



**Translation: AIHK's submission to the Curriculum Development
Council on the Review of the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum"
(2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion) -
To strengthen human rights education
15 September 16**

1. Amnesty International Hong Kong opines that the Curriculum Development Council (hereafter referred to as "the Council") should strengthen human rights education in the *Review of the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion)* (hereafter referred to as "Review of the Curriculum Guide") with reference to international human rights treaties. A human rights friendly learning environment should be created for children to learn about and develop respect for human rights.

A. Human rights should be included in pre-primary education

2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹ prescribe the aims of education including strengthening "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" in order to promote a universal human rights culture. The above two conventions are applicable to Hong Kong. The Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong also states that a member of the profession "shall treat as a primary duty the teaching of respect for human rights".² Therefore, both the international human rights instruments and the domestic professional code do confirm that education encompasses human rights education.
3. Human rights education should start at a young age. Education in Hong

¹ Article 26(2), The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 29(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: "1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; (e) The development of respect for the natural environment."

² The Council on Professional Conduct in Education. *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong*. October 1995. "2.6 Commitment to the Community".

Kong should be in line with international human rights standards. The Council should include "nurturing children to have respect for human rights" as one of the Curriculum Goals, Learning Objectives and Examples of Learning Expectations in the Review of the Curriculum Guide, so that children can begin to learn about human rights from a young age, particularly learning about the UNCRC. They should also learn to respect the rights of others, to uphold non-discrimination and equality and to value difference and diversity. The Council may refer to human rights education for pre-school and lower primary school stated in the "Familiarization of children with human rights concept - a step-by-step approach" by the United Nations.³

B. To set up a human rights friendly school. To implement the rights of the child and children's participation.

4. The hidden curriculum is also important for human rights education. The Council should stipulate the responsibility of schools and teachers to provide a human rights friendly school⁴ in the Review of the Curriculum Guide, so that it enables children to learn about and practise human rights in an environment that respects human rights. Schools should also be given adequate resources to implement a human rights friendly school. Moreover, schools and teachers should commit themselves to implementing four general principles enshrined in the UNCRC, namely non-discrimination, best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development as well as the views of the child.⁵

C. To strengthen human rights education for educators

5. The Government should strengthen human rights education for in-service teachers and pre-service teacher training including human rights knowledge, attitude, skills and pedagogy with reference to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) and the World Programme for Human Rights Education. The aforementioned Declaration states in its article 2(2) that "Human rights education and training encompasses education: (a) About human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection; (b) Through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners; (c) For human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and

³ United Nations. "Familiarization of children with human rights concept". *ABC Human Rights Practical activities for primary and secondary schools*. 2004.

⁴ The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. *General Comment No. 12 (2009): the right of the child to be heard*. 20 July 2009. Para 110-114. Amnesty International. *Becoming a Human Rights Friendly School: A guide for schools around the world*. 14 September 2012. Chinese version is available at AIHK's website at <https://www.amnesty.org.hk>

⁵ Article 2, 3, 6 and 12 of UNCRC. United Nations. *Fact Sheet No.10 (Rev.1), The Rights of the Child*.

exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others."⁶

D. Inclusion of multiple citizenship

6. In "4.4.6 Self and Society" of the Review of the Curriculum Guide, the Council has revised the statement "develop national identity through an understanding of the Chinese culture"⁷ to "have a basic understanding of the Chinese culture and their identity as Chinese, and to respect the cultures of other countries and nationalities".⁸
7. AIHK opines that this change is indeed an improvement as its focus shifts from the affective to the cognitive aspect. However, the Council should add to the Review of the Curriculum Guide, "to develop a basic understanding of multiple citizenship"⁹ which comprises identity as a global, national and territorial citizen. This is because Hong Kong is a pluralistic society. There are also ethnic minority students studying in mainstream schools. Children learning differences and respecting diversity and multiple citizenship is of utmost importance.
8. Apart from that, in "4.4.6 Self and Society" of the Review of the Curriculum Guide, the Council has changed its Learning Goal from "expand their social circle, understand themselves and the social environment, learn about the close relationship between themselves and society, and **develop civic awareness**"¹⁰ to "take the initiative to learn about different social groups (e.g. family, school, local community, society, nation) and to show commitment and active participation" as well as adding "be concerned about the happenings in the local community as well as society" as one of the Examples of Learning Expectations.¹¹ This seems to weaken civic awareness and justification should be provided.

E: Recommendations

1. Inclusion of human rights education in the Review of Curriculum Guide

9. The Council should include "nurturing children to respect human rights" as one of the Curriculum Goals, Learning Objectives and Examples of

⁶ *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*. Final Adoption by the General Assembly. 19 December 2011.

⁷ The Curriculum Development Council. *Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (2006)*. "2.5.5 Self and Society" "Learning Objectives" (1)(f). Page 34.

⁸ The Curriculum Development Council. *Review of the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion)*. June 2016. Page 24. "4.4.6 Self and Society" "Examples of Learning Expectations".

⁹ The Guide of Civic Education by Civil Society (Concepts). 6 Feb 2013. Para 4.1.1.

¹⁰ The Curriculum Development Council. *Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (2006)*. "2.5.5 Self and Society" "Learning Objectives" (1)(e). Page 34.

¹¹ The Curriculum Development Council. *Review of the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion)*. June 2016. Page 24. "4.4.6 Self and Society".

Learning Expectations in the Review of the Curriculum Guide with reference to "Familiarization of children with a human rights concept - a step-by-step approach" by the United Nations. Through this, children can start to learn about human rights from a young age, particularly learning about the UNCRC, to respect the rights of others, to uphold non-discrimination and equality as well as to value difference and diversity.

2. Inclusion of multiple citizenship in the Review of the Curriculum Guide

10. The Council should include "to develop basic understanding of multiple citizenship" to "4.4.6 Self and Society" of the Review of the Curriculum Guide. This comprises identity as a global, national and territorial citizen.

3. To set up a human rights friendly school

11. The Council should stipulate the responsibility of schools and teachers to provide a human rights friendly school in the Review of the Curriculum Guide, so that it protects the rights of the child and children's participation. It also enables children to learn about and practise human rights in an environment that respects human rights. Schools should also be given adequate resources to implement a human rights friendly school.

4. To strengthen human rights education for educators

12. The Government should strengthen human rights education for in-service teachers and pre-service teacher training including human rights knowledge, attitude, skills and pedagogy with reference to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) and the World Programme for Human Rights Education.