A national network dedicated to building a culture of human rights.
What is Human Rights Education?

Human Rights Education (HRE) is a lifelong process of teaching and learning that helps individuals develop the knowledge, skills, and values to fully exercise and protect the human rights of themselves and others; to fulfill their responsibilities in the context of internationally agreed upon human rights principles; and to achieve justice and peace in the world.
At Human Rights Educators USA (HRE USA), we believe the key to engaged Americans who understand and respect human rights—and act in their daily lives with compassion and empathy for their fellow human beings—is the early introduction to our children of their rights, and the rights of others, in age-appropriate language, and from their earliest formal schooling onward. Since 2011, HRE USA has:

- created and maintained a network of HRE USA regional representatives throughout the US;
- provided extensive substantive comments and suggestions that were adopted by the California State Board of Education and that strengthened the HRE content of the California History/Social Science curriculum standards framework;
- created and maintained an online presence through our interactive website, hreusa.org, including a growing archive of HRE resources from the US and abroad for teachers and other HRE practitioners in the US to access and use at no charge;
- published monthly newsletters;
- created in New Jersey a state standards-specific HRE curriculum integration guide for high school teachers, which is accessible from our website and which serves as a model that can be adapted in other states for their high school-level curriculum integration guides;
- supported the creation of a Community of Interest for HRE within the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) that helped NCSS draft and implement a robust position statement in support of HRE in the US;
- participated, along with other US human rights organizations, in the United Nations Universal Periodic Review with regard to the current status of HRE in US schools;
- in conjunction with Amnesty International USA and the Dorothy Cotton Institute, worked with schools in Ithaca, New York, to help them become official Human Rights Friendly Schools;
- assisted the Human Rights Watch student task force and its California high school students as they sought ways to advocate for increased HRE in their schools and communities;
- through our regional representatives and members, held workshops, hosted speakers and increased public visibility of HRE;
- consulted with partners in Los Angeles in an effort to develop a robust human rights education framework for the Los Angeles Unified School District;
- supported the founding of a Higher Education Consortium for Human Rights; and partnered with AIUSA to develop a human rights toolkit.

While we’re proud of these achievements, as we look forward to this 70th year since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we know we’ve got a lot more work to do. As we prepare for activities that celebrate this “year of human rights” we’ll need your help to continue and expand on the work of building a strong, active and effective network of human rights educators. Please join us in our efforts by becoming an individual or institutional member of HRE USA today. Together, we can create a culture of respect for human rights among our fellow Americans - a legacy that will resonate both here at home, and abroad.

Sincerely,
Kirby Edmonds
Co-Chair, HRE USA
Mission

The mission of Human Rights Educators USA (HRE USA) is to promote human dignity, justice, and peace by cultivating an expansive, vibrant base of support for human rights education (HRE) within the United States.

HRE USA was founded in 2011 by leaders in the field of HRE, including seasoned educators, students, higher education faculty, members of non-profit organizations, representatives from both major national teacher unions, and other stakeholders. The network draws inspiration from the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December, 2011. The Declaration underscores the globally recognized importance of human rights in every person’s education.

To fulfill our mission, we facilitate mutual collaboration and support to maximize our members’ efforts to:

- **integrate** international human rights standards into formal and non-formal educational settings
- **promote** the inclusion of HRE in national and state education policies, standards, curricula, and pedagogy;
- **develop** training and education resources
- promote and **conduct** scholarly research on HRE
- **empower** educators, learners, and **members** with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to promote HRE
- participate in global **network** and forums to share best practices

Our Values

HRE USA is committed to the basic human rights principles of human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In all our undertakings we value diversity, inclusiveness, transparency, integrity, accountability, responsibility, and respectful, honest communication and sharing. Regardless of varying perspectives, HRE USA expects that its members will operate from the same values in their dealings with each other.
Leadership

The current Steering Committee consists of eighteen members. There are twelve seats for organizations and individuals, that are nominated by the Executive Committee as a slate, and six at-large seats that are chosen through election by HRE USA members. There are two co-chairs, two vice co-chairs, (at least one of each must be selected by membership) and one secretary. Steering committee members serve three-year terms, officers serve two-year terms.

Current HRE USA Steering Committee:  

**HRE USA Co-Chair**  **HRE USA Vice Co-Chair**  **HRE USA Secretary**

Gloria Alter  
Northern Illinois University, Retired

Dennis Banks  
SUNY College at Oneonta

Rosemary Ann Blanchard  
California State University, Retired

Kristina Eberbach  
Columbia University

Kirby Edmonds  
Dorothy Cotton Institute

Cynthia Gabriel Walsh  
Amnesty International USA

Bill Fernekes  
Rutgers University

Marissa Gutiérrez-Vicario  
Art and Resistance Through Education

Page Hersey  
University of San Francisco

Harry Lawson  
National Education Association

Glenn Mitoma  
University of Connecticut

Madeline Lohman  
The Advocates for Human Rights

Kristi Rudellius-Palmer  
Youthrive

Violette Rodriguez Sofaer  
The World As It Could Be

David Shiman  
University of Vermont

Sandra E. Sohcot  
The World As It Could Be

Adam E. Stone  
Filmmaker & Novelist

Adrienne van der Valk  
Teaching Tolerance

Development

In 2017, the Development Committee continued its comprehensive review of the funding organizations listed within its development database, and expanded that database on the basis of Committee member research and input from HRE USA Steering Committee members and other HRE USA members. The Development Committee then conducted a large-scale outreach effort, including personal contacts, Letters of Inquiry, and full grant proposals, to dozens of potential funding partners. The Development Committee expects to see its efforts bear fruit in 2018, but there’s always more to be done. The Development Committee encourages any HRE USA member with development experience, or with contacts at foundations or other potential funders, to join the Development Committee.
HRE USA is a coalition of hundreds of members across the country, and we continue to grow daily. We are academics, activists, parents, educators, students, unions, policy makers, social scientists, software engineers, professors, artists, and non-profit organizations united with a common mission: education about and for human rights.

In 2017, over 150 individuals and organizations joined HRE USA as new members, increasing our membership from 493 members to 643 members by the end of December. Of those numbers 76 are organizational members and 567 are individual members.

Staying Connected and Informed
HRE USA helps members stay informed on HRE developments through our monthly e-newsletter that highlights the latest news, action alerts, publications, events and partner announcements related to human rights education in the United States. In addition, members can connect with others, participate in online discussions, and hear about human rights related job opportunities through our national HRE USA LinkedIn group.

Membership Benefits
- Receive and share information about upcoming events, developments in the field, education resources, advocacy and employment opportunities through our monthly newsletter.
- Connect with other human rights educators in your area through HRE USA regional networks
- Connect with HRE USA members around the country through our website and our LinkedIn group
- Meet and network with other HRE USA members at the annual Edward O’Brien Award Reception
- Discuss questions, challenges, policies, resources, and ideas with other HRE USA members through the LinkedIn discussion board
- Access human rights education resources online, including curriculum materials and lesson plans, books, videos, background information, and take action resources.
- Receive support for human rights education initiatives in your schools, university, and community.
- Influence HRE USA’s policy, advocacy, outreach and development activities by participating in national HRE USA committees
- Establish working groups based on your human rights education interests and goals
- Participate in the election of steering committee members and run for membership
Regional Representatives

HRE USA’s regional representatives coordinate human rights education activities and communicate with partners in their areas. Members can contact their nearest representative to connect with local efforts, events, and activities related to human rights education in their area.

In 2016, Violette Rodriguez Sofaer took on the role of coordinating our regional representatives across the nation. This past year we increased our regular communication with regional representatives through in-person meetings and conference calls, established a new representative in Eastern Virginia, and assisted with the coordination of local HRE USA events in Washington D.C., New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other venues.

Regional Representatives are very involved in HRE advocacy, serve on HRE USA committees as well as on the Board of Directors for local and national organizations working in the area of human rights. In 2017 HRE USA regional chapters:

- Hosted a Symposium on Engaged Scholarship: Education as Activism: The Role of Educators, Counselors, and Scholars (Northern California)
- Co-led a Human Rights Advocacy workshop with United Nations Association, San Francisco State University Chapter (Northern California)
- Offered three interactive sessions on human rights education in partnership with Amnesty International USA (New York City)
- Hosted Screening of Dolores! for students and faculty of Thurgood Marshall Academy (Washington, DC)
- Contributed to the education section of the 2017 Human Rights City Report (Washington, DC)
- Testified before the DC State Board of Education and DC Council Education Committee on revising the district’s Social Studies Standards. (Washington, DC)
- Facilitated HRE workshops for students and training for teachers and coordinated the Human Rights Academy High School (Hawaii)
- Ensured HRE USA had a visible presence at the national NCSS conference and other events locally and nationally (Southwest region)
- Worked in partnership with local universities to change discipline policies in schools in the state. (Virginia)

For a full list of the highlights from each of the HRE USA Chapters please visit: hreusa.org/regions/.

HRE USA New York offered three interactive sessions on human rights education in early 2017. Participants explored multiple topics and discussed how they use education to encourage action on human rights; through art, UN efforts, higher education, NGOs, professional networks, and research & evaluation. Sessions were hosted at Amnesty International USA’s offices in NYC.

HRE USA San Francisco co-sponsored a book talk and signing event for author Lauren Markham’s recent book, The Faraway Brothers about two undocumented students.
Projects & Publications

New Website
In 2017 HRE USA launched their new website HREUSA.org. The site has a fresh new look and was designed with the needs of our members in mind. The user-friendly navigation provides easy access to recent updates, featured materials, events, action alerts, and more. New features include an updated HRE resource library, an organizational directory, and clear avenues for members to get involved locally or nationally.

Human Rights Education Resource Library
In 2017, as part of the new website update HRE USA created a new interface for our online human rights education resource library which offers a detailed overview on how to get started in HRE and provides a vast library of HRE resources, lesson plans, and other materials that have been vetted for quality, usefulness, and relevance. Visitors to the library can access resources by topic and subject matter. The resources also include HRE USA original human rights-themed posters featuring the UDHR that can be used to promote and educate about human rights in the classroom and the community. They are available to anyone to download for free online.

Human Rights Here and Now Bulletin
In 2017, HRE USA published two more editions of our periodic publication - Human Rights Here and Now Bulletin - which provides background information and educational resources and lessons to address contemporary human rights issues. One edition, entitled, “Getting HRE Into the Curriculum,” addressed the question, “How do teachers bring human rights into an increasingly restricted curriculum?” The other edition, “800,000 Reasons to Teach About DACA: A Toolkit for Educators” offered educators resources for addressing this important and controversial human rights issue that faces schools and communities across the country.

Human Rights Friendly Schools Project
HRE USA partners with Amnesty International USA to bring the “Human Rights Friendly Schools” project to schools in the United States. The Dorothy Cotton Institute (DCI) is leading the piloting of this initiative in five schools in the Ithaca, New York area.
HRE Curriculum Integration Guide

During 2017, 5 new lessons were added to the section on the HRE USA website entitled “Curriculum Integration Project.” These lessons, along with related instructional materials, were authored, revised based upon expert feedback from HRE USA advisors, and field-tested with students between March—December 2016. Following final editorial review by William R. Fernekes, the project coordinator, the lessons were mounted on the HRE USA website in February 2017. Beginning in March 2017, 3 new lessons were developed with the expectation they will be mounted on the HRE USA website in February 2018 following successful field testing during the fall of 2017. Additionally, a section on Service Learning for Human Rights Education authored by John Terry of the Wayne (NJ) Public Schools was added to the Curriculum Integration Project of the HRE USA website in 2017. Last but not least, the project finalized a cover letter and release form that educators can use to obtain exemplary student work products related to project lessons. Educators using the current set of lessons or those creating new ones can use the cover letter and release form to request permission to use student work that illustrates learning from the lessons.

Edward O’Brien Award

On Thursday, November 16th, 2017 HRE USA held its annual reception and awards gala in San Francisco, CA. The ceremony celebrated the 2017 winners of the Edward O’Brien Award for Human Rights Education which recognized both an individual as well as organization, institution or program that has made an outstanding contribution to human rights education in the United States. The individual award was presented to Mariana Leal Ferreira for her work as a professor at San Francisco State University where she uses critical theory, including Theater and Pedagogy of the Oppressed, to protect the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and other minorities in North and South America. She has organized the annual Human Rights Summit at SFSU since 2004. The organizational award was given to the Voice of Witness Education Program. The program serves more than 20,000 people annually, providing curricular support in human rights education and empathy based learning.

The Flowers Fund

This year, HRE USA also recognized Nancy Flowers with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her decades of dedication, innovation, and mentorship in advancing human rights education. Nancy was surrounded by family, friends and colleagues many of whom shared their own personal stories and thank you messages attesting to the impact Nancy has made on their lives through her human rights work. Furthermore, in honor of Nancy Flowers, HRE USA established the Flowers Fund. Under her guidance, the fund will be used to continue Nancy’s legacy of innovation and mentorship in human rights education.
Policy & Advocacy

State Learning Standards Work
In 2017, multiple members of HRE USA’s Collaborative Action, Policy, & Advocacy Committee (CAPAC), along with other HRE USA members/stakeholders who live in Colorado, provided detailed suggestions for stronger human rights education, and international humanitarian law, content to the Colorado Department of Education’s Second Public Feedback Opportunity, as part of the review and revision process for the Colorado Academic Standards. Our suggestions covered the following subject areas, and intersected with various areas of the entire K-12 spectrum: Social Studies (including History, Geography, Economics, and Civics), Reading/Writing/Communicating, Science, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama & Theater Arts, Comprehensive Health, and Music - proof that HRE really can fit into every aspect of the curriculum! We also offered our support to HRE USA members/stakeholders in South Carolina and Massachusetts, where our work will continue in 2018 as opportunities for public comment open in those states. Also in 2018, Kansas will begin to revise its standards, and we have committed to helping stakeholders there who want to make certain that HRE is a vital part of the new standards that emerge from that process.

Increasing HRE in the District of Columbia Public Schools
In 2017, CAPAC members wrote to the DC Council Education Committee, Office of the State Superintendent for Education, the State Board of Education, the Deputy Mayor of Education, and the Mayor urging them to begin the process of revising DC’s social studies standards, which were last reviewed and revised in 2006, with emphasis on the incorporation of human rights and humanitarian law principles into the social studies core. In September 2017, a CAPAC member testified before the DC Council Education Committee to urge the Council to revise social studies standards and to create a human rights elective for high school and middle school students. The testimony offered many recommendations for how these initiatives could be implemented and how community resources could be harnessed to train existing and prospective teachers on HRE and provide curriculum. Following the testimony, CAPAC members sent follow-up emails and were invited to meet with the Legislative Council to further discuss HRE in DC schools. We met with the Legislative Council in November and shared what other states are doing as far as standards, budgets, and Amnesty International USA’s Human Rights Friendly Schools model. A CAPAC member also testified at a public meeting before DC’s State Board of Education urging them to begin the process of revising DC’s social studies standards, with particular emphasis on the incorporation of human rights and humanitarian law principles. This has garnered support from at least one Board member. At the Board’s request, CAPAC is gathering other organizations, teachers, and students to testify on this issue during the next public meeting. We also submitted comments to the DC Graduation Requirements Task Force, suggesting that DC should make competency in HRE a requirement for all DC students.
Advocacy for U.S. involvement in Inter-American Commission

In 2017 the Trump administration pulled its participation in a planned hearing on March 21st with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) - a regional human rights body that has enjoyed the support of every U.S. administration since its founding. The hearings were scheduled to cover the Trump administration’s attempt to ban immigration from six predominantly Muslim countries, its immigration enforcement and detention policies, and its approval of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

In response, on May 8th HRE USA and 29 other human rights organizations including the ACLU, Equality Now, RFK Human Rights, and the US Human Rights Network sent a letter to Secretary Tillerson urging the administration to adopt a policy of robust and active engagement with the IACHR, the key mechanism for human rights promotion and protection within the Organization of American States (OAS). Since then, follow-up letters have been sent to Secretary of State Tillerson regarding US absence at IACHR and to the IAHCR requesting oversight over President Trump’s Travel Ban.

Participation in UN Universal Periodic Review Process

In 2014, HRE USA submitted the first-ever Stakeholder Report on the status of human rights education to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as part of the new human rights mechanism the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This first report, carried out by HRE USA in cooperation with the US Human Rights Network, overviewed the status of HRE in U.S. schools, drawing on a survey administered to members and incorporating other information from secondary sources such as policy reports and legislation. In that first report, HRE USA emphasized the importance of the U.S. government in supporting HRE within state-level curriculum standards, teacher training and whole school attempts to reduce violence.

In February 2018, HRE USA completed a follow-up Stakeholder Report on the status of human rights education in the U.S.: Submission to the UN Mid-term Review of Recommendations from the 22nd Session of the Universal Periodic Review. The report reviews over 130 higher education institutions in the United States for human rights and rights-related topics within the curriculum of schools of education, military academies and schools of social work.

This report was carried out in cooperation with the University and College Consortium for Human Rights Education (UCCHRE). Information for this report was gathered through a coordinated effort involving faculty, staff, and students at Columbia University (Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Teachers College) and the University of Connecticut (Thomas J. Dodd Research Center). The document recognized promising practices, particularly in schools of social work, but called for the U.S. government to encourage and support HRE in those institutions operated by the government or receiving federal funding.

The report can be found on the HRE USA website at hreusa.org/policy-and-advocacy/international-advocacy/shadow-report-mid-term-upr/.
Partnerships

HRE USA collaborates with member organizations on advocacy initiatives, research projects, curriculum development, and collective action. Below are some of our key partnerships.

**HRE 2020**

HRE USA is a member of the global civil society coalition, HRE 2020. HRE 2020 supports and strengthens the implementation of international human rights education commitments and seeks to ensure a systematic monitoring of governmental implementation of human rights education provisions in international human rights instruments, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

**National Council for the Social Studies HRE Community of Interest**

In 2017, HRE USA continued its support and collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Human Rights Education Community. With urging from HRE USA and the NCSS HRE Community, the NCSS Board of Directors for the first time incorporated specific HRE skills in their National Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers. HRE USA also supported the HRE Community’s call for schools and school districts to develop human rights friendly school programs to counter hate and intolerance. HRE USA recommended resources, including the Human Rights Friendly Toolkit developed by Amnesty International. NCSS’ House of Delegates adopted a resolution supporting this initiative, which is currently before the NCSS Board of Directors.

As a result of these positive collaborations, HRE USA and the NCSS HRE Community are working together to develop recommendations to schools of education across the country regarding the preparation of social studies teachers, are preparing to develop one or more webinars on ways to develop human rights friendly schools and are beginning a multi-year collaboration to create and propose to the NCSS Board of Directors a companion document on Human Rights Education to accompany the NCSS College, Career and Civic Life (C-3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. NCSS has already approved companion documents to the C-3 Framework in field such as Anthropology, Sociology, Religious Studies, etc.
University and College Consortium for Human Rights Education

The University and College Consortium for Human Rights Education (UCCHRE), established in April 2016 as an affiliate of HRE USA, continued to advance human rights education, research and learning by promoting engagement, collaboration, innovation, and mentorship within higher education. Throughout 2017, UCCHRE hosted monthly membership conference calls, which provided a forum to discuss a variety of issues of common concern among human rights educators in colleges and universities. The consortium developed a member survey designed to gather information on human rights programs and practitioners in higher education, which is now live on the website ucchre.org. UCCHRE also partnered with HRE USA in the development of a Stakeholder Report for the mid-term cycle of the U.S. Universal Period Review at the UN Human Rights Council.

US Human Rights Network

HRE USA maintains its membership in and collaboration with the US Human Rights Network. HRE USA is a member of USHRN’s Education Working Group. As such we have participated in development of shadow reports to accompany and critique U.S. government reports to the UN Human Rights Council on compliance with human rights treaties, with a particular focus on those treaties in which the United States has committed to teach its own people the fundamental principles of human rights.
Get Involved

Members can easily become part of the growing Human Rights Education movement in the USA by joining one of HRE USA’s organizing committees:

**Collaborative Action, Policy and Advocacy Committee**
This committee develops, reviews, and undertakes collaborative action projects in conjunction with HRE USA partner organizations. Projects include submitting shadow reports on HRE in the US to the United Nations, developing a HRE Curriculum Guide, and actively advocating US states to integrate HRE into education standards. CAPAC meets by teleconference, for one hour on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 2:00 pm EST.

**Membership Committee**
This committee develops ongoing strategies to engage and grow the involvement of HRE USA individual and organizational members. This includes outreach to regional representative groups, management of the HRE resource library, and communication on how to get involved within the network. The Membership Committee meets by teleconference for one hour on the third Thursday of each month at 2:00 pm EST.

**Development Committee**
This committee develops and carries out the fundraising goals of HRE USA including establishing relationships with and soliciting funding from prospective donors, identifying and submitting grants, and cultivating major gifts prospects for the organization. The Development Committee meets by teleconference for one hour on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm EST.

**Archives Committee**
This committee prepares and implements the records management and archiving policies and procedures for HRE USA in order to preserve both electronic and paper records of the network’s activities and history. The Archives Committee meets by teleconference monthly.

**Edward O’Brien Award Committee**
This committee is responsible for administering and selecting the recipients of the annual Edward O’Brien Human Rights Education Award for recognition of an outstanding contribution to human rights education in the United States. The committee meets periodically as necessary.
Thank You to All of Our Supporters!
Donations given to date:

**GIFTS or GRANTS OF $10,000 - 50,000**
Puffin Foundation
Amnesty International USA

**GIFTS OF $5,000 - $9,999**
National Education Association

**GIFTS OF $1,000 - $4,499**
Harry Flowers
Nancy Flowers
Theodore Andersson

**GIFTS OF $250 - $999**
Up to $99
Adam Stone
Laura Finley
Monisha Bajaj
Susan Katz
David Stamps
Andrea Spero
Rebecca Norlander
Bill Fernekes
Kristi Rudelli-Palmer
Cosette Thompson
Sandra Sirota
Maureen Draper
Elyce Melmon
Hilary Naylor
Jeannine Marston
Deborah Padilla

**GIFTS OF $1,000 - $4,499**
Presently, HRE USA does not charge membership fees. The bulk of the work conducted in our activities and projects is done through the in-kind donation of time and energy given by our dedicated members.

HRE USA would like to thank the **Puffin Foundation** for their generous support without which this report and much of the work it lays would not be possible. The Puffin Foundation Ltd. has sought to open doors of artistic expression by providing grants to artists and art organizations who are often excluded from mainstream opportunities due to their race, gender or social philosophy.

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Financials

Projected for Year Ending June 30, 2017

**ASSETS**
- Checking and Savings: 84,216.09
- Total Current Assets: 84,216.09
- Total Assets: 84,216.09

**LIABILITIES & EQUITIES**
- 283 - Deferred Revenue: 32,990.73
- Total Liabilities: 0
- Retained Earnings: 9,936.60
- Net Income: 74,279.49
- Total Equity: 84,216.09
- Total Liabilities & Equity: 84,216.09
“Human rights education is much more than a lesson in schools 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, former Secretary General of the United Nations, Nobel Peace Prize winner

HRE USA
Human Rights Educators USA

A national network dedicated to building a culture of human rights.

HRE USA, PO Box 151, Ithaca, NY 14851

HRE USA is a project of The Center for Transformative Action