' – and this… by supposedly educated people – what a shame!....I am rededicating this work to all those who fell in the Cameroonian struggle for independence and for all who continue to suffer repression in Cameroon and throughout the world in their struggle for liberty, justice and equality. One day, we hope, the rule of law shall have meaning to those who hold the reins of power…The rule of law presupposes both rights and duties for each citizen and on no account must government trample on these rights. The refusal by government to respect these rights is the worst form of anarchy and surely prepares the ground for rebellion…I have no fear. I don't feel fear, and my concept is – fear is man-made and has to be destroyed. Once we stop fearing and have conviction in the force of the truth, we go ahead with the fight."

# Introduction

*Where do human rights begin? In small places close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on a map of the world* Eleanor Roosevelt, 1948

In most schools human rights is part of Citizenship education, but often it is only briefly discussed. In order to be effective, human rights education should permeate every student's whole learning experience. The Cameroon government, in partnership with the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms introduced a human rights curriculum for primary and secondary schools this year. "As a member state of the UN and the AU, Cameroon has ratified many international instruments. Today's Cameroon is facing several forms of violence coupled with daily violations of basic human rights. This curriculum constitutes a possible efficient means of preventing violations of citizen's basic liberties and curbing human rights violations in view of building a free, just and peaceful society in Cameroon." (Minister of Secondary Education, Louis Bapes Bapes)

I was delighted to be at the SW Region's launch of the new curriculum in February 2009 where many fine words were spoken about the importance of human rights education but weeks later, most of the staff expected to pilot it still had no personal copies. There was no specialised training, resources or support. It was left to Help Out, an NGO, to initiate partnership with the authorities and organise a seminar for teachers. If the Ministry of Education is serious about implementation, it needs to spend money on training, resources and evaluation. I have seen many examples of the urgent need for human rights education in Cameroon. I hope this handbook will help you to deliver it.

Most conversations here, wherever they start, (football, children, food, TV) end with the subject of the government. You don't need me to tell you that Cameroon is blessed by beauty and resources both material and human. When I say, 'You have a beautiful country' people say, 'Yes but we are poor' or 'Yes but people die because they can't afford medicine.' I met so many wonderful people here, in schools, community groups and in the prison. I met people committed to: educating children in rural areas; micro credit for women; preventing violence against women and children; increasing employment for young people; the rights of people with disabilities; public health; legal support for those arbitrarily arrested; HIV AIDS education; defending human rights; youth democracy and empowerment; Public Legal Education. Working together they would be strong. But partnership and collaboration are rare and resources are spare.

If we believe that every human being is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in life, then many things follow. If we see ourselves as one, then where there is injustice, it is surely our responsibility to try to do something about it. I believe this collective feeling can be nurtured and embedded. I have seen what can happen when people join together, dedicate time, learn from each other and never give up. I'm not saying it's easy, especially for people worried about where the next meal is coming from or who are afraid. *I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles, in which vast and transforming events take place* (Rufus Jones, Quaker). We must believe we can effect change or else what are we doing in education? I came to West Africa to celebrate turning 50 and have had the time of my life. I met many brave people dedicated to their fellow citizens, while apparently living on thin air. This book is for you.

Thank you. Farewell Cameroon, au revoir, courage, next time…

Carrie Supple, Buea, June 15th, 2009

# The purpose of this handbook

I imagine the material will be of most use to staff in primary, secondary and special schools but I'm delighted that so many community groups and NGO staff are interested too. I hope it will support anyone involved with placing human rights at the heart of their school/community. I tried to include themes teachers asked for. You can pick and choose according to your need and 'audience.' There are sections covering key themes,(see Contents), enabling students to: learn about the concepts and values of human rights and think about how they are relevant to their lives via school subjects; learn about the Conventions; use a human rights framework for exploring controversial issues and take action to uphold human rights and encouraging a human rights ethos.

**You, the teacher, community educator/leader, project director**:
I have seen some excellent teaching in circumstances most teachers would faint at – 110 students in a class, with one textbook. And I have seen the power of community leadership. What motivates you to be a human rights educator? One Buea teacher told me it was the sight of police beating up girls during the student strikes of 2008.

**Teachers' rights. Help yourselves** In the UK, when we advocate for children and young people's rights and voice, some staff say, 'What about us? What about teachers' participation and rights?' **They** often feel powerless too and that their conditions are poor. There are occasional Teachers' Well being Weeks in England. See: www. teachers.tv/wellbeing But in the end it's up to teachers to represent themselves and lobby for change. Use the techniques recommended below for social action to try and secure your own rights. Don't wait for government, inspectors or NGOs to provide support. You are the experts. Why don't you - teachers, youth workers, community leaders, NGO field workers, create a human rights education forum in Buea and invite all those who have contact with young people to join…Social workers, lawyers, journalists, medical staff and friendly police officers. A group of allies. Meet every month in one member's workplace or a communal area, share practice and advice. Bring refreshments. A group of us did that in Stoke-on-Trent, England and it transformed our practice. You can read more about the cross community citizenship education forums: www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s263

**Start anywhere** It's easy to feel defeated by the enormity of the task. The culture of understanding and respecting human rights needs to be built throughout public administration (police, armed forces, justice system, schools, health bodies, religious bodies, social services, media etc). Cameroon is a million miles from seeing this ideal in place (along with most nations). Petit a petit, l'oiseau fait son nid. Start where you are.

**A word about Student Voice** Children have a right to feel powerful and that they can have an effect on their world. Not to be made dependent on and blame others. Participation is a habit which can be learned. We need to give status and time to student issues so they are equipped to take part in decision making bodies, (including staff in charge of Discipline) and processes with adults, in accordance with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account**.'** Regular consultation with students about real issues supports the importance of playing an active part in democracy and promotes collaboration and opportunities to bring about social change. Don't let anyone patronise young people, telling you that they are not capable of participation. At a human rights club meeting, I met a student so articulate and wise, it was as if he

already knew everything about how the world works. A study in the UK by Derry Hannam demonstrated that in schools where participation is taken seriously, attendance, achievement and motivation increase and violence declines. See **www.csv.org.uk/csv/hannamreport.pdf** In Scandinavia, governments have introduced democratic structures and processes in secondary schools, with funding. In the UK the idea of Student Voice is slowly being taken more seriously. For guidance on School Councils see www.schoolcouncils.org and for a gateway to resources on participation see www.participationworks.org.uk Perhaps you could make links with schools/organisations abroad to exchange experiences?

I know many schools in Cameroon already elect prefects who have responsibilities and some have student decision making bodies. I heard about a Children's Parliament in Yaoundé which represents all the regions of Cameroon. **The United Africa Association** has posted free downloadable resources, guidance on running school elections, addressing democracy, human rights and leadership. See: http://www.unafas.org.uk/pages/education%20mar%2009.htm and http://www.unafas.org.uk/pages/democratisation0309.htm

**Inclusive education** There is an organisation in London called Every Disabled Child Matters **www.edcm.org.uk** They asked children with disabilities to say what they wanted in life, *If I could change one thing* and they want the same as most people i.e. to be listened to; make public transport easier to use; be able to get a good job; more choice; stop people staring. We judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens - prisoners, older people, refugees and the disabled who are often discriminated against. Their rights and needs are often neglected. Human rights education strives to increase mutual understanding, break down barriers and for recognition of the dignity of all people regardless of their mental or physical abilities, age, gender, colour of skin, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. Francophone, Anglophone, speakers of the 250 languages of Cameroon, all the tribes. Our aim is joint friendship and for people to abandon their fixed views of each other. *So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. And this cycle of suspicion and discord must end* President Barack Obama, speaking in Cairo, Egypt June 2009

*All of our people have the same goals, the same objectives: freedom, justice and equality. All of us want recognition and respect as human beings…We are fighting for the right to live as free humans. We are actually fighting for rights that are even greater than civil rights and that is human rights* Malcolm X

## What are human rights?

When Cameroonian children ask what rights children have in the UK, I say they are the same rights **on paper** as in Cameroon and although the UK is no heaven, legal conventions are taken more seriously by more people in power than they are here. Everywhere, most rich people tend to think they are entitled to the best land, health care, education, cars and clothes by virtue of their birth, money, accent etc. And many men think they are entitled to power by virtue of their gender. The concept of universal human rights challenges such thinking. The development of human rights has roots in all the great events of the world, and has sustained the struggle for freedom and equality everywhere. The basis of human rights - such as respect for human life and human dignity - can be found in most of the world's religions and philosophies.

- Human rights belong to people simply because they are human.
- Human rights do not have to be bought, earned or inherited - they are 'inalienable', which means that no one has the right to deprive another person of them, for any reason.
- Human rights standards set out what governments must do *for* their citizens, and also what they must do to protect their citizens.
- Human rights are the basic needs of people, what everyone needs in order to be happy, healthy, involved in their society and live a life of dignity.
- When we say that each person has human rights, we are also saying that each person has equal responsibilities to respect the human rights of others.
- People still have human rights even when the laws in their own countries do not recognise or protect them. By knowing your rights you can use them as a framework for action to create a better society for all.

Human rights are a package of principles and all are equally important as part of the whole. They are made up like a house of cards, each supporting the other. If you take away one, the house collapses. Similarly, if one right is threatened, all rights are threatened. However, most people divide them into three categories:

1. **Civil and political rights**. These are "liberty- oriented" and include the rights to life, liberty and security of the individual; freedom from torture and slavery; political participation; freedom of opinion, expression, thought, conscience and religion; freedom of association and assembly.
2. **Economic and social rights**. These are "security - oriented" rights, for example the right to work; education; a reasonable standard of living; food; shelter and health care.
3. **Environmental, cultural and developmental rights**. These include the right to live in an environment that is clean and protected from destruction, and rights to cultural, political and economic development.

(With thanks to Amnesty International)

## Why Human Rights Education?

*Human rights education is more than a lesson in school or a theme for a day; it is a process to equip people with the tools they need to live lives of security and dignity*
Kofi Annan

Learning that you have certain rights, now, simply because you are a child, provides a starting point for building self esteem. From this starting point children can begin to make connections with the needs and rights of other people. Thus begins the journey of learning about our rights and responsibilities and the values that underpin this way of seeing. Such an approach brings children into early contact with ideas of interdependence and the importance of cooperation and helps them see the need of greater equity in terms of health, education, security and democracy. Knowing that these rights derive from a higher authority (all but two nations have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child), knowing that they have a right to participate, to have a voice in decisions that affect them, arouses interest and opens the way to exploring the skills, language and concepts required to exercise the rights and the responsibilities that accompany them.'

(Taken from UNICEF's *Rights Respecting Schools Award*
**www.unicef.org.uk/teacher_supporter/rrs_award.asp**

**Understanding human rights can help people:**

- Challenge brutality, *Oppression does not stand on the doorstep with a toothbrush moustache and a swastika armband. It creeps up insidiously, step by step* (Lord Chief Justice of Great Britain, Lord Lane, 1989). One of the human rights club teachers said, 'When I wear the human rights club badge in my village, I feel proud to be a defender of human rights. It makes me feel brave.'

- Understand their concerns. Most issues relevant to young people have a human rights dimension e.g. poverty.

- Understand how conflicts arise and how they can be resolved.

- Challenge discrimination and abuse. If you know your rights, it's easier to stop police attempts to bribe and families attempts to seize property from a widow.

**Concerns** Some people worry that human rights education is political indoctrination and that students will be roused to disobedience and revolt by a fixation on their right to do or say anything. A misconception of rights can lead to unnecessary conflict in schools. When young people are fully aware of their human rights, evidence shows that low level contact and disruption in the classroom is reduced. However, for this to happen, they have to be taught about human rights in a classroom where rights are respected and in a way which enables young people to understand the universality of human rights ('I have rights but so does my teacher and so do my peers') *Right Here, Right Now, Teaching Citizenship Through Human Rights*

## What is human rights education?

*Human rights education is about individuals knowing their rights, knowing the boundaries of those rights and knowing the past and present relevance of those rights. It is also about those working the machinery of the State being clear about their obligations to respect and promote human rights of all individuals* Veena Vasista

Human rights education is about helping people understand human rights and know these rights are important and should be respected and defended. Human rights education is education ***about***, but also ***for*** and ***through*** human rights. For example:

- Teaching young people about international law or human rights violations such as torture is teaching ***about*** human rights.
- Teaching young people how to respect and protect rights in action e.g. working for Amnesty International is teaching ***for*** human rights.
- Teaching young people about respect and their rights is pointless, ineffective and wrong if you as a teacher hit your students or do not respect their opinion. Education ***through*** human rights is as important as education about them.

**Think of** as many examples of education about, for and through human rights as you can, to inform your planning.

**Knowledge and understanding** e.g. The nature of dissent and social conflict. Educate yourself. *The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed* Steve Biko 1946 – 1977

**Concepts** Students will need to understand certain concepts so they can discuss human rights issues e.g. Power in everyday life (local, national, international, school, work, home, friendships, football crowds), socialisation, democracy, autocracy, co-operation, conflict, equality, diversity, fairness, justice, the rule of law, human rights, meritocracy, civil disobedience, freedom, order, individual, community, rights and responsibilities, representation, separation of powers and campaigning,

**Skills and aptitudes** e.g. The ability to make reasoned arguments verbally and in writing; the ability to recognise forms of manipulation; critical literacy and independent thinking (see Open Spaces for Dialogue & Enquiry **www.osdemethodology.org.uk** & the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry & Reflection in Education **www.sapere.org.uk**)

**Values and dispositions** are central to human rights education e.g. Belief in human dignity and equality; concern for the common good; working with others with sympathetic understanding and a determination to act justly for human rights.

**More on education through human rights** Many teachers have found that monitoring and changing their behaviour was an important step in creating a human rights environment. Ask yourself the following questions or discuss them with colleagues:

- Do you treat all students as individuals? Do you address them by their names? If so, do you take care to say the name correctly?
- Do you use eye contact to reassure students of your attention and concern?
- Do you listen to students and show respect for their opinions?
- Do staff make time to discuss social & emotional aspects of learning?
- Do you apologise when you have made a mistake?
- Do you allow students to make decisions? For example, about aspects of classroom organisation?
- Do you talk most of the time in lessons?
- Do you encourage good listening habits? How do you get silence?
- Do you smile in the classroom? Do the children feel comfortable in class?
- Do you reward the whole group for something well done together? Do you praise cooperation, caring and peacefulness or just good academic work?
- Do you explain the reason for sanctions? And avoid 'blanket' sanctions?
- Do you label students as bad or good? Are all students treated equally?
- Are you afraid of noise, even when it's caused by students working hard?
- Do you emphasise the importance of mutual support and collaboration?
- Do you humiliate students by anything you say or do?
- Do you punish particular children? Is the punishment fair?
- Do students have an opportunity to feedback what helps & hinders learning?
- Are students involved in assessing their own & others' learning?
- Does your school offer peer support projects?

(Thanks to Amnesty International and see
www. **unicef.org.uk/rrsa** UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award)

Teachers and students can work together to develop a charter to deal with violence, conflicts and prejudices in school and make the sessions fair and fun for everyone. If students are given the responsibility to be involved in making rules and in deciding what to do when rules are broken, they will be more likely to respect them, for example:

- No physical or verbal aggression
- Everyone has the right to voice their opinion without being verbally abused
- Everyone has the right to challenge another's opinion, in a non- threatening manner
- Everyone has to listen to each other
- The use of a quiet- signal
- One person speaks at a time
- No one leaves class until the session is over

## *The State of the World's Children* UNICEF

In 2004 UNICEF produced a framework for a Child Friendly School. *The State of the World's Children* reports developed these components for a child friendly school in a 'developing' country context:

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|---|
| 1. Is gender sensitive for both boys and girls. |
| 2. Protects children; there is no corporal punishment, no child labour and no physical, sexual or mental harassment. |
| 3. Ensures that children are learning and not being preached at. |
| 4. Involves all children, families and communities; it is particularly sensitive to and protective of the most vulnerable children. |
| 5. Is healthy; has safe water& adequate sanitation, with separate toilet facilities for girls. |
| 6. Teaches children about life skills and HIV/AIDS. |
| 7. Involves children in active and participatory learning. |
| 8. Develops children's self esteem & self confidence free of bias from staff& parents. |

## Human rights milestones

**1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The most widely accepted statement of human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) although it's not legally binding. Its core message is the inherent value of every human being. The Declaration was unanimously adopted on the 10th of December 1948 by the United Nations. It sets out a list of basic rights for everyone in the world and declares that governments promise to uphold certain rights, not only for their own citizens but also for people in other countries. Its principles have been translated into legal force in the form of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Countries that have ratified these Covenants commit themselves to making laws in their country to protect these human rights. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights was inspired by the UDHR. (Amnesty International)

**Simplified Version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A summary by Amnesty International)**

1. Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights.
2. Everyone is equal despite differences in skin colour, sex, religion, language etc.
3. Everyone has the right to life and to live in freedom and safety.
4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
5. No one can be tortured or the victim of cruel or inhuman treatment.
6. Everyone has the right to be treated equally by the law.
7. The law is the same for everyone, it should be applied in the same way to all.
8. Everyone has the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected.
9. No one should be imprisoned unjustly or expelled from their own country.
10. Everyone has the right to a fair and public trial.
11. Everyone should be considered innocent until guilt is proved.
12. Everyone has the right to ask for help if someone tries to harm them. No-one has the right to attack the family or private home of another person or open their private letters without a good reason.
13. Everyone has the right to travel as they wish.
14. Everyone has the right to go to another country and ask for protection if they are being persecuted or are in danger of being persecuted.
15. Everyone has the right to belong to a country.
16. Everyone has the right to marry and have a family.
17. Everyone has the right to own property and possessions.
18. Everyone has the right to practise and observe all aspects of their own religion and change their religion if they want to.
19. Everyone has the right to say what they think and receive information.
20. Everyone has the right to take part in meetings and to join associations in a peaceful way.
21. Everyone has the right to help choose and take part in the government of their country.
22. Everyone has the right to social security and to opportunities to develop their skills.
23. Everyone has the right to work for a fair wage in a safe environment and to join a trade union.
24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
25. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help if they are ill.
26. Everyone has the right to go to school.
27. Everyone has the right to share in their community's cultural life.
28. Everyone must respect the 'social order' that is necessary for all these rights to be available.
29. Everyone must respect the rights of others, the community and public property.
30. No one has the right to take away any of these rights in this declaration.

**Article 1** Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

**Article 2** The Convention applies to everyone, whatever their race, religion, abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

**Article 3** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

**Article 4** Governments should make these rights available to children.

**Article 5** Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

**Article 6** All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

**Article 7** All children have the right to a legally registered name, and nationality. Also the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

**Article 8** Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

**Article 9** Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

**Article 10** Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

**Article 11** Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

**Article 12** Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 13** Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**Article 14** Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

**Article 15** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 16** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

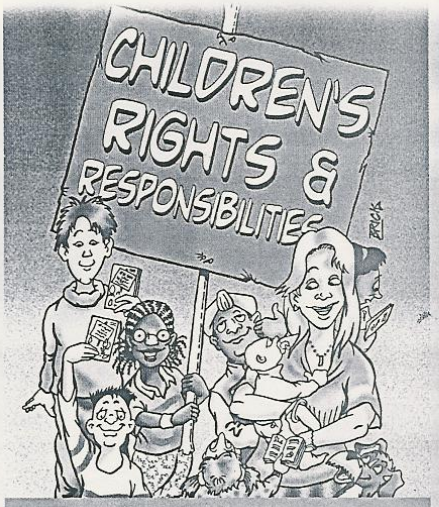
**Article 17** Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

**Article 18** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

**Article 19** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

**Article 20** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

**Article 21** When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.




## The Big Poster of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

*A convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same law. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland agreed to obey (ratified) the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 December, 1991.*

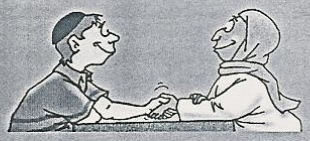
*That means our government now has to make sure that every child has all the rights in the Convention, except the two they have 'reservations' about Articles 10 and 37.*

### Whose responsibility?

Children's rights are a special case because many of the rights laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child have to be provided by adults or the state.

However, the Convention also refers to the responsibilities of children, in particular to respect the rights of others, especially their parents (Article 29).

*If every child, regardless of their sex, ethnic origin, social status, language, age, nationality or religion has these rights, then they also have a responsibility to respect each other in a humane way.*



*If children have a right to be protected from conflict, cruelty, exploitation and neglect, then they also have a responsibility not to bully or harm each other.*

*If children have a right to a clean environment, then they also have a responsibility to do what they can to look after their environment.*

*If children have a right to be educated, then they have the obligation to learn as much as their capabilities allow and, where possible, share their knowledge and experience with others.*

*If all children have a right to a full life, then they should also lend help so the needy, the disadvantaged, and the victims of discrimination also enjoy this right.*

Check out UNICEF UK's website for children & young people: www.therightssite.org.uk

**UNICEF website: www.unicef.org.uk**

For further free copies of this leaflet call the UNICEF Helpdesk: 0870 606 3377 Quote code: 31305

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Cartoons by Brick

unicef

**Article 22** Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

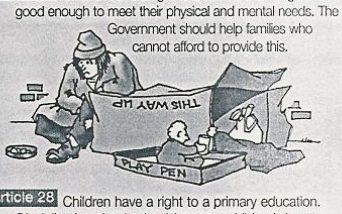
**Article 23** Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

**Article 24** Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 25** Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly.

**Article 26** The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

**Article 27** Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.




**Article 28** Children have a right to a primary education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29** Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

**Article 30** Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

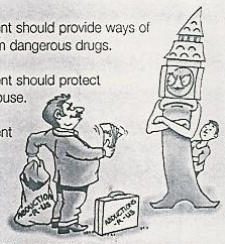
**Article 31** All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

**Article 32** The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous, or might harm their health or their education.

**Article 33** The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

**Article 34** The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

**Article 35** The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.



**Article 36** Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

**Article 37** Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

**Article 38** Governments should not allow children under 16 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

**Article 39** Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

**Article 40** Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

**Article 41** If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

**Article 42** The Government should make the Convention known to parents and children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children get all their rights.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989**

# Two views on Africa and human rights

**These are African writers' personal opinions which you might find useful to stimulate discussion**

'We have been looking for solutions to the continent's problems everywhere except in the most obvious and logical place – within Africa's cultural, economic and political institutions…The few that have suggested that African institutions and systems of thought have something to offer have also been least interested in liberating Africa from colonial relationships and internal despotism. Joseph Mobutu and Idi Amin contorted African culture to accommodate and prop up their dictatorships…So we have ended up with a situation where African culture and history have been completely ignored or misused…Why do we expect Africans to define the character and content of a continent's liberation entirely outside African history and philosophy?...African cultures contain the most progressive and retrogressive elements. They contain legacies of slavery, colonialism and globalisation. The Yoruba and am Xhosa, for example, continue to thrive as a people inspite of great upheavals…Culture is dynamic and elastic. There is much for us to draw upon. Take the amaZulu philosophical concept *ubuntu ngumuntu* – a person is a human being through other people…Then compare it to Western humanism that has as its basis the recognition of collective human needs. Both draw on each other for meaning.' Extract from, *Let's Get Moving* by Mukoma Wa Ngugi in BBC Focus on Africa December 2008

'True freedom and development have eluded Africa. There have been 206 African heads of state since 1960 but one would be hard pressed to name just 20 good leaders. The modern leadership blindly copied defective economic and political systems…The economic system of statism and dirigisme with its state controls created chronic commodity shortages and black markets and a culture of bribery and corruption...The political system of one-party states and military dictatorships degenerated into tyranny…One word – power - explains the African conundrum. This is the adamant refusal of African leaders to relinquish or share political power when their people are fed up with them…Thus only reform – intellectual, economic, political and institutional – will save Africa, but reform remains anathema to the current leadership…Meanwhile the African Union is on vacation, sipping champagne..[It] cannot even define democracy, let alone respect its own African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights.'

Extracts from *Leading From Behind* by George B.N. Ayittey *BBC Africa Focus* Dec. 2008

# Cameroon context

As a member of the United Nations and the African Union, the Cameroonian government has ratified the following agreements:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

# Mane Man

Omer Songwe reports on Paul Biya's reputation as the 'Lion Man' of Cameroon

When asked why President Paul Biya is still in power after all these years, responses in Cameroon vary. To some Biya is amongst the continent's worst dictators and deserves nothing less than to be indicted by the International Court of Justice for human rights abuses. Others are less angry. To them he is simply a clever politician who knows how "scratch my back, I scratch yours" works in the cut-and-thrust of politics. And there are those who see him quite differently, as a leader able to boast of a good track record in stabilising the country.

Since taking over power from late President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1982, and surviving a coup plot two years later, Biya has adopted three key strategies to keep a firm grip on power. He carefully selects mostly people from his *Beti* tribe to hold key positions in government, he rewards those who support his stay in power with ministerial positions and amenities and he keeps the military happy with good salary packages. The latter in particular is not lost on many in Cameroon. "It is outrageous that someone who left primary school and is in the army, who is not able to write a sentence in English or French, earns three times more than what I do," a school teacher tells me bitterly.

But there are always a number of supporters on hand to cheer him on. Awona Henri Paul, a member of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), says that Biya has been able to stay in power for more than a quarter of a century because "his vision for this great nation is rivalled by no political leader. He has maintained peace, prosperity and unity because when you look around Cameroon other countries are having worse problems." One former minister has gone further and described the president as "the way, the light and the truth!"

Biya, though, is seemingly restless. '*L'homme lion*' or the 'Lion Man', as he is known, is in the process of cutting out a new image for himself as 'a man of great ambitions'. During the last presidential election, Biya ran a campaign on a simple slogan promising peace and national integrity. This, he told Cameroonians, would enable him to realise his plans for the country. Recently, Biya added to this by adopting a new image – that of a tough, stern father figure who will not allow his children to 'set the house on fire'. This, though, was in response to recent events. Following a series of strikes across five provinces in protest against constant hikes in the prices of basic commodities earlier this year, the president warned that he was not going to tolerate what he called the manipulation of the citizens. Hundreds of people were arrested.

The president has also taken a stand against corruption. As a result of Cameroon being shamed in the past by Transparency International, a number of top government officials have now been jailed for corrupt practices and investigations are ongoing.

But many doubt their leader's intentions. "Cameroon is peaceful but people are in pain," says Andrew Akonteh, executive director of Movement for Democracy, Development and Transparency, a civil society organisation. "Ask them to talk about the suffering they are going through and they are afraid to open their mouths. The system has intimidated people to the point that they are afraid."

And there's no sign yet that Biya, now aged 72, is about to throw in the towel. Last year the CPDM won 159 seats in parliament enabling its members to crush any resistance from the opposition to a bill that makes it possible for the president to stay in power for an unlimited number of terms. This is a sign that Biya is now enjoying the personal fruits of the seeds sewn in 1992 when the first multiparty elections were held in the country. Since then, Biya has consistently won a majority in parliament which gives him the leverage to get what he wants.

Despite one of the benefits to a multiparty system being that leaders can change, Biya's men do not see the need. "I cannot understand why people will want an excellent, visionary leader out when other countries are in search of such," says Matoya Cletus, a CPDM politician. "He has a wealth of experience in international relations, he steered the country from a single party to multiparty politics and he has a firm grasp of the system."

But PC Fonso, a member of parliament for the opposition Social Democratic Front, disagrees. He bluntly tells me that Biya can rather boast of the most effective election-rigging machinery in the world and this is what has helped to keep him in power. "The National Elections Observatory (NEO) that has had the power to oversee elections in this country is a toothless bull dog," he says. "They can only observe and report. Unless we have a truly independent election body in this country that is capable of handling the process from registration to proclamation of results, we will never get anywhere."

In response to mounting criticism that the NEO has failed dismally to perform its mandate, Elecam – described as an independent body – has been created to handle the forthcoming election process, but it is yet to get off the ground. Biya himself has the power to appoint these 'independent' members to steer the body.

Nevertheless, some see it as a cause for hope. "Biya will be kicked out in 2011 if he allows Elecam to function in a transparent way," an opposition supporter, who does not wish to be named, tells me. "The divisional officers who constitute the nuts and bolts of the rigging process will be wiped out of the system." Over the years divisional officers who are civil servants appointed by the president, have been accused of ensuring that the election process is flawed. It is alleged they refuse to register members of the opposition in the election registers.

However, the reason why Biya is still in power goes beyond electoral fraud. Akonteh believes that Cameroonians have simply not made up their minds to get rid of the president. He blames both the government and the opposition: "The political leaders who say they are democratic use draconian rules to flush out people [who threaten them]. Ask political leaders what they have to offer and, apart from their rhetoric, they are unable to say anything."

Even if Biya is removed from power without a change in party, there is no indication at all who he would prefer to take the reigns. He has not groomed a successor and has effectively marginalised, and even exiled, those who have challenged him in the past. A paralysis has set in amongst Cameroonians – unable or unwilling to consider any alternatives to the long-standing Biya.

Added to this, the opposition has been far from effective. To many Cameroonians it is the failure of opposition political leaders to form a united front and select a credible candidate to stand against Biya that has kept him in place this long. As such, a Cameroon with an alternative party leader in power is not very likely in the near future.

"Why can't the so-called opposition leaders sacrifice their differences and fight for the future of children and grandchildren like we have seen in Pakistan?" a young graduate asks. "They are all very selfish and feel that it is better to have a devil you know than to speculate on an angel you don't."

*Omer Songwe is a freelance journalist based in Bamenda*

ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**Human rights in the history of Cameroon**

**Google 'Human rights and History in Cameroon' for more information….**

Unfortunately there is no room here for any detailed history of the struggle for human rights in Cameroon, but hopefully you have access to information and analysis of: Cameroon before colonial rule; slavery and the slave trade; the impact of European explorers; Christianity; the 'scramble' for Cameroon, German, French, British colonisation and their legacy; Cameroon and the Two World Wars; independence movements in the French and British sectors; uprisings, killings, brutality; the United Nations Trusteeship; nationalism; Federal Republic and President Ahmadou Ahidjo; Independence 1960 La Republique du Cameroun; February 11th 1961 plebiscite ('independence by joining Nigeria or east Cameroon') and how disagreements and discrimination still exist; 1972 United Republic of Cameroon; economic success but human rights abuses and political arrests, corruption grows; 1982 Ahidjo steps down ; President Paul Biya; increased powers (Ahidjo, in exile, accuses Biya of making Cameroon a police state); disparity of power - Anglophone/Francophone issues; 1984 attempted coup, 1000 killed; 1984 election, Paul Biya is the only candidate ; 1987 Oil boom over; 1988 Election, Paul Biya is the only candidate & 'wins' with 98.75% of the vote; crisis – economic, political ; Pro-democracy movement; Amnesty International condemns torture and political arrests; 1990 'The Cameroon Lions' reach quarter finals of World Cup and Social Democratic Front is formed. 300,000 people join a peaceful founding rally in Bamenda. Arrests. Killings ; Draft multi-party system abandoned when President sees coalitions and strong opposition. Military rule imposed in 7 regions ; Rallies banned; 1991 campaign of civil disobedience; 1992 Opposition parties allowed. Independent papers closed ; 1992 election Biya 39.9%, Opposition John Fru Ndi 35.9% Observers allege fraud ; State of emergency, thousands arrested, dead, tortured; 1992 Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) is formed and demands independence from Cameroon; 1998-9 Transparency International names Cameroon as the 'most corrupt nation in the world'; 2008 National Assembly overwhelmingly passed a bill to amend Law 96/06 to change the Constitution to provide the president with immunity from prosecution for acts as president and to allow the chief executive to run for unlimited re-elections. Protests erupt calling for the President to step down, many people are killed; 2009 Amnesty International report gross violations, torture and appalling prison conditions in Cameroon. After all the hope for change of the early 1990s, many are in despair and now waiting for the 2011 election. [Biya 'won' again].

"Political opposition is not tolerated in Cameroon. Any dissent is suppressed through either violence or abuse of the legal system to silence critics. Unfair trials, intimidation and harassment, including death threats, are routinely used by the authorities to quash criticism from politicians, human rights defenders and journalists," Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International's deputy director for Africa, talking about *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, Amnesty International report 2009

**Government and state agents**

'We, the people of Cameroon, Declare that the human person without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights…
All persons shall have equal rights and obligations. The State shall provide all its citizens with the conditions necessary for their development…'

(Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon)

**The Constitutional culture** is not strong in Cameroon. People perceive the government making up the Constitution as it goes along and changing it at will. Protests against anti-democratic amendments in 2008 resulted in many deaths. There are good laws to protect people but citizens don't always know about them and they are not implemented systematically. Some say that because Cameroon needed IMF, World Bank and UN support, the 'good laws' were drafted in order to satisfy their requirements. You could research Albie Sachs, Constitutional judge in South Africa on how the authorities tried to negotiate a post-apartheid Constitution with the people.

There is a belief that **elections** are rigged and results known ahead of voting and people who are registered to vote in one place turn up at ballot only to find their names are in fact in another, far away place. The body created to oversee elections is not seen as fair or independent.

**Justice system** The Criminal Penal Code, 2005 is a brilliant document but not always heeded. The law should protect the people. It belongs to **them**, not to an elite in whose interest it is to mystify the system. Human rights laws are the foundation stone of democracy and safeguard society. In Cameroon some trials are delayed for years. Lawyers ordered by the state to take cases of people who can't afford defence often don't do the work because it's not lucrative; State agents – police, politicians, lawyers& soldiers can trample on human rights. If an incident is reported, there are not enough resources or political will to follow it up e.g. when a police officer should be disciplined.

**Police** Have a duty to protect the people. Who do you report violations to if the police are corrupt? As recently as 2002 a woman called Therese was imprisoned for attending a demonstration against the wrongful arrest of her son for theft. She was raped, tortured and released, then her family was harassed and police arrested and murdered her husband. She discovered her son had been tortured and shot in the woods together with other boys. They were defaced with acid and covered in a mass grave. In Bamenda, 2007 police beat a motorcycle taxi driver they stopped at a checkpoint so severely, he lost an eye. During protests against police brutality, two people were killed.

**No Welfare State** The people are heavily taxed and often by random amounts. But that public money is not fairly distributed in the form of pensions, health, education or benefits to improve people's lives. There is a need for consumer rights, tenants' rights, employment rights (e.g. safety clothing, decent pay, and protection against unfair dismissal) in action. The system is made more difficult by having separate Anglophone and Francophone legal, education and police (to a certain extent) structures.

**Hugh Masekela** trumpet player and political activist from South Africa, talks about those leaders who, instead of seeing themselves as guardians of their country and people, consider it to be their private garden, to plunder for themselves and their families.

**The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms** was created in 2004 to 'be an independent institution for consultations, monitoring, evaluation, dialogue, concerted action, promotion& protection in the domain of human rights.' Discuss: Why was it created? What impact has it had? Do you know how to contact the NCHR&F?

**The need for a strong civil society**

Civil society is the space between government and home where citizens can organise. *For a democracy to be strong it needs an active civil society in which citizens are both informed and connected* Common Purpose www.commonpurpose.org.uk

Where a government is afraid of openness and transparency and the media is tightly controlled by the state, it is hard for civil society to flourish. Despite the limited opportunities, chronically high rate of unemployment, poverty and obsession with tests etc, genius, optimism, potential and creativity abound in Cameroon.

**Consequences**
There is no real protection despite all the Conventions. People fight over parents'/dead spouses' property. Poverty, illiteracy, disease and want abound. There is plenty of food but 25% of the people are malnourished. Plantation workers and their families exist on 25,000 CFA (£25.00) per month or less. All this was reported to me by people I trust. Even though the torture chambers are officially closed, cases of torture are still reported and there is a legacy of fear. Too many women die in childbirth. Many can't afford scans and complications arise when it's too late. Many experience domestic violence. Families have to take responsibility for the most vulnerable people in society: deaf, blind, old (many are neglected by their family), disabled, widows, uneducated. They are made to feel a burden when their care should be the responsibility of all, especially because Cameroon has the means, with so many rich natural and human resources.

**Everyone for themselves?**
I see tremendous examples of self help and mutual care in communities in Cameroon. But where there is no fair system or state organised welfare structures, it's everyone for her or himself and the family. It is said by Cameroonians of themselves that they are incredibly welcoming, gracious and generous to strangers but often not so towards each other. The 'cake' of resources is seen as limited and people often become anxious and jealous if the next person is seen to gain.

**Nothing you can do?**
Many people say 'there's nothing you can do' in the face of injustice. But everyday I meet or speak to Cameroonians who prove them wrong. Female Genital Mutilation used to be widely practised here until women and men worked for its reduction. I realise it's easy for me, white, affluent, protected by my British passport to say. But here are just a few of the many people who decide…despite circumstances, to speak out:

*Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little* Edmund Burke

**Reverend Sr Jackie Atabong** Africa Co-ordinator of the International Catholic Commission for Prison Pastoral Care has worked tirelessly for years in Cameroon prisons to ensure prisoners are counselled, trained, cared for and have their rights respected. In 2008 she investigated the cases of inmates in New Bell Prison Douala and discovered that 1,200 of them had in fact served their time but were still in prison and so they were released. 'The concern for and care of prisoners is an aspect of the Church's work for justice and peace because as human beings they have rights which have to be protected and defended no matter what crime they might have committed.' (*Opening New Doors – Pastoral Work in the Prison*) Email: sisjacky@yahoo.com

**Madeline Afite** Human rights campaigner with ACAT (Action by Christians Against Torture). Her case was cited in the 2009 Amnesty International report, see above, after her house was searched without a warrant. **www.jeuneafrique.com/madelieneafite**

**Lapiro de Mbanga** (Pierre Roger Lambo Sandjo) is a popular musician, whose message 'Change and Perseverance' against corruption, appeals to many people. He was accused of instigating young people to riot during the strikes in response to

amendments made by the government to the Cameroon Constitution in February 2008 and of inciting banana plantation workers to burn down a plantation due to his song 'Constitutional Constipation' He was tried in March and sentenced to three years in jail where the conditions were appalling, overcrowded and unsanitary.

**Dr Solomon Nforgwei** seen by many as a pioneering President of the government created National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms. Had goodwill but was frustrated by 'administrative bottlenecks' which prevented him from doing his job.

**Human Rights organisations** e.g. the first to be founded, The Human Rights Defence Group in Bamenda, and Help Out Centre for Human Rights in Buea. There are many others, see the list of local/national organisations below.

**Rayons de soleil (Sunrays)** in Tokembéré, Moutourwa and Wina. Aims to find birth certificates for vulnerable children of the Far North Province to counter child trafficking and promote human rights and to sensitise young parents in remote areas on the need to secure identity papers for their child. Without birth certificates, it's easier for children to be trafficked. Rayons de soleil talk about forced and early marriage, social exclusion and violence against women. They work with the authorities, traditional leaders, town halls and the Ministry of Social Affairs and of Empowerment and the Family.

*Where justice is denied, where ignorance prevails and where one class is made to feel that society is an organised conspiracy to oppress, rob and denigrate them, neither persons nor property will be safe* Frederick Douglass

## The new human rights curriculum

**Is being piloted** in all 10 regions of Cameroon with a view to an eventual national role out. It is for primary and secondary schools through Forms 1 to Upper Sixth. Pilot teachers are recommended to dedicate just 15 minutes a week of Citizenship lessons to it…..

**The government/National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms manual** lays out: Objectives; course content; teaching methodology and pedagogic tools.

**Objectives** of the curriculum: Acquiring values; Taking responsibility; Change ('the transformation of the individual and the gradual transformation of society').

**Content** includes: What are human rights?; UNDHR; Universal and fundamental rights; responsibilities; principles; how to ensure respect for human rights; discussion of each article. There is a lot of detail given to help teachers.

**Full programmes of study** with recommended methodology.

Plus **History, Human Rights Conventions, Constitution of Cameroon, Glossary.**

**For your copies** There are two books, **Pedagogic guide and pedagogic manual for the teaching of human rights in Cameroon Primary/Secondary Education for teachers of Human Rights in Cameroon.** Produced by the Ministry of Secondary Education and the NCHRF French and English. POB 20317 Yaounde. Tel. 22226117 **cndhl@iccnet.com**

# Human rights activities and games

Here are a few popular activities. You can find many more on the websites below.

**Quotes**

You could print any quotes which appeal to you and display them in the classroom to get the children inspired. I saw some quotes used to stimulate excellent discussions.

| |
|---|
| *Peace is not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere* Martin Luther King |

**Talking Stick**
This activity helps children to develop listening and talking skills, as mentioned in article 12 (Convention on the Rights of the Child) 'the right of the child to express his or her opinion and to have this taken into consideration'. You will need a stick or any other small object. You can get the students to make and decorate their own stick.

Explain that the Native American people have a way of listening to each other so that everyone gets a chance to talk. They use a 'talking stick'. Whoever has the talking stick has the power to speak and everyone else must listen. The stick is passed around in a circle. Anyone who doesn't want to speak simply passes it on. The talking stick can be used in different ways, for instance to share news or to give an opinion. It is a good way to get shy children to speak with confidence and to persuade dominant children to respect the rights of other children. Don't force children to speak! Ask:

- What was it like to speak? To hear other people speak?
- Did you find out anything new or surprising?
- How does it feel to be interrupted?

**This is me!**
This is an activity about diversity, similarities and differences between people. The aim is to show children we are all different yet equal and for them to value each other.

Ask the children to make a copy of their hand on a piece of paper and write their name inside. Ask them to decorate the paper with some of their favourite things, such as toys, places, food, friends, hobbies, music, books, films, ambitions* and so on. You can display the papers in class or, if there is time, discuss each child and their favourite things in class (using the talking stick). Alternatively, children can sit in a pair with someone they don't really know yet and find out their likes and dislikes and make a portrait of their partner. The information is obtained by asking questions of each other.
*I realise this might have to be adapted in a class of children with few material things.

**Rights in your home**

| |
|---|
| *Human rights begin with breakfast* Leopold Senghor, first President of Senegal |

Ask what students did yesterday, write their answers on the board: e.g. eat, talk, play, school, were they ill? did they dance? clean? go to church/mosque? From that you can extract a list of rights & discuss which are vital and how they are linked. Define

'rights' and 'needs.' Establish the importance of knowing our rights. What does the Senghor quote above mean?

**The Principle Game**
This activity makes the students think about human rights. Divide the group in three. Each group looks at a few articles of the Declaration of Human Rights (depending on the size of your group) and tries to identify the principles which underlie the articles. Share the results of each group. Discuss why they are important. Principles you might be able to identify include: love, responsibility, equality, security, justice, tolerance, identity, freedom, solidarity, peace. Some people use FRED (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity) as a useful acronym for the values most people hold dear. You can do a Values Ranking exercise where groups of students discuss which are the three most precious values for them. You can provide a list including some of those listed above including obedience, order, honesty and patriotism.

**Sorting exercises** (Thanks to Anna Douglas)
Use a series of statements, opinions, case studies and put them in categories for example agree/disagree or prioritising, most to least important e.g. different forms of public protest and action and ask students to decide whether they constitute public disorder or not. This is good for stimulating discussion about concepts and reality.

**Human rights statements** (Devised by Don Rowe & Tony Thorpe, Citizenship Foundation)
Break the group into small groups and give out 'decision cards' with human rights written on them e.g. People should be allowed to criticise the government; It is wrong to keep someone as a slave; Torture is wrong; It is wrong to force a person to work. Create a grid with 'never' 'sometimes' and 'always' sections. (It is best to copy the grid onto large paper). Ask them to talk about each card as a group and then decide whether the right should be placed in the box saying never, sometimes or always. They should try to agree on those rights which are absolute* and should never be violated.

Hold a discussion about the rights that they think should always be respected (absolute rights) and sometimes be respected (qualified). This activity can demonstrate how difficult it is for any group to agree on which rights are inviolable. It is a good introduction to exploring the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

*Right to life, prohibition of torture, prohibition of slavery and forced labour, right to a fair trial, no punishment without law, prohibition of discrimination, abolition of death penalty.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

Explain the phrase: 'One person's rights end where another person's begin.' A responsibility is a duty to do or look after. You have the right to own a bike (property) and ride it down the street, but you also have the responsibility to ride it carefully so you don't endanger anyone else. You have the right to free education, as expressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but students also have the responsibility not to disrupt lessons so that others can't learn. You have the right to be respected, but you have the responsibility to respect others. Rights can compete and conflict e.g. Freedom of speech vs Right to respect.

You can go through the UNDHR and ask the children about some corresponding responsibilities. Alternatively, you can cut cards with rights written on them and others with responsibilities and hand them out. The children have 10 minutes to look for their partner and pair up.

**Ask the following questions:**
- What is a responsibility?
- Why is responsibility important?
- Can you think of a time you felt responsible? Why?
- What happens if people do not take their responsibilities seriously?
- How can we make sure everyone takes responsibility?

**Human rights group discussion**

Divide the group in small subgroups and ask each group to answer a different question. For instance:

- What is the most important article of the UNDHR? Why?
- These rights are indivisible. What does that mean?
- Which rights are most relevant to your life?
- Can you think of some situations where any of your rights might be threatened?
- Can you think of some rights women struggle with?
- Can you give some examples of people's human rights being violated in your country?
- Can you think of an inspiring person that has improved the human rights situation in the world? For instance Eleanor Roosevelt or Nelson Mandela. Let them explain what this person has done and how it has affected Cameroon.
- What would happen if there were no human rights?
- Is there ever any justification for denying anyone their human rights?
- Looking at the CRC and UNDHR, what is the difference between them?

One of the group members has to speak on behalf of the group and present the group's answer/ difficulties/ conclusions.

*When we set up a democracy, we want to see a democracy based on solid principles, not on any personalities* Aung San Suu Kyi

**Action role plays**
Perhaps as preparation for real action and campaigning as advocated in the new curriculum, this activity aims to encourage children to apply their rights in real situations. Ask the class to divide into small groups. They have to devise a scenario where one or more rights are being violated. They have 20 minutes to come up with a scenario and who plays who. When the act is performed in front of the others, the group has to identify which rights in the UNDHR are being violated. You could prepare some scenarios too e.g. During a discussion in class, one student says that people with disabilities should not be allowed in school because they are cursed or that people in prison do not deserve any rights.

After each group performance ask following questions:
- What happened in this scenario?
- Whose rights were being violated and by who?
- What are the consequences of these violations?
- What would you have done in this situation?
- Can you think of ways in which the people in the scenario could have prevented their rights from being violated? How?

Or, use a scenario or story to trigger an activity such as drafting a constitution or programme for action. Anna Douglas (a teacher in the UK) uses the context of Zimbabwe to encourage students to consider key elements of a constitution. Following

the war of independence, the two main opposing groups and a more 'neutral' organisation (African majority, white minority and the UN) have to draft constitutions which are to be brought to a constitutional conference. Groups are given role cards and further information e.g. key summaries of the elements of a constitution. They have to consider how to create an elected assembly/Parliament. How should it be elected etc? They introduce concepts of fairness and have to compromise, they talk about the land issue and the relationship between economic and political power.

**International**

**Some people find it easier to start with examples of human rights violations or defence outside their own country. Then students can make the links. It also encourages a fascination with the world and is inspiring and connecting.**

*If we could but recognise our common humanity, that we belong together, that our destinies are bound up with one another's… we can only survive together* Desmond Tutu

**Global citizenship** is desirable: Globalisation (music, clothes, communication); sustainable development, the environment; ethical trading; poverty, debt, aid; the concepts 'developed' & 'developing'; human rights; resolution of conflicts; access to education, health, security, food, water, justice. Work of children's rights groups.

**Research** (using the web) **case studies** of human rights abuses and defence taken from countries all over the world. Try to find examples of human rights abuse in every continent. You can prepare case studies on laminated cards with quotes and key questions about background, motivation, risks, outcomes, motivation. Ask small groups to feedback to the whole class. Here are a few examples of human rights defenders:

**Argentina** The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. A fearless & determined group of women who, after their sons, daughters & husbands were 'disappeared' by the military dictatorship of the 1970s & early 1980s decided to confront the kidnappers. Every Thursday they stood in the grand plaza in front of the Congress to demand more information about the fate & remains of their loved ones and to force prosecutions and reparation. They wore white handkerchiefs on their heads to symbolise their children's nappies. Some of these mothers were murdered too, as a punishment for their protests.

**Burma** Aung San Suu Kyi, 63 [now freed from house arrest and elected to Parliament]. Leader of the Opposition to military rule, Chair of the National League for Democracy. And there are the VJs (Video Journalists) who filmed the brave monks' protest in September 2007 which was brutally put down. Films were smuggled out over the border to Thailand & are now distributed via the Democratic Voice of Burma based in Norway.

**Anna Poltiskaya**, 42, fearless investigative journalist in Russia who wrote about abuses of the Russian government in Chechnya. She asked awkward questions, embarrassed Putin, exposed Russian & Chechnyan crimes and was shot dead outside her apartment in 2006. She won an International Women in the Media Foundation award 2002. Accepting her award, she said, 'The need to risk is part of the profession. If you are tired and cannot take the risk anymore, you have to leave. As for me, I am not tired yet.'

**Ken Sarowiwa** Nigerian author, TV producer and environmental activist. Campaigned on behalf of the Ogoni people and against environmental damage. He spoke out when his home town Ogiland in Niger Delta was affected by crude oil extraction and

dumping, causing environmental damage and organised non violent means of opposition. He accused Shell of colluding with the military dictatorship of Nigeria to silence the protest. He was tried hastily and hanged on November 10 1995.

**The Children's Parliament of Tilona**, in India's Rajasthan Desert. The Prime Minster and MPs of this extraordinary system are shepherds and farm labourers, aged 11-14, who work in the family fields all day. Their only chance of education is at night school. There is a network of 60 village night schools run by a local organisation called the Social Work Research centre (SWRC), with support from Britain's Save the Children. Young shepherds learn to read and write and other important, relevant skills such as animal husbandry. They also learn that democracy should be above gender, caste and creed. The Prime Minster is a 13 year old shepherd girl called Laxmi Devi, she has a Cabinet and an opposition. The civil servants are adults who provide information and advice.

**Children's Radio Show SISKONA, Swaziland** set up to challenge adults who slap and abuse them. SISKONA means *Our Rights*

See **www.1worldvoice.org** and www.globaldimension.org.uk

**You might want to use this powerful poem written by a young teacher in Timbuktu, Mali Alhousseiny Aboudjé Touré Source *de Vie* Translation into English by Daneil Ekongwe**

**Mon Afrique n'est pas un continent de Satan**

Mon Afrique n'est pas le continent de tous les maux,
Elle n'est pas non plus le continent des barbares indomptables,
Mon Afrique a eu ses beaux épisodes de l'histoire.
Ma chère Afrique a tout l'avenir devant elle.

Mon Afrique n'est pas qu'une terre
De guerres, de maladies et d'ignorance.
Mon Afrique est une terre d'hospitalité.
D'humanisme et même de savoir.
L'Égypte antique par le génie de ses rois,
De ses architectes et géomètres continue.
D'inspirer les nobles civilises.
Nos généraux Zoulous n'étaient-ils pas de stratèges?
Mon Afrique n'est pas que terre de désolation.

Non! Mon Afrique n'est pas une terre de barbares.
Ce sont pas des Africains
Qui ont invente le poudre et le canon.
L'Afrique n'était pas la tète pensante
Des deux guerres mondiales.
Ce ne sont pas des Africains qui ont planifié
Les crashes des tours jumelles de Manhattan.
Il y a peu d'Africains en Tchétchénie, a Sarajevo
En Afghanistan, ou même a Jérusalem.

Mon Afrique n'est pas un continent de Satan,
Le Satan est venu d'ailleurs,
Et a creusé un fossé entres mes frères.
Qui se déciment au Congo et en Angola,
Qui s'entre-tuent au Soudan et au Rwanda

Et même en Cote d'Ivoire.

Mon people n'est pas un people d'ignorants,
Un jour, il comprendra la propagande des maitres,
Et ce jour il redeviendra ce havre de paix,
Où de loin on peut savourer la musique de la savane.

**My Africa is not Satan`s Continent (Translated by Daniel Ekongwe)**

My Africa is not a continent of endless evil
Neither is she a continent of wild savages.
My Africa has a beautiful history.
My beloved Africa has a wonderful future.

My Africa is not just a
Land of wars, diseases and ignorance.
My Africa is a land of hospitality,
Of humanism and knowledge.
Ancient Egypt through the genius of its civilisation,
Its architecture and geometry still
Inspires noble cultures.
Were Zulu militarists not strategists?
Africa is not a land of complete desolation.

No! My Africa is not a land of wild savages.
Africans did not invent
Gunpowder or the canon.
Africa was not the brainchild
Of the two world wars.
Africans did not orchestrate
The collapse of the twin towers.
You don't find Africans in Chechnya, Sarajevo
Afghanistan, or Jerusalem.

My Africa is not the Devil incarnate.
Satan is alien,
Bringing division between brothers
Slaughtering each other in Congo and Angola,
Doing the same in Sudan and Rwanda
And even Ivory Coast.

My people are not ignorant,
The masters` propaganda will be overcome,
The day of peace will return,
The savannah music will triumph.

**Human Rights in Cameroon**

| |
|---|
| *When I give to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist* Dom Helder Camara |

When I asked young people here which human rights Issues they care about most, they said:

- The treatment of house servants
- Violence against women
- Arbitrary arrests and police taking money unlawfully
- People being given jobs based on their tribe, not merit
- Policemen slapping them.

**Spectrum**. **Take a Stand**. Choose a topic e.g. whether the visit of the Pope in 2009 helped or hindered the cause of human rights in Cameroon. Think of how to put the issue into a controversial statement e.g. 'The visit of the Pope set back human rights in Cameroon.' Ask the group to stand up and position themselves on a 'line' with those who agree at one end and those who disagree at the other end. People who are not sure, can stand in the middle. Then you ask some of those at the extremes and in the middle to explain why they are standing where they are. Anyone can move up and down the line if they change their mind. It can be a great way to get discussion going. **NB for some students certain topics might be too personal and difficult, perhaps even related to tragedies.**

**What to do about human rights abuses?**

You could take the issues of most concern to your students/group, link them to the articles of the African Charter, UNDHR or CRC and discuss. The roots, causes, ask why? To get behind key questions e.g. how poverty is linked to violence. It is essential to learn the Conventions and understand them. You could make 50 copies of the Charters, one between 2 (costs 1250 CFA) or even better if you can afford to copy one each and collect them in for the next group, then students can link abuses to specific articles in the conventions and think about how to hold the government to account. The Minister for Secondary Education advocates human rights education as a means for achieving change and challenging violations. Here is one method:

I have started the grid, you can complete it! The possible actions are ideas only:

| Human rights issue | UNDHR/CRC/African Charter/CEDAW | Possible action |
|---|---|---|
| Violence against women | | Interview older women to find out how/whether changed over years. Meet those who campaigned on Female Genital Mutilation. |
| Beating of children | Articles 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 19, 28, 29, 31, 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. | Legal advice. Phone hotline. |
| Unemployment | | Lobby for more public investment |
| Prisoners no trial | The Constitution. African Charter. | Alexander McLean, young man in UK set up African Prisons Project |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | NCHR&F. International Charter in the Right to Justice for All. Criminal Penal Code. | Write to Sergeo Polo who sings about Douala Prison<br>Mock trials (see **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk**)<br>Peer education in your local prison |
| Police abuse powers | | Make summaries of key rights, fines and distribute to sensitise. |
| Deaf people can't communicate with family, taxi drivers, doctors, shopkeepers etc. Feel marginalised. | | Make links between Buea School for the Deaf and local primary and secondary schools. |
| People die because they can't afford medicine | | |
| Poor roads & inadequate electricity supply | | |
| Remote areas can't afford phones | | Public Calling Office (PCO) satellite phones (contact Clarkson Obasi, Executive Director of Help Out) |
| Child trafficking | | Ministries of Women's Empowerment and the Family, Ministry of Youth Affairs etc. DELICE, Rayons de Soleil |
| The law is seen as the preserve of the rich | | Find out about Street Law, a USA based international NGO which teaches about the importance of the rule of law for all **www.streetlaw.org**<br>Produce simplified version of the Criminal Procedure Code for all |
| Many women don't have marriage certificates | | Sensitisation. Get training on it. Educate men and women on the need. Nkong Hilltop, Help Out. |

**Women** Some cultures in Cameroon hold that battery (beating) is an acceptable way of correcting a woman. Legislation sometimes unfairly punishes women. Property law allows men the freedom to sell or mortgage property without a woman's consent. The definition of adultery in the Criminal Penal Code makes it more difficult to prove the act when carried out by a man than a woman. In addition, the level of education among girls and women remains lower compared to men in Cameroon.

*The house of women is vast and unfinished. The west wing is fairly complete. Most of us who live there enjoy privileges such as the right to vote and run for office. We have access to education and may support ourselves if we choose. We've convinced legislators that domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape are crimes…Prospective mates may woo and worship but must swallow their pride if we reject them…Imagine what would happen if world leaders committed themselves to the cause of women's liberation with the same unwavering conviction as the abolition of the slave trade or the demolition of apartheid? Imagine the number of lives they would save* Extract from Ayaan Hirsi Ali *In the house of women*' Newsweek December 2008

**Even more controversial issues**. All the issues outlined above are controversial in Cameroon but no-one defends police corruption. Controversy is good. Some teachers are afraid and for others, no topic is out of bounds. For example:

**Child labour** is often accepted in the culture (manhood, income etc) due to poverty, and some see education as a waste of time. This is much more the case in rural areas e.g. Lebialiem where the mountainous terrain makes it hard for workers to travel to and from the farm and return in one day. So very young children are often left in the care of older mothers or they are neglected until the parents come home on weekly visits. There is a high infant mortality rate and incidence of illness in these areas and some children are simply abandoned.

**Beating children** For many people, hitting/beating a child is an abuse of power and usually a result of adults' stress, frustration or helplessness. It is teaching through fear rather than understanding and can be brutalising and traumatising. Children cannot defend themselves and beating teaches them that it's okay to hit another person if you are bigger and stronger, handing violence on to the next generation. It is saying that hitting someone is an appropriate way to react when you do not agree with a person's behaviour or actions. But most friends in Cameroon tell me it's normal, even kind, and not violent and they laughingly say they cannot count how many times they were beaten. Alternatives: Take time and give attention ; engagement and counselling; loss of break time; focus on dialogue; put on report; removal from class; withhold participation; positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour. What else?

**Homophobia** Many, including prominent human rights campaigners in Cameroon do not consider the rights of gay and lesbians as worth mentioning or thinking about. In fact they see homosexuality as a sin. Where does this prejudice come from? There is a presumption, here and in the UK and most countries that everyone is heterosexual e.g. the assumption that a male pupil will have or be looking for a girlfriend. I like the Help Out pledge (see below) because it truly includes everyone.

**Some operating principles for teaching controversial issues**. From:

*Teaching on controversial issues: Guidelines for teachers* by Alan Shapiro

**1. Examine yourself.** What do you, the teacher, think and feel about an issue? Why? Acknowledge there are many questions which adults struggle to answer.

**2. Create a safe environment.** Fears of ridicule, failing to conform to teacher views, and making mistakes are among the reasons why students can be unwilling to participate.

**3. Find out what students know and think about an issue before beginning an inquiry.** Start where the students are. This old adage is ever-new.

**4. Examine questions.** After listing student questions on the chalkboard without comment, the teacher invites scrutiny of them.

**5. Have students experience multiple perspectives and the complexity of public issues.**

**6. Promote dialogue.** Dialogue aims for understanding, enlargement of view, complicating one's thinking, an openness to change.

**7. Be responsive to students' feelings and values.** The teacher's role is not to tell students what to think but to help them learn how to think.

**8. Encourage both independent and collaborative work.** In either case, they need to understand the purpose, what they are going to do and how to go about it.

**9. Provide opportunities for students to act on their conclusions.** The idea of taking action may seem pointless and hopeless to students. Confronting and dealing with students' sense of powerlessness then becomes essential.
Teaching controversial issues is demanding of both students and teachers. And it takes time. For details of all the above points go to **www.teachablemoment.org/high.html** and **www.oxfam.org.uk/education** and **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk**

**And the Human Rights Award goes to…**
Tell the children to imagine that the world's Human Rights Award this year will be held at their school. There will be international leaders, human rights activists, journalists from each corner of the world present. The children will be in a position to each give away one award for the Best Human Rights Defender. It can be anyone, dead or alive: a grandma, cousin, Martin Luther King, Gandhi etc. As long as this inspiring person did something important for other human beings. Answer the following questions:

- Who is this person and why did you choose him/her?
- Tell us something about this person's life/struggle/achievements.
- What has this person taught you?

The answers can be presented in class or written down like an essay as homework.

*When you visit the Holocaust Museum and see the worst that people can do to each other and you commit yourself to doing the best* Guatemalan human rights activist

**Human Rights Quiz**
This quiz is most useful at the last stage of teaching human rights, so it can be used to check on how/if students' human rights knowledge has increased over time. The purpose of this game is to raise human rights issues, not to get 'correct' answers!

Divide the group into subgroups and give them 3 minutes to come up with a name for the group. Ask a question (below) and the group has to discuss the answer. One student per group has to run to the board/table and touch it. The first one gets the opportunity to give the answer and when correct, the group receives a point.

1. Can you think of a human right? (warm up question)
2. A country where human rights are violated currently?
3. A document that protects human rights?
4. A group of people who were persecuted in the past?
5. A country where people are denied their rights because of their religion?
6. An organisation which fights for human rights?
7. An important human rights activist in Cameroon?
8. A country where people are tortured?
9. A country where the human rights situation has improved?
10. A right denied to people in prison?
11. A right sometimes denied to women?
12. A group of people in Cameroon whose rights are being denied?

# Action – schools, youth and community groups

**(Caution: With Cameroon criticised for its repression of political dissent, I leave it up to you to decide how much of the following is appropriate and safe for you all)**

*If I do not stand up for myself, then who will stand up for me? However, if I only stand up for myself, what am I? If I only look after myself and do nothing for others, what kind of value do I have and what significance do I have in this world?* The Talmud

**Ask who is responsible for protecting human rights?** You can divide answers between: personal, school, local community, country, global community. Who has the power to make change? Discuss what you think you are capable of and what you want to address. Ask your group whether they have ever taken action to change something they consider to be unfair or unjust. What did they do? Did it make a difference?

*Each of us is responsible for everything and for every human being* Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Discuss. Do you think this is true? If so, what does it mean for every day life?

**Before planning any action, you might want to consider: Hart's Ladder of Participation**

Eight levels of young people's participation. The ladder metaphor is borrowed from Sherry Arnstein, the categories are from Roger Hart. You can write the levels of participation on cards, mix them up and ask students/colleagues to create the ladder as they see it, from the least to the most participative levels.

| Levels |
|---|
| 8. Child-initiated shared decisions with adults |
| 7. Child-initiated and directed |
| 6. Adult-initiated shared decision with children |
| 5. Consulted and informed |
| 4. Assigned but informed |
| 3. Tokenism |
| 2. Decoration |
| 1. Manipulation |

**Some factors which help to ensure young people led projects are effective**:
Opportunities need to be provided; Young people's hearts and minds need to be engaged; There need to be clear aims and roles; The role of adults is to provide support, advice and a point of contact; Projects and networks take time to develop and need a time commitment; Development of key skills including team building, negotiating and campaigning; Young people need knowledge of issues and how to access points of power; Sometimes you need money to make things work; It's important to celebrate success. (Thanks to Ted Huddleston)

**Skills to develop**
e.g. Preparation; Arranging meetings; Listening; Note taking; Researching; Financial skills; Mediating in conflicts; Organising; Letter writing; Presentation skills; Negotiating; Communication; Initiative; Leadership; Entrepreneurship; Teamwork.

**Action planning model:**

Using the **Youth Act** model (Youth Act was devised by Street Law in the USA and then adapted in many countries including the UK. Youth Act trains people to campaign **www.youthact.org** and **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/youthact**)

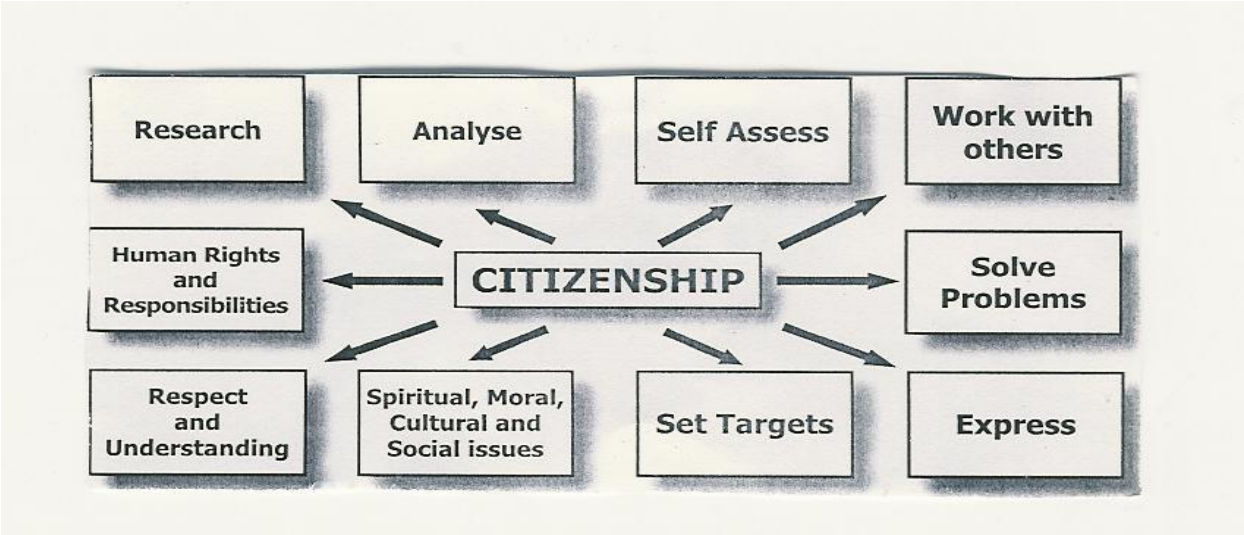
- Step 1 Think about different human rights issues
- Step 2 Identify your issue, what is the purpose of the change?
- Step 3 Set a goal with a timeline
- Step 4 Decide on campaign activities (see strategies below)
- Step 5 Become an expert on your issue
- Step 6 Create a resource pool, who needs to be involved? Which skills?
- Step 7 Plan for success
- Step 8 Recruit allies who will help and identify 'road blockers' who will hinder
- Step 9 Work the media
- Step 10 Celebrate success

**Some campaign strategies**

- Letter-writing
- Offer to do a school assembly about your campaign
- Form a study action group
- Contact newspapers for support (e.g. *The Post* and *Eden*)
- Email alert
- Invite yourself to a local council meeting
- Prepare yourself and your communication skills
- Surveys, petitions, questionnaires
- Organise a night-time vigil to publicise your issue
- Think of a publicity stunt to get attention
- Record an interview with someone who can help your campaign
- Organise a public meeting, make posters and leaflets
- Show movies e.g. *Hotel Rwanda, Missing*
- Form a human rights club
- Write articles to publish in school and beyond
- Raise money for badges, T shirts.
- Write to companies which make so much money in Africa
- Join Amnesty International's Urgent Action campaigns
- Produce drama, songs etc and get them out to the public
- Read and understand the human rights conventions. Offer to teach them to whoever you think should know e.g. discipline staff? police? parents?
- Find allies. e.g. intergenerational, parents, teachers, police (find the police human rights centre), principals, caretakers, administrative staff, governors, delegates, community groups. Make a network. Run a workshop together
- Ask to speak at a staff meeting about your campaign
- Invite someone from a local NGO like Help Out to support you
- Find out about local community groups (women, workers, church groups) and ask if you can speak to them. Ask them for support
- Create a website. There will be sympathetic people who can help you

- Repeat key messages
- Look out for local film makers e.g. Ntoah Godfred Epitime, Ntoko Media UK/Cam Email: ntoah@yahoo.com Telephone 94888108/74137882) and helpful radio and TV journalists looking for good stories. If you have to pay them, think of some money making ventures to raise the cash.

**Active citizenship**: (with thanks to the UK Youth Parliament, British Council 1World 1Voice *Citizenship : A World Wide Affair*)




**Visit websites about campaigning** e.g.
**www.changemakers.org.uk**
**www.wearewhatwedo.org**
**www.dosomething.org**
**www.sheilamckechnie.org.uk**
**www.realworldawards.com**
**www.btbetterworld.com**

**Political will – for discussion**

When discussing possible solutions to Cameroon's human rights issues, people talk about the government being the answer, or god or grassroots movements. The aim of campaigns is usually to influence those with power to make changes to policy and practice. Discuss what needs to happen to ensure everyone has their rights. Laws need to be implemented, embedded, monitored, followed up, funding, training, monitoring with consequences for failure. Why do you think some governments allow people to express opinions they do not agree with and others do not? In a consolidated authoritarian dictatorship regime is it true that the politician must lead the change? As I write, hundreds of thousands of Iranians have 'thrown off the mantle of fear' (BBC World Service) and are marching in protest at the recent election results [and two years on we saw what became known as The Arab Spring]. Most of us yearn for leaders who are educated, intelligent, practical, with a sense of justice and concern for all the people.

*Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has* Margaret Mead

# Human rights throughout the curriculum

**Human rights education is not an implant but integral to the curriculum so:**

- It needs to be planned
- Audit to find out what is already being done
- What are you trying to achieve? Are the learning outcomes clear to staff and students?
- Clarify how human rights education contributes to school improvement
- Consider how to involve parents and the local community
- Decide what is to be taught & how (key concepts, words, questions, issues, resources)
- Encourage subject staff to work together across the curriculum
- Ensure there is progression in the programme
- How will we do this?
- Link the work with recording achievement, target setting and assessment
- Does everyone know what is expected of them?
- Which member of senior staff is responsible? Are they an ally?
- Which inspector/advisor is available to support you?
- Who will lead this and be involved?
- Ensure the purpose of human rights education is clearly stated
- What are the milestones?
- What evidence will there be of progress?
- What resources do you have?
- Any staff development and student training?
- Make arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

**Citizenship in Cameroon schools usually covers:**

The family; rights and duties of a child in the family; responsibilities of parents, clan, tribe, ethnic group; dignity of human beings; human rights; the school day; school institution & environment; village; traditional organisation of the village; traditional social values; economic life of the country; types of councils; management of councils; resources of council; budget; administrative organisation of Cameroon; traditional leadership; district, sub divisions, divisions; school; community; drug abuse; prostitution; STDs; AIDS; status and social advancement of women; Cameroon's political life; national symbols; constitutional changes; executive power; the President of the Republic; the government, parliament and national assembly, the senate; judicial power; relationship between executive, legislative and judicial powers; the notion of governance; rights and duties; the notion of peace; development; economic life; production; corruption; enterprise; money; markets; environmental protection.

**History in Cameroon schools usually covers:**

Form 3: Cameroon History; Form 4: World History – 1848 revolutions, Unification of Germany, Italian Unification; Form 5: Africa colonial rule, 1884 Berlin Conference, consequences for Africa; Lower 6: Post colonial resistance Kenya, Tanzania, Mandinka Empire; Upper 6: Problems with national building, nationalism, case studies e.g. Ghana, Algeria, South Africa.

## Teaching human rights through the curriculum

| Subject | Example of topic | Link to human rights education |
|---|---|---|
| **Citizenship** | The concept of liberty | Political, economic & social liberty in practice |
| **Philosophy** | The State – Cameroon Constitution, rights and duties and freedoms | The fundamental rights & freedoms spelt out & guaranteed in the preamble of the Constitution. Does the Constitution conform with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights? |
| **Economics** | Business organisation and development<br><br>The Economy | Right to own resources; right to operate a business of your choice; right to good service; right to know the fair amount of tax to pay; conflicting rights e.g. shipping, new roads.<br><br>How resources (capital, labour, land, income, public services) are produced, distributed and organised. |
| **Geography** | Migration | Child trafficking and labour; Need for water, food, minerals, energy; interdependence; sustainability; rights of indigenous people. |
| **History** | Nationalism in French Cameroon<br><br>The growth of democracy | Violations of human rights, no freedom of association & expression; No fair trials; intimidation of political leaders; torture; harassment; transfer to remote areas; political assassinations and exile etc.<br><br>The struggle for women's right to vote. |
| **Language & Literature** | Novels, poetry, drama, writing letters, debate | Themes in literature e.g. discrimination, inequality, abuse of power, use of fear; Building a vocabulary of human rights; sending real letters to Amnesty International; debate current issues. |
| **Science** | Abortion | Rights of the woman/parents/unborn child. |
| **Maths** | Statistics | Global rates of maternal deaths in childbirth. |
| **Sport** | Football | Teamwork, the collective. |
| **Law** | Labour legislation | Protecting workers, future workers, rights. |
| **Social Studies** | Stereotyping | Attitudes of people from the SW and NW Provinces towards each other. Attitudes of Francophones and Anglophones towards each other. |
| **Languages** | French society | SOS Racisme, an anti-racist movement |
| **Religious Education** | The 'Golden Rule' of all religions | 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' |

With thanks to staff and inspectors for all their ideas.

# Methodology

**Some useful teaching methods and activities**

*Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire* W.B. Yeats

Participative, interactive methods are the most powerful way to develop important knowledge, skills and attitudes. Students become active explorers of the world around them, rather than passive recipients of the teacher's expertise. There are many methods that can be used for teaching human rights. Bear in mind that it's not about getting the right answers but more the discussion and accepting varied viewpoints. Here are a few useful methods, many are recommended to you in the Cameroon government's human rights education curriculum which is being piloted:

- Drama/ role play
- Whole class discussion
- Creative expression – dance, poetry, sculpture
- Songs e.g. Bob Marley. Protest songs
- Short story telling/ case studies
- Pictures and cartoons
- Historical extracts
- Audio-visual aids
- Assembly (see Amnesty International's resources for ideas)
- Brainstorming
- Public speaking. Communication (see under assessment)
- Human Rights Clubs (discussion, action, inter-school, sensitisation, pledges)
- Pairs and group work
- Questioning/ quiz
- Circle time (discuss group decisions, rules, issues, rewards, sanctions etc)
- Images as stimulus (pictures/ video)
- Projects
- International Day (discuss the essence of that special day, e.g. 19 January Martin Luther King Day, 8 March Women's Day, 1 May Labour Day, 20 November Children's Day, 10 December Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day)
- Anti bullying groups
- Peer mediation
- Key documents e.g. Criminal Penal Code
- Newspapers
- Interviews
- Amnesty International
- Human Rights awards
- Debates
- Conversation Circles, panels, "fishbowls."

# Assessment

**Aims of assessment** include: measuring success and progress; how much has been learned?; whether or not you have met the agreed aims; how/whether students have benefited; have you benefited?; informs planning next time. Assessment is an essential part of any programme. Much more important than passing a test, assessment is about developing attitudes and capabilities. Students can assess themselves and their peers.

**Citizenship is not formally tested** and not weighted highly, which of course affects its status in students' eyes and can affect their attitude to learning. The new human rights education curriculum manual does not include substantial advice about assessment.

Here are some ideas:

**Overall** = a. Tutors' personal reflections on own actions and experiences, b. Their observation and analysis of students' understanding during the course of study, c. Written exams and quizzes and d. Consultations with students individually or in groups regarding their own progress. But is this possible with the huge classes you teach? (Thanks to *Preparation for Social Action Tutor Training*, FUNDAEC)

**Decide which tasks you want to assess** e.g. Ask students to analyse key human rights questions such as why there is no free media, look for good questions they come up with, research, ideas. Run a debate, write a song or a radio broadcast, ask them to write the diary of a refugee, make group and individual presentations. Agree first what criteria you're looking for e.g. tone of voice, volume, speed/pace, eye contact, body language, relaxed? Use humour, smile, beginning and ending song, broadcast. They can assess each other's 'performance' after you agree criteria but make sure to praise first. People often criticise first, before praising and that is bad for the self esteem. It is also very discouraging and will not guarantee you get the best out of your students.

**You can consider** whether a student:

- Has shown understanding of course content
- Can express with reasons a personal opinion, orally and in writing
- Can respond appropriately to the opinions of others
- Contributes appropriately to whole class debate
- Shows interest in human rights discussions.

(With thanks to Don Rowe, Citizenship Foundation)

Some teachers put **simple questions** to their students in order to assess their learning e.g.

- List the fundamental rights of the human being
- In your own words, 'Human rights begin at breakfast'
- What do you understand by human rights violation?
- Name three areas of the world where human rights are being violated.

**Learning Tree**

Give everyone a handout of a leaf or ask them to draw one and write down anything they have learned, to develop a tree of learning. Stick the leaves on a tree that you have drawn and fix it to the wall.

**And if the students have run a campaign, you can assess it:**

- What issue did you decide to research and take action on. Why?
- How is this a human rights issue?
- What action did you take?
- Why did you decide that was the most appropriate action to take on this issue?
- How did you plan your action?
- What roles and responsibilities did different group members take?
- What did you hope to achieve as a result of this action? What progress have you made? What would you do differently next time?
- You can ask about **skills development?** e.g. Confidence, how to work in a group, speaking in front of people, influencing people with decision-making powers, becoming an expert on an issue, finding allies, approaching the media, how to design and run surveys, petitions, goal setting, planning. (All in the new curriculum).

**Ask yourself**: How do you think the human rights education unit went overall? Did you achieve your aims? If not, why do you think this was? Did you stick to your plan? If not, how did you deviate from it? What went particularly well? Why? What didn't go so well and why? What would you do differently next time?

# Concluding…

No system is fixed, everything can change….

*If you work in human rights, you have to be optimistic. My own trial has had a consciousness-raising effect, educating people about what is really happening here in Malaysia. With women's and migrant groups organising at the grassroots level more than ever, free association is taking on new life while free speech may be suppressed. This shows the way education for empowerment works: with action comes reflection, and with reflection, new consciousness, action and mobilisation. It's not a strategy for the impatient. What's more, even if they send me to jail, it will give me an opportunity to write a report on jail conditions and see what changes need to be made* Irene Fernandez, founder of Tenaganita, (Women's Force, Malaysia) who was accused of 'maligning the good name of Malaysia in the eyes of the world' for publishing her NGO's report, *Treatment and deaths of migrant workers at detention camps*

*In spite of everything, I still believe that people really are good at heart…I have to have hope…I simply can't build my hopes on a foundation of confusion, misery and death. How wonderful that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world* Anne Frank, 14, writing in hiding from the Nazis

*From my own point of view women should not consider their task complete until every woman knows the joy of freedom and living a life free from the threat of violence, until shame and silence break into joyful melodies, where women and men gain the power and the courage to live their lives to the full potential* Clodine Mbuli Shei,
*Impact of marital conflict on women's participation in development*

*Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights are respected is our solemn duty* Joseph Wrensinki, Founder of ATD Fourth World International, 1987

## Examples of local and national organisations for human rights

- Help Out Centre for Human Rights, Buea **helpout_cam@yahoo.com** 77622112
- National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, Buea
- The People's Rights Protection Association, Tiko 75271468
- Human Rights Defence Group, Bamenda 77645854
- DELICE – campaign to stop child trafficking, Yaounde 77625836 o_delice@yahoo.fr
- Creative Hands Organisation – Leadership & empowerment, Buea 77692010
- Youth Alliance for Democracy and Development (YADD), Buea 74505995
- Nkong Hilltop, Buea **www.nkonghilltop.org** 33010743/ 77048113
- Rural Women Development and Environmental Organisation, Buea Tel. 74085029
- Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, Buea **www.chrda.org** 33026975
- Association International pour la promotion et la protection du statut de refuges
- ACAT Action by Christian for the Abolition of Torture
- Rayons de Soliel, Yaounde sunrays2006era@yahoo.fr

## Human Rights Education – international resources & opportunities

- List of International human rights treaties ratified by the Republic of Cameroon **www.umn/humanrts/research/ratification-cameroon.html**
- Amnesty International **www.amnesty.org.uk/education**
- Panos Institute **www.panos.org.uk/global/livingwithpoverty.asp**
- Save the Children **www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/44.htm**
- Oxfam **www.oxfam.org.uk/resources**
- Unicef **www.unicef.org/siteguide/resources.html**
- The Citizenship Foundation **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resources**
- Human Rights Watch **www.hrw.org**
- Facing History and Ourselves (offer courses online) **www.facinghistory.org**
- University of Minnesota Human Rights Centre **www.umn.edu/humanrts/index.html**
- British Institute of Human Rights **www.bihr.org/development/education**
- The Association for Citizenship Teaching- Human Rights **www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/theme?t=5**
- Free resources on the international campaign for right to education **www.sendmyfriend.org**

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- *First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education* Amnesty International, 1996
- *Youth Act Training Manual* by Saskia Neary with Ade Sofola and Carrie Supple, The Citizenship Foundation, 2006
- *Opening New Doors – Pastoral Work in the Prison* by Rev. Sister Jacqueline Atabong, SST. Dec. 2007
- *Building Citizenship* Books 1 – 5 by Tazifor Tajoche John pub. Education Book Centre, POB 330 Buea
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- *Torture in Cameroon* Medical Foundation for the care of victims of Torture 2002

**HELP OUT Centre *for* Human Rights**
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**Visiting Address:** University of Buea Street, Molyko **Registered NGO N°.** 403/G.37/D14/1/VOL.3/OAPP
**www.helpoutcameroon.org**

**Affiliated to National Commission on Human Rights & Freedoms**
**Non-Governmental Organisation in Observer Status with African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**

**Human Rights Education. Prison, Legal & Democratic Reforms. Alternative Dispute Resolution. Rural Infrastructure Development. Information & Communication Technology (ICT)**

## Human Rights Pledge

I pledge from this day onward to do my best to interrupt prejudice and to stop those who, because of hate, would hurt, harass or violate the civil rights of anyone.

I will try at all times to be aware of my own biases against people who are different from myself.

I will ask questions about cultures, religions and races that I do not understand.

I will speak out against anyone who mocks, seeks to intimidate or actually hurts someone of a different race, religion, ethnic group or sexual orientation.

I will reach out to support those who are targets of harassment.

I will think about specific ways my community can promote respect for people and create a prejudice- free zone.

I firmly believe that one person can make a difference and that no person can be an "innocent bystander" when it comes to opposing hate.

By signing this pledge, I recognise that respect for individual dignity, achieving equality and opposing anti-Semitism, racism, ethnic bigotry, homophobia, or any other form of hatred is a non-negotiable responsibility of all people.

…… ……
My signature Date