

SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY & HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

HRE USA
Human Rights Educators USA
hreusa.org



WHAT IS HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION?

Human Rights Education (HRE) is a lifelong process of teaching and learning that helps individuals, groups, and communities develop the knowledge, skills, and values to fully exercise and protect their human rights and those of others; to fulfill their responsibilities in the context of internationally recognized human rights principles; and to achieve justice and peace in the world.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRE) & SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

As we carry out our work to have HRE become an integral part of U.S. public education standards and curricula, we believe it is vital to also articulate the connection between HRE and social justice advocacy. Recognizing and valuing these connections can help strengthen collaborations and clarify that all of us working in these arenas have common goals for positive social change that furthers equality, equity, justice, and dignity for all people.

HRE and its connection to social justice advocacy

Universal human rights are the bedrock principles that underlie all racial and social justice movements. The universal human rights principles, spelled out in such documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as expounded by HRE, provide practical and well-established legal and ethical foundations for use by all social justice movements, worldwide. When referenced and followed, universal human rights principles provide standards and norms that are invaluable tools to support social justice advocates in their struggles to overcome white supremacy and other oppressive ideologies.

EXAMPLE OF CONNECTION BETWEEN HRE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY: OUR HUMAN RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR GOVERNMENT, SECURED THROUGH PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

UDHR Article 21 states the following:

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his/her country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Social Justice advocates like Stacey Abrams, her supporters at Fair Fight, as well as members of the NAACP, Common Cause and Brennan Center for Justice, are among the many who are striving to ensure that every person can exercise their right to vote. The importance of this work could be further amplified by including reference to the significance of voting as a universal human right belonging to every human being, identifying the gaps that exist in preventing people from exercising each part of UDHR Article 21, and pointing to how each social justice effort is vital to closing these gaps.