

# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

**10<sup>th</sup> August, 2007**

## **What Is Human Rights Education?**

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) has defined Human Rights Education as "training, dissemination, and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes," which are directed to:

- (a) "The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."
- (b) "The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity."
- (c) "The promotion of understanding, respect, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups."
- (d) "The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society."
- (e) "The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the Maintenance of Peace." (Adapted from the Plan of Action of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), paragraph 2)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Centre, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-2/HRE-intro.htm> Ed. Nancy Flowers (1998).

Simply stated, human rights education is all learning that facilitates a knowledge and value of human rights. As such human rights education simultaneously serves two purposes; it provides education *about* human rights while it also *informs* people as to what their rights are. “Integral to learning about one’s human rights is learning about the responsibilities that accompany all rights. Just as human rights belong to both individuals and society as a whole, the responsibility to respect, defend and promote human rights is both individual and collective.”<sup>2</sup>

Other positive aspects of human rights education are as follows:

- it promotes social order, inclusively and respect;
- provides a basis for conflict resolution; and
- teaches the skills of negotiation, mediation and consensus building.

Thus, the main goal of human rights education is that it instils in individuals at a very young age and at all levels of society a desire to respect the differences and dignity of others throughout their entire life cycle.

### **Human Rights Education and the National Curriculum**

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the government of the Cayman Islands is obligated to provide our children with human rights education. One of the principles of the CRC is the “right to education” which advocates for free and compulsory education at primary and secondary levels. “Human rights education embraces this right and advocates for a human rights approach in all learning, so that human rights values and principles can be applied in our everyday lives.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

While information about human rights should be available to society as a whole, a particular duty is owed to the younger elements of our society. It is therefore appropriate for the compulsory education sector to be targeted for human rights education and for human rights education to therefore feature in any national curriculum.

The HRC believes that human rights education will work best when it is pervasive and woven into the fabric of the curriculum, as opposed to being viewed as a separate subject. As Sherri Le Mottee has stated:

“It is a way of thinking about and relating to the world, not just subject matter to cover. Educators can find opportunities in most aspects of day to day life to engage and challenge their students about human rights.”<sup>4</sup>

The following are the key principles to keep in mind when infusing human rights education into a curriculum:

- **Delve beneath the surface** - avoid being superficial and working only with what is obvious- you are not simply dealing with an add-on to what already exists. Explore connections beneath the obvious-dig down deep.
- **Be real and realistic** - you are not being asked to artificially introduce something that does not have a natural relationship to the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes already being worked with in the learning area. Only use and engage with what fits comfortably and ‘naturally’.
- **Each learning areas should retain its integrity** - don’t turn every learning area into a human rights learning area. The core issues of the learning area should remain in tact and should not be compromised in anyway by dealing with human rights and inclusion issues but rather enhanced and broadened.

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<sup>4</sup> Sherri Le Mottee, *Human Rights and Inclusively in the Curriculum: A Resource Book for Educators*. (South Africa: European Union Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa).



- **Recognize that ALL educators are educators for human rights and inclusively.** There are many opportunities for the infusion of human rights and inclusively into all learning areas. Making them real depends on how willing and open educators are to engage with them.
- **Curriculum is not just about content** - it is also about enactment. In working with human rights and inclusively, the process of learning is as important as the 'content'. Planning learning programmes and learning material should therefore always deal with the 'how' and for 'whom' as well as the 'what'.
- **Have clear selection criteria for learning support materials** - learning and teaching for and about human rights and inclusively should be supported by relevant and human rights sensitive learning support materials. Educators should scrutinise materials before bringing them into the classroom. For example, even the most 'conservative' or 'biased' material can form a valuable resource for teaching critical engagement with the power of the written word as well as historical bias, indoctrination and so on.<sup>5</sup>

Attached, as Appendix 1, is a table extracted from *Human Rights and Inclusively in the Curriculum*, which offers an overview of the core knowledge, values, skills and issues that should be introduced in human rights education, according to the students' developmental level.

### **The Methodology for Human Rights Education**

The HRC fully endorses the methodology for human rights education advocated by the University of Minnesota's Human Rights Resource Centre:

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



“No matter what the setting – whether a classroom, a community center, or a religious organization – common principles inform the methods used to teach human rights.” These principles, outlined below, should be evident in every aspect of good human rights education:

- ❑ Provide **OPEN-MINDED EXAMINATION** of human rights concerns with opportunities for participants to arrive at positions different from those of the facilitator.
- ❑ Include an **INTERNATIONAL/GLOBAL DIMENSION** to the human rights theme being examined, (e.g. how it manifests itself both at home and abroad).
- ❑ Avoid too much focus on human rights abuses. Emphasize human rights as a **POSITIVE VALUE SYSTEM** and a standard to which everyone is entitled.
- ❑ Affirm the belief that the **INDIVIDUAL** can make a difference and provide examples of individuals who have done so.
- ❑ Include an **ACTION DIMENSION** that provides participants with opportunities to act on their beliefs and understanding. These actions should address problems both at home and elsewhere in the world.
- ❑ Link every topic or issue to relevant articles of the **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**. Make this connection explicit rather than implicit or assumed.
- ❑ Be responsive to concerns related to **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**. Activities should reflect a variety of perspectives (e.g., race, gender, religion, cultural/national traditions).
- ❑ Be concerned with both **CONTENT AND LEARNING PROCESS**. It is difficult to engage participants in examining issues related to rights and justice if the learning environment does not demonstrate respect for justice and human dignity.

- Keep lecturing to a minimum. Instead use **PARTICIPATORY METHODS** for learning such as role plays, discussion, debates, mock trials, games, and simulations.
- Connect people's **LIVED EXPERIENCE** directly to abstract concepts and legal documents.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Human Rights Education beyond the National Curriculum**

While the HRC would like to see human rights education integrated into the National Curriculum that is delivered in our schools; it also believes that education and learning does not only occur within schools. The HRC therefore urges teachers, parents and concerned citizens in general to begin educating themselves and, in turn, the future generations of the Cayman Islands simply by having dialogue on some of the more frequently asked questions about human rights. Appendix 2 at the end of this paper, *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on Human Rights: Information for Students*, was adapted from information obtained from Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissions' website section on information for students. It should provide you with a way to get started and begin the dialogue with students, peers, or family members.

Additionally, the following are some recommended websites, which anyone interested in promoting human rights could access, although teachers should find the resources designed to assist with the delivery of human rights education in schools particularly useful.

#### ***The United Nations Cyberschoolbus***

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/index.asp> ...

... has a wealth of information for teachers including: a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in plain language; FAQ's about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a

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<sup>6</sup> University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Centre, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-2/howteach.htm> Ed. Nancy Flowers (1998).

classroom guide project on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Human Rights Factsheet, and links to other human rights organizations.

***Amnesty International*** <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/hre-resources-eng> ...

... also has a great deal of resources for human rights education materials on a variety of subjects including FAQ's on human rights, where to get more information and how to participate in various human rights campaigns.

This information on human rights education has been compiled and distributed by the Cayman Islands' HRC as part of its public awareness initiative. If you have any suggestions, comments or ideas for raising the level of human rights awareness in the Cayman Islands, we invite you to contact us at [committee@humanrights.ky](mailto:committee@humanrights.ky).

Appendix 1: Taken from: *Human Rights and Inclusively in the Curriculum* by Sherri Le Mottee

Developmental Level	Core Knowledge Areas and Values	Core Skills	Issues and Problems	Relevant Human Rights Standards and Instruments
<b>Childhood</b>  <b>Foundation Phase</b>  <b>Ages 5-8</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rules</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Order</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Respect</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Identity</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Diversity</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cooperation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Personal Responsibility</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sharing</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Empathy</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Humanness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Belonging</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Making and keeping basic rules</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cooperation/ sharing</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Communication skills- self expression, listening, telling</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Working in small groups</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Problem-solving</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Understanding cause and effect</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Analysing reasons for acts/empathy</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Making and keeping friends</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Inequality</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Unfairness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Harm</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Abuse</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bullying</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fear</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Classroom rules</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Family life</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Friendship</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Organizations working against child abuse (e.g. Dept of Children and Family Services, Cayman Islands Crisis Centre, etc.)</i>
<b>Later Childhood</b>  <b>Intermediate Phase</b>  <b>Ages 9-11</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Individual Rights</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Family and community</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Social responsibility</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Freedom</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Equality</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Law and government</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Leadership</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Citizenship and civic participation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Taking a position</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Defending a position</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Questioning to clarify information or a point of view</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Distinguishing between fact and opinion</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Managing personal conflict</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Discussing public affairs</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Performing school or community service</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Prejudice</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Discrimination</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poverty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Injustice</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Selfishness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Theft</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Breaking the law</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Community standards</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>History of human rights nationally and internationally</i>



<b>Developmental Level</b>	<b>Core Knowledge Areas and Values</b>	<b>Core Skills</b>	<b>Issues and Problems</b>	<b>Relevant Human Rights Standards and Instruments</b>
<b>Adolescence</b>  <b>Senior Phase</b>  <b>Ages 12-14</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Natural rights</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rule of law</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Justice</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Equity</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Security</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Global responsibility</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>International law</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Interaction among nation states</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Understanding other points of view</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Making decisions and choices</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agreeing to disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Citing evidence in support of ideas or positions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Using print and electronic sources to acquire, share information</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Questioning public officials/experts/ others, gathering information from officials and agencies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ethnocentrism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Xenophobia</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Racism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sexism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ignorance</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Authoritarianism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cynicism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Powerlessness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hunger</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Colonialism</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Regional Human Rights Conventions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>UN Conventions/covenants</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Civil and Political Rights</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Economic, social and cultural rights</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Elimination of racism and discrimination</i>
<b>Youth</b>  <b>Secondary School</b>  <b>Ages 15-18</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Moral exclusion/moral inclusion</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Moral responsibility</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Civil society/role of voluntarism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Global citizenship</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ecological responsibility</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Global political demographics</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Environmental developments</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-violence</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Civic problem seeking/problem-solving</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Participation in civic organisations, political parties, interest groups</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Writing letters, petitions, speaking, debating, testifying on political issues</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fulfilling minimal civic responsibilities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Voting</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Apathy</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Low self-esteem</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Political repression</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lack of recognition</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Civil disobedience</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Environmental abuse</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Genocide</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Torture</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Violence</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Nuremberg Principles</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>UN Conventions: Prevention and Punishment of Genocide; Prevention and Elimination of Torture</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>National and international mechanisms for human rights protection</i>

## **Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS) On Human Rights Information for Students**

### **1. What are human rights?**

Every person has dignity and value. One of the ways that we recognise this fundamental worth is by acknowledging and respecting a person's human rights.

Human rights are concerned with equality and fairness. They recognise our freedom to make choices about our life and develop our potential as human beings. They are about living a life free from fear, harassment or discrimination.

There are a number of basic rights that people from around the world have agreed on, such as the right to life, freedom from torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment, rights to a fair trial, free speech and freedom of religion, rights to health, education and an adequate standard of living.

These human rights are the same for all people everywhere – male and female, young and old, rich and poor, regardless of our background, where we live, what we think or what we believe. This is what makes human rights 'universal'.

Rights also describe what is lawful: that is, some rights may be laid down in law. If you have a legal right to something, you may be able to defend it in court.

In many situations, though, rights exist but are not covered by law. These rights are often called moral rights and are based on people's sense of what is fair or just.

### **2. Where do human rights come from?**

Human rights are not a recent invention. Discussion about these ideas can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Babylon, China and India. They contributed to the laws of Greek and Roman society and are central to Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Islamic and Jewish teachings.

Concepts of ethics, justice and dignity were also important in societies, which have not left written records, but consist of oral histories, such as Indigenous people in Australia and elsewhere.

A significant development in human rights took place in the 18th Century, during a time of revolution and emerging national identities. The American Declaration of Independence (1776) was based on the understanding that certain rights, such as 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness', were fundamental to all people.

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) challenged the sovereignty of the aristocracy and recognised the "liberty, equality and fraternity" of individuals. These values were echoed in the United States' Bill of Rights (1791), which recognised freedom of speech, religion and the press in its Constitution, as well as the right to "peaceable" assembly, private property and a fair trial.

However, the growth of totalitarian regimes in the 20th Century and the atrocities of World War II made the protection of human rights an international priority. The first attempt to develop a comprehensive statement of human rights was made in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the UDHR).

The UDHR sets out the fundamental rights of all people, including the right to life; freedom from slavery, torture and arbitrary arrest; freedom of thought, opinion and religion; the right to a fair trial and equality before the law; the right to work and education; and the right to participate in the social, political and cultural life of one's country.

The UDHR was adopted unanimously by members of the United Nations in 1948. Since then it has been the foundation on which much international law has been based.

### 3. Are there different types of human rights?

Human rights cover virtually every area of human life and activity.

They include **civil and political rights**, such as freedom of speech and freedom from torture. They also include **economic, social and cultural rights**, such as the rights to health and education. Some rights apply to individuals, such as the right to a fair trial: these are called **individual rights**. Others apply to groups of people, such as women and children: these are called **collective rights**.

One of these characteristics of human rights is that they are 'universal'. This means they apply to everyone, regardless of status, race, gender, nationality or other distinction.

Another characteristic is that they are 'indivisible'. In other words, people are entitled to all rights - civil and political (such as the right to a fair trial) and economic, social and cultural (such as the right to education). They can't be ranked, or traded off.

### 4. What are the human rights "standards"?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, agreed to by the nations of the world on 10 December 1948, sets out the basic rights and freedoms of all men, women and children.

It has become the most important document of its kind and forms the basis of many legally-binding national and international laws.

Since then, human rights standards have been developed and incorporated into many international laws and treaties. Two of the most significant of these are:



- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**Civil and political rights** attempt to protect the individual from the misuse of political power and recognise a person's right to participate in their country's political process. They include freedom from slavery, torture and arbitrary arrest; freedom of thought, opinion and religion; the right to a fair trial and equality before the law.

**Economic, social and cultural rights** require a government to ensure that its people share in the economic wealth of the country, can participate in its social and cultural life, have access to adequate health care, education, social support and a clean environment and develop to their full potential.

International law has also developed to protect people from racial discrimination and recognise the rights of specific groups of people, such as women, children and people with a disability.

## 5. Who has responsibility to protect human rights?

Human rights cannot exist in isolation; for instance, an individual on a desert island does not really “have” any rights because there is no-one to meet the corresponding responsibilities that go with them. In other words, human rights connect us to each other in a shared set of rights and responsibilities.

Human rights involve responsibility and duties toward other people and the community. Individuals often have a responsibility to ensure that they exercise their rights with due regard for the rights of others. For example, when a person exercises their right to freedom of speech, they should not infringe someone else's right to privacy.



Governments have a particular responsibility to ensure that people are able to enjoy their rights. They are required to establish and maintain laws and services that enable their citizens to enjoy a life in which their rights are observed.

Whether or not governments actually do this, it is generally accepted that this is the government's responsibility and citizens can call them to account if they fail to protect their basic human rights.

## **6. Why are human rights important?**

In recent decades there has been a tremendous growth in how we think about and apply human rights ideas. This has had many positive results - knowledge about human rights can empower individuals and offer solutions for specific problems.

Values of tolerance, equality and respect can help reduce friction within society. Putting human rights ideas into practice can help us create the kind of society we want to live in. Human rights are an important part of how people interact with others at all levels in society - in the family, the community, schools, the workplace, in politics and in international relations.

It is vital therefore that people everywhere should strive to understand what human rights are. When people better understand human rights, it will be easier for them to promote justice and the well-being of society.

## **7. Are some human rights more important than others?**

Disagreements over whether one form of rights is more important than another have occurred over past decades between countries with different political ideologies.

Some nations have asserted that priority should be given to economic, social and cultural rights and point to the fact that their particular country's history, culture or religious background is not suited to incorporating ideas of an individual's civil and political rights.

Other nations have argued the opposite; that civil and political rights should take precedence and that the cost to governments of meeting the economic, social and cultural rights of its citizens would be impossible to meet.

However, over the last decade there has been broad agreement between members of the United Nations that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. In other words, all rights are equally important and necessary in creating a strong and healthy society.

### **8. Can my human rights be taken away from me?**

A person's human rights cannot be taken away. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in its final Article, that no State, group or person “[has] any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein”.

This doesn't mean that abuses and violations of human rights don't occur. On television and in newspapers every day we hear tragic stories of murder, violence, racism, hunger, unemployment, poverty, abuse, homelessness and discrimination.

However, the Universal Declaration and other human rights treaties are more than just noble aspirations. They are essential legal principles. To meet their international human rights obligations, many nations have incorporated these principles into their own laws. This provides an opportunity for individuals to have a complaint settled by a court in their own country.

Although courts in the Cayman Islands have, on occasion, recognized and protected human rights, including those contained in international treaties, the absence of human rights in the Constitution of the Cayman Islands significantly handicaps and inhibits the court's ability to enforce human rights.

Individuals from some countries may also be able to take a complaint of human rights violations to a United Nations committee, which would then give its opinion. As far as the Cayman Islands is concerned, this international legal avenue of recourse is provided by the right of individual petition to the European Court of Human Rights.

In addition, education about human rights is just as important as having laws to protect people. Long term progress can really only be made when people are aware of what human rights are and what standards exist.

## **9. How are human rights protected in the Cayman Islands?**

While the Cayman Islands is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that does not enshrine at least some human rights in its constitution - a fundamental fact that the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee is actively seeking to alter - this does not mean that human rights are alien to the Cayman Islands.

The long existence of representative government in the Cayman Islands, along with a free and independent media and a legal system, which recognizes individual liberty as one of its key features, all serve to demonstrate how Caymanian society embodies the ideals of human rights in spite of the absence of fundamental rights in the constitution. Despite the many important historical landmarks for human rights that exist in the history books of the Cayman Islands, there is still much room for improving the protection of these rights.

A number of major international human rights treaties have been extended to the Cayman Islands -some for many years - but while these may be persuasive in local courts, they are not directly enforceable unless or until they are incorporated into domestic law. The following are the treaties extended or relevant to the Cayman Islands:

- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as amended by Protocol No.11

- United Nations International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
- United Nations International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

In addition, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is also clearly relevant to the Cayman Islands. Some local efforts have been made to have this extended, although, thus far, these have not come to fruition.

The extension to the Cayman Islands, in early 2006, of the right of individual petition to the European Court of Human Rights is a significant addition to the range of remedies available to people in the Cayman Islands, although even this does not empower local judges to enforce the human rights contained in that Convention.

The creation of a local Human Rights Committee in 2004 and the ratification of its Terms of Reference in January 2006 have provided further impetus for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Cayman Islands. If an individual or group in the Cayman Islands feels as if their human rights have been violated then they may submit a petition to the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee.

The Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee can be accessed in three different ways:



- *The First Pathway.* An individual or group of individuals can directly petition the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee by writing to the Committee at P.O.Box 30664, Grand Cayman, KY1-1203, CAYMAN ISLANDS, or at [committee@humanrights.ky](mailto:committee@humanrights.ky); or
- *The Second Pathway.* An individual or group of individuals can address a petition in writing to a Member of the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee, who may then formally lodge the petition with the Committee; or
- *The Third Pathway.* A Member of the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee can petition the Committee of his or her own volition, by bringing an individual issue or a matter of general concern, in writing, to the attention of the Committee.

The HRC is empowered to investigate human rights complaints and, where appropriate, to produce and publish a Report on the matter. These Reports are sent by the HRC to all concerned parties and the HRC seeks to work with the relevant government agencies to implement any recommendations. While the HRC does attempt to monitor issues and press for the implementation of its recommendations, the HRC has no legal powers to enforce its findings. The public and the press therefore have an important role to play, ensuring that pressure continues to be exerted on government agencies so that they do respond positively.

For more information on how the complaints process works, please visit the Cayman Islands Human Rights Committee's website at [www.humanrights.ky](http://www.humanrights.ky).

### **10. What can I do to promote human rights?**

There are literally hundreds of things you can do to promote discussion, education and action about human rights issues in your local area. Here are a few ideas.

- Surf the web or read the newspaper and get up to speed with some of the issues in Cayman and overseas;



- Set up a human rights project or awareness campaign in your school or neighbourhood;
- Talk to your teacher about issues you could study at school;
- Write to your school or local newspaper about an issue that concerns you;
- Raise money for an overseas aid program or a local human rights project;
- Join a human rights group, like Amnesty International.

**Source:** Adapted from Information for Students: Human Rights Essentials on Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's website:

[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/info\\_for\\_students/essentials/faq.html#3](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/info_for_students/essentials/faq.html#3)