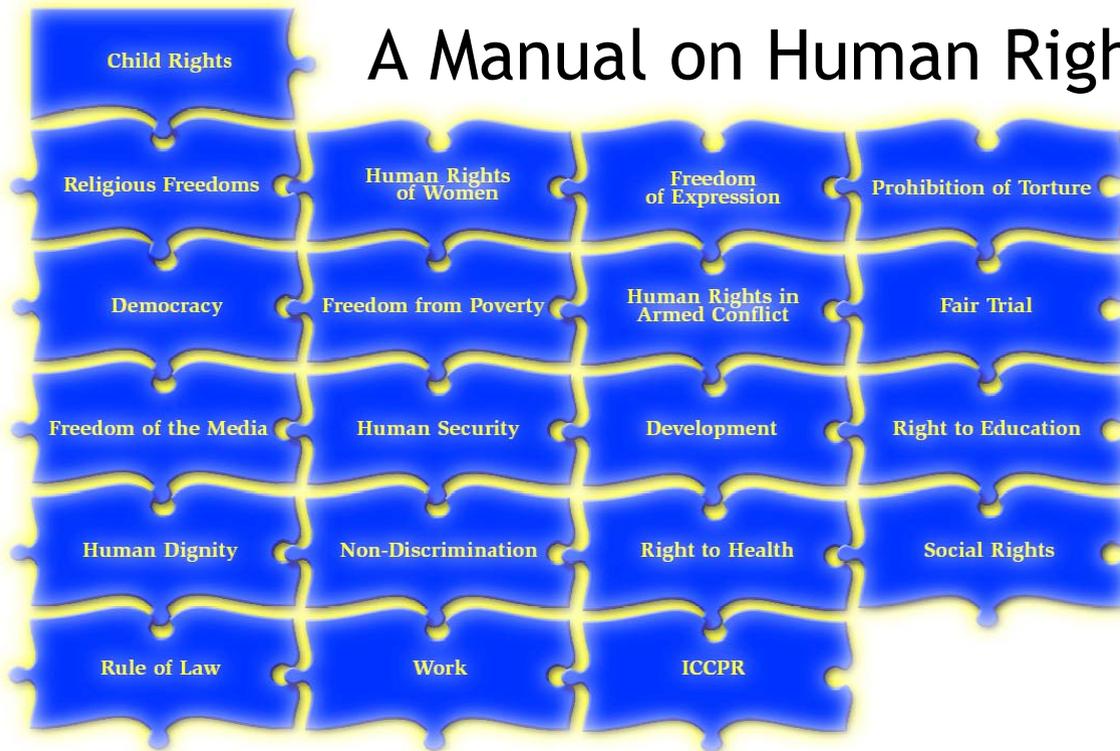


UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS

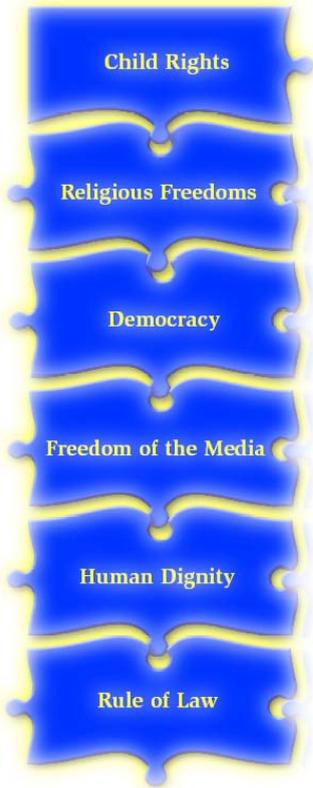
A Manual on Human Rights Education



Federal Ministry
for Foreign Affairs
of Austria

Democracy

Democracy



„Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through chosen representatives.

Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. 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.“

Article 21, UDHR

Democracy

- Democracy: „Rule of the people“
 - ➔ Form of government
 - ➔ Idea which underlines the socio-political and legal organisation of the state
- Democracy is strongly related to the principles of HRs and cannot function without assuring the full respect and protection of human dignity.
- Democracy depends on the interest and active participation of its beneficiaries. Access to knowledge and information are a precondition to meaningful participation.
- Democratic education has the formation of responsible citizens as its aim.

Democracy - Definition and Description

- A form of government in which state authority is derived from the people: USA the first modern democratic state.
- **Direct democracy**: popular assemblies, popular legislative initiatives, recall, referenda, etc.
- **Representative democracy**: parliamentary democracy, presidential democracy
- Most existing democracies combine these types of democracy and feature elements from all forms.

Prohibition of Torture

Fair Trial

Right to Education

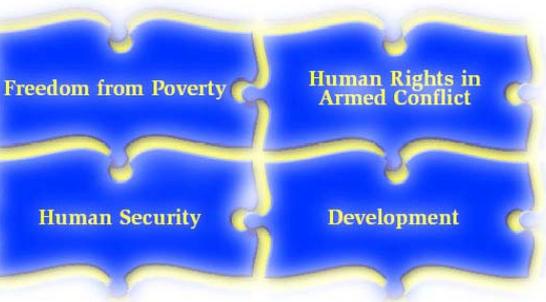
Human Dignity

Non-Discrimination

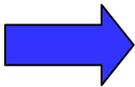
Right to Health

Social Rights

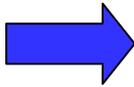
Core Elements of Modern Democracy



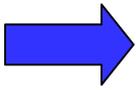
Key elements constituting the basis of every democratic society



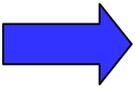
Equality
→ All human beings are born equal
→ they enjoy equal opportunities and participation in the political life
→ entitled to equal treatment before law
→ social and economic equality between men and women



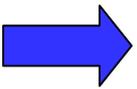
Participation
→ in community and policy affairs



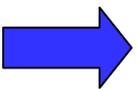
Majority rule and minority rights
→ Obligation of the majority to take the rights and needs of minority groups into account



Rule of law and fair trial
→ ensures that a state has an autonomous legal order

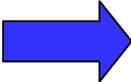
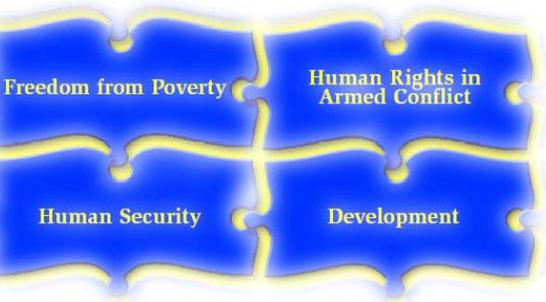


Respect for human rights
→ assure the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights
→ free from fear and free from want

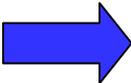


Political pluralism
→ diversity of ideas and opinions
→ to secure structures flexible enough to adapt to changing needs but still remain stable

Core Elements of Modern Democracy



Free and fair elections
→ elections are democracy’s most fundamental and unique characteristic
→ they leave the decision on political leadership to those primarily affected by the governmental system - the people



Division of power
→ State power is divided between legislative, executive and judicial bodies functioning independent but are accountable to each other
→ John Locke “Two Treaties of Government”, 1690; Montesquieu “De l’esprit des lois”, 1748

Religious Freedoms

Human Rights
of Women

Democracy

Need to Know

Forms of Democracy

Types of democracy

Direct
democracy

Representative
democracy

Parliamentary
democracy

Presidential
democracy

Reality: Mixed forms of democracy

Intercultural Perspectives

Importance of several constitutive elements of democracy differs among cultures. The emphasis of the Western model on civil and political rights is problematic for other countries.

- „**Asian values**“ debate: community-orientation, oligarchic leadership as opposed to notion of maximum freedom for the individual.
- **Muslim World: Shura**, Islamic concept of consultation in conducting common affairs. Limited by Allah’s legislation and cannot be modified. Opposed to openness, pluralism and the separation of powers.

Human Dignity

Work

Non-Discrimination

Development

Fair Trial

Implementation

- **Relationship majority/minority**: protection of political minorities
- **Civil society**: free and active citizens to hold government accountable
- **Free and independent media**: control over means of information = control over decision-making in a democracy
- **Democracy and human rights**: interplay an indicator for a vital democracy

Freedom
of Expression

Human Rights in
Armed Conflict

Development

Right to Health

ICCPR



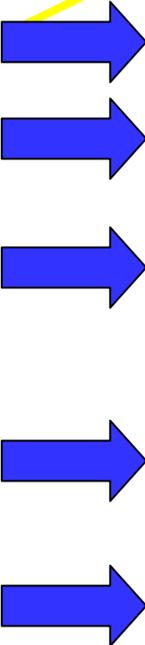
Religious Freedoms

Human Rights
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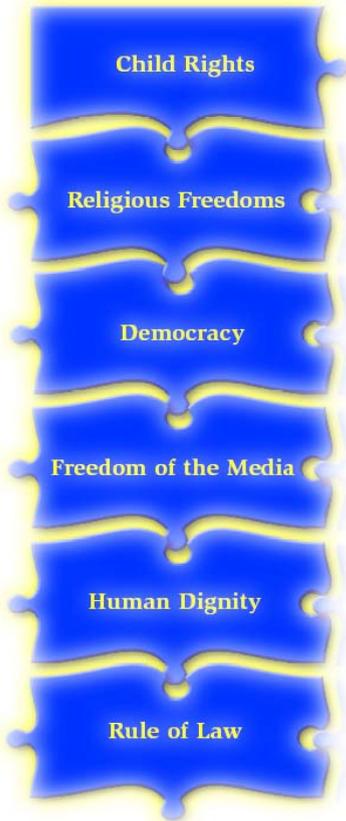
Democracy

Need to Know

Implementation

- 
- European Convention of Human Rights (CoE): Greece 1967
 - ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) established by the OSCE
 - IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union) to facilitate networking of national parliaments
 - UN Development Program / Human Development Report 2002
 - ILO Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Convention

Women and Democracy



Women in Parliament: 1945 - 1995

In 50 years, from 1945 to 1995:

- The number of sovereign States having a Parliament has increased **seven-fold**;
- The percentage of women MPs worldwide has increased **four-fold**;
- The record average level was reached in **1988** with **14.8%** of all MPs being women.

Democr@cy Online

- availability of internet access not a substitute for democratic structures; exchange and use of information to create informal organisational structures

- online communication caused dramatic increase in activities of NGOs, campaigns can reach more people, can express own opinion more easily

Human Security

Non-Discrimination

Work

Fair Trial

Right to Education

Social Rights

Freedom from Poverty

Human Rights in
Armed Conflict

Human Security

Development

- 400 million online, 5,8 billion are not: digital divide between developed and developing countries OR between urban and rural areas within developed countries
- democratic challenges are about assuring access, and about contents:
 - Ku-Klux-Klan increased numbers of members considerably since its online presence
 - Yahoo! Declared to monitor voluntarily and to prohibit activities such as offering neo-Nazi memorabilia on its website

Democr@cy Online

The internet can be a medium to facilitate communication, but it will never be a substitute for a lack of commitment in the offline world.

Freedom of the Media

Human Security

Development

Right to Education

CHALLENGES

Globalisation and Democracy

- many decisions go beyond national boundaries
- socio-economic changes
- anti-globalisation movements: claim that a globalised world lacks democratic principles
- key mode of campaigning: mass demonstrations (WTO, Seattle 1999)
- democratic global governance, participation of civil society, democratisation of international economic relations

Child Rights

Religious Freedoms

Democracy

Freedom of the Media

Human Dignity

Rule of Law

CHALLENGES

Democracy and IOs, MNCs, NGOs

- important actors in world politics
- decisions and regulations affect policies of states and lives of millions of citizens
- explore practices, policies, decision-making if principles of democracy are fulfilled
- proposals for reform: UN-SC, parliament for WTO, Global Peoples Assembly etc.

