unrwa school parliament

good practices booklet

human rights, conflict resolution and
tolerance education programme
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Overview

The UNRWA School Parliaments: Good Practices Booklet is a compilation of good practices from UNRWA School Parliaments in all five fields of operations. The practices reflect how School Parliaments have been working to raise awareness and take action on human rights. The Booklet provides an easy to read summary of a range of activities undertaken by School Parliaments and as such provides a reflection of a small sample of the vast wealth of experience of UNRWA schools.

The Booklet presents success stories and highlights what made each story successful. It includes ideas, guidelines, and steps to help other schools conduct activities that will contribute to a culture of human rights. It suggests longer-term ways of capturing additional practices, such as sample templates for planning and evaluating and procedures for parliament elections. In this way it is hoped that schools are able to benefit from a practical guide that provides an example for students and school management.

In 2014, as part of the Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) Education Programme, all UNRWA schools were encouraged to submit their School Parliament good practices to be included in this Booklet. Out of all submissions received, the top three entries are presented in this guide as outstanding practices in promoting HRCRT. The additional three good practices in this Booklet are the result of adapting or combining more than one good practice submitted.
Goal and Objectives of Creating the Good Practices Booklet

The overall goal of developing the Booklet is to develop a shared resource of good practices in UNRWA School Parliament activities.

The specific objectives of the Booklet are to:

• Share good practices to promote the role of School Parliaments in UNRWA schools.
• Develop a common approach to planning and implementing School Parliament activities and processes.

What’s Included in the Booklet

The Booklet contains the following sections:

• Section 1: School Parliament Good Practices
  This section includes an overview and full description of each practice.

  This section presents the steps that school management and School Parliaments should undertake in order to plan School Parliament activities. This includes templates for an annual action plan and for planning and evaluating individual activities.

• Section 3: Ideas and Tools.
  This section includes a range of tips and tools to help School Parliaments actively promote HRCRT in their schools and within their communities.
Section 1. School Parliament Good Practices

The table below summarizes the six good practices presented in this Booklet. The top three practices were chosen as winning entries among all schools.

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<th>Good Practice Name</th>
<th>Main Theme(s)</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1* Picking Olives – A Season of Blessings for the Country</td>
<td>Community links and participation</td>
<td>Students assist farmers during the olive-picking season and gain a greater appreciation of volunteering and Palestinian culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2* All Together</td>
<td>Respect and community links</td>
<td>Students volunteer at a centre for children with special needs and learn more about the rights of persons with disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 A Clean Environment for All</td>
<td>General human rights and participation</td>
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<td>5 Welcome to Our Classroom</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates a winning entry in the School Parliaments Good Practices Competition 2014.
School: Jalazone Boys School

Field: West Bank

Types of action:
- Teaching students about the importance of land.
- Encouraging students to volunteer in the community.

Description:
School Parliament members and other students at school wanted to volunteer their time to assist members of the community. They wanted to spend time assisting farmers with their olive picking. Approximately 200 students helped out in this way, easing the workload for the farmers and their families. Additionally, the farmers taught students about the harvesting process and the importance of olive farming in the Palestinian culture.
Achievements:

- Two hundred School Parliament members and other students participated in the activity.
- Farmers were very pleased with the assistance provided by the students.
- Farmers have a greater appreciation for what students learn in school, and were happy to contribute to students’ learning about their culture.
- Students developed an understanding of volunteering in the community.
- Students heightened their appreciation for the work farmers do and the importance of respecting the environment.

Why is this a Good Practice?

This is a good practice because it demonstrates the initiative of the School Parliament members to help motivate students in their school to actively participate within their community.

Apart from participation among students and the strengthening of community links with farmers, this practice also highlights the importance of several rights, including:

- The right to work, in particular the right of the farmers to work.
- The right to an adequate standard of living.
- The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

As some farmers noted, it was an activity that helped students recognize the importance of volunteering as a key aspect of being a good citizen.
Questions and answers:

- **How did you benefit from the activity?**
  One farmer said: “The process of picking olives was much faster. Through the help of students and members of the community we were able to finish olive picking before the winter season. They picked four trees in one hour.”

- **What did you share with students?**
  One farmer said: “Picking olives is fun. As a farmer, I showed students the different tools used in the harvest including sticks, bare hands and machines. After picking olives we had tea and it was delicious. When students volunteer in the community to help us with olive picking, it strengthens our identity.”

- **How did the farmers and local community react?**
  One teacher said: “We received many positive messages from farmers and the local community who had clear demands. They wanted similar participation and voluntary activities to be implemented in order to enhance community links. Some farmers organized meetings with members of the School Parliament to include plans for student participation in the harvest season.”

© 2014 UNRWA Photo.

*School Parliament members plant trees as part of an initiative to volunteer in the school and community, Gaza.*
• **How did the school assist the School Parliament?**
  One teacher said: “We held a meeting to raise awareness about volunteering among students.”

• **What did you like most about this activity?**
  Students responded: “Cooperation,” “Teamwork and benefiting from the farmer’s knowledge and experience about the olive harvest,” and “Spreading love among the students and farmers.”

**More information:**

• Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right of individuals to participate in cultural activities.

• If students are interested in volunteering in the community, the School Parliament can conduct surveys to see how they can help out. The School Parliament can identify a list of organizations (such as community organizations that help children with disabilities) or groups of workers (like farmers or health care workers) and invite students to identify how they would like to help and learn from these organizations and groups.

**Follow-up:**

• The school can invite the farmers to the school to talk to students about their work.

• The school can invite the farmers to a meeting to discuss how and when students can volunteer their time to help with future harvests.
**Good Practice 2: All Together**

**Themes:** Respect and Community Links

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**School:**
Kalandia Girls School (1)

**Field:**
West Bank

**Type of action:**
- Raising awareness about people with intellectual disabilities.

**Description:**
School Parliament members worked together with specialists from the Centre for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities to design and deliver workshops at the school to educate students about persons with intellectual disabilities.

The School Parliament members and specialists from the Centre also organised a number of activities that required participation from students and children with intellectual disabilities, such as the decoration of rooms at the Centre and meeting with families of children with intellectual disabilities in order to identify ways to support them further.
Achievements:

- Children with intellectual disabilities from the Centre were happy to be included in activities.
- Members of School Parliament positively influenced families of children with intellectual disabilities to be more at ease allowing their children to interact with others.
- The relationship between the school and local community was strengthened.
- Students’ respect of differences and the rights of people with special needs were enhanced.
- School Parliament members furthered their relations with the school administration to plan awareness-raising workshops for students.

Why is this a Good Practice?

This is a good practice because it positively affects many stakeholders:

- The students learned more about the rights of children with intellectual disabilities.
- The children with intellectual disabilities from the Centre felt more appreciated and included.
- The families of the children with intellectual disabilities appreciated their children being included.
- The administrators of the Centre and the school were appreciative of the leadership demonstrated by School Parliament members, whose actions contributed towards stronger ties between the school and the community.

The activities in this good practice are inherently rights-based; in other words, the activities considered people with special needs as rights-holders entitled to the enjoyment of their rights to the fullest extent. The activities focus on inclusion of persons with special needs while also making sure to raise awareness of students on issues related to persons with special needs. Including family members in the process reflects how this practice carefully thought of ways to strengthen the community’s understanding and appreciation of what students could do.

Questions and answers:

- How did you feel about your child participating in these activities?
  One family with a child with intellectual disabilities said: “We felt that people cared about our children. We rarely see schools showing interest in children with special needs. Seeing the School Parliament girls play, sing and dance with our children was great! We saw our children laugh from the bottom of their hearts.”
• **What is the importance of such activities in society?**
  The School Principal said: “Rehabilitation centres are not like any other institution because they take care of people with special needs, a category of society that requires much support and attention for better integration in society. Such initiatives will ensure that the school is highly appreciated by the local community.”

• **How did the students feel about the activity?**
  The School Principal said: “This initiative allowed students to work as a team, accept the opinions of others, solve problems and find alternative solutions, reflect on the problems of the local community, and express opinions on matters which give students a sense of being part of change. This initiative also opens doors for students introducing them to a new field, one which they may choose to study in the future.”

• **What was the impact of this activity?**
  One student said: “This initiative impacted us psychologically and emotionally. We rarely interact with people with special needs and their families. We felt it was our duty to give moral support to ‘both children and their parents.’ Meeting with specialists at the Centre raised our awareness of different intellectual disabilities and ways to deal with them. We passed this knowledge on to other students at school. We are carrying on with this initiative which has become a main component of the School Parliament annual plan.”

• **How did students feel about the activities?**
  One student said: “To be honest, I was scared of participating in these activities at the start because I thought the children [with disabilities] would be violent and wouldn’t accept me among them. But the reality was very different. They were innocent children; the smallest things we did made them happy. I enjoyed the activity very much and would definitely participate again in the future.”

© 2014 UNRWA Photo by Henk Bos.
School Parliaments organize a sports activity with children with special needs, Jordan.
More information:

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines the rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to education.
- The Agency’s Inclusive Education Policy presents information regarding the rights of persons with disabilities.

Follow-up:

- Teachers at school can facilitate the HRCRT Toolkit activity 28 ‘One School for All’ to assess how much the school environment respects the rights of students with disabilities.
- School Parliament members can integrate into their annual plans similar activities with the centre.

© 2014 UNRWA Photo by Abednasser al-Saadi.
Students conduct an activity together in an inclusive UNRWA classroom, Lebanon.
**School:**
Jabalia Preparatory Girls School (A)

**Field:**
Gaza

**Type of action:**
- Raising awareness among the community about human rights.

**Description:**
The school administration asked School Parliament members to propose good practices that promote human rights. The students proposed to act out short plays based on stories written by some students with support from their teachers. The stories presented human rights issues that are relevant to the community. The plays enabled other students at the school to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions about these human rights, as well as explore potential actions to help realize those rights.

**Themes:**
General Human Rights

**An important note about this practice:**
The original practice submitted by Jabalia Primary Girls School (A) is on the use of short plays that present the difficulties of living in environments exposed to conflict. While addressing this issue is of great importance, it should be noted that addressing conflict could raise intense emotions among children. As such, the School Principal and teachers must carefully assess how the issue of conflict could be raised among children. Furthermore, if conflict is addressed, qualified staff that can provide psychosocial support should be involved at all stages.

In the description that follows, the school’s practice has been modified to describe how theatre can be used to raise awareness about human rights issues in general, thereby making it a practice that can be adapted in different contexts in all Fields.
Achievements:

- School Parliament members who acted in the plays were empowered and more confident about discussing human rights issues that were relevant to their community. They also developed a strong sense of leadership among students in the school.
- Students who saw the plays were able to express their opinions about human rights issues and explore actions to help realize human rights in their community.
- Parents and members of the community were invited to see the plays and developed an appreciation for the role the school administration and the School Parliament members played in helping students identify actions to improve human rights within the community.

Why is this a Good Practice?

This is a good practice because the School Parliament and school administration worked together to find an appropriate way to empower students to address human rights issues within their community.

While the initial short plays were written by one of the teachers, students eventually wrote their own short plays and presented them to students, parents and the community. Enabling students to participate in this way helped to build their self-esteem. The issues identified through the plays reflected reality. Some examples of plays that address human rights issues are:
• Students in a play examine their environment and realize that more could be done to create and maintain a clean environment conducive to learning. The students in the play create a clean-up campaign with community members and help clean up their neighbourhood.

• Students in a play explore different gender roles that boys and girls conform to at home and within their community. The play can challenge the audience’s notions of what girls and boys typically do (for example, who does certain chores or games that are typically for boys or girls) and encourage children and their parents to become more open to gender equality.

• A play presents a child who is unable to go to school because of economic reasons (for example, the family needs the child to work in order to help feed the family) or because the child is marginalized or excluded from school because of a disability. The play presents different ways to include the child in the school through the help of teachers, parents and students.

Questions and answers:

• What are the main topics presented in plays?
  A teacher said: “The most important topics covered in role-plays were general human rights, namely the right to life, the right to medical treatment and the right to equality, particularly for people with special needs such as persons with physical disabilities.”

• What did School Parliament members learn by acting in the plays?
  A Grade 9 student said: “Leading this activity made me feel proud of myself, my ideas and my ability to deliver my messages and objectives to the audience. I learned of the importance of the role I was playing through introducing students to their rights.”
More information:

- A play about human rights issues in the community is an effective way for children to explore their understanding of human rights in a concrete way. The children who act in a play are expressing themselves on issues they may have trouble discussing in other ways, for example in a class discussion or with their families.

- A play on a human rights issue typically presents the issue, explains why it should be addressed and begins to explore possible solutions. However, it is important to note that the play should not necessarily present a simple solution to a potentially large human rights issue. Solutions should be as realistic as possible.

- No matter what the content of the play is, it is important to discuss the play with the audience (in this case, students, parents and members of the community) once it is completed. The audience should have the time to reflect on the play, express their opinions and feelings about the play and discuss how the play helps them understand their own situations better. If the play presents concrete solutions to community problems, these solutions should be examined in terms of their feasibility and implemented with the support of the school staff, parents and community members.

Follow-up:

- In the case of this good practice, students benefited from the expertise of a teacher familiar with theatre. Based on the success of the initial plays, a good follow-up action is for more students to write their own short plays and act them out in front of students, parents and members of the community.
Schools:
This practice is inspired in part by practices at Jabalia Elementary Coed School (B) in Gaza and Jerash Camp Preparatory Girls School (2) in Jordan.

Field:
Gaza and Jordan

Types of action:
- Raising awareness about the importance of keeping a clean environment.
- Engaging others to act towards keeping a clean environment.

Description:
School Parliament members receive ideas from other students on human rights related activities. They place a ‘Suggestion Box’ on school grounds and encourage students to submit ideas. The School Parliament and the school’s Human Rights Committee review the ideas.
The chosen idea is to create a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of living in a clean environment. The campaign has a number of different activities, including:

- A drawing competition for students, with winning entries being displayed around the school.
- Visiting experts in tree planting to learn about the most suitable trees to plant around the school.
- Meetings held with parents and the local community to inform them of the campaign and whether or not they could donate seedlings to plant around the school grounds.
- Using the school radio and workshops at school to educate students about the importance of a clean environment.
- Encouraging students to place any litter from their lunches back into their lunch boxes and to properly dispose of the litter at home.
- Hosting a ‘recycling exhibition’ in which students create art from recycled objects.
- Participating in a paper-recycling project with a local organization that helps protect the environment.
- Discussing the importance of a clean environment in classes (Islamic Studies, Arabic and Social Sciences).
Why is this a Good Practice?

This is a good practice because it gives all students the opportunity to participate by means of the Suggestion Box. Once the idea is selected, the different activities involve many stakeholders: students, parents, the community and experts who can help with the tree planting.

The activities such as collecting litter from students’ lunches and hosting a recycling exhibition also involve students to a great extent, thereby increasing their participation and interest in keeping their environment clean.

While there does not currently exist a ‘right to a clean environment’; having a clean environment enables other rights to be enjoyed. A clean environment, for example, directly affects students’ health, the food they eat and the water they drink. Planting trees in particular has many advantages, such as:

- Cleaning the air
- Providing oxygen
- Preventing water pollution
- Providing shade for students when they play
- Cooling the play area
More information:
- Earth Day is globally celebrated on 22 April to recognize the importance of protecting the environment.
- Education on the environment can be integrated into Social Sciences and Geography classes.

Follow-up:
- A student committee can be in charge of taking care of the seedlings as they grow.
- Students, with the assistance of teachers and experts on the environment, can provide parents and community members with awareness-raising activities (like plays, exhibitions or workshops) on the importance of a clean environment.

© 2014 UNRWA Photo.
‘Interactive wall painting’ with artists from the local community as part of an initiative to improve the school environment, Jordan.
School:
This practice is inspired in part by a submission from Waqqas Primary Girls School in Jordan.

Field:
Jordan

Types of action:
• Raising awareness about persons with disabilities.
• Engaging and integrating children with disabilities in the classroom.

Description:
School Parliament members want to raise awareness about the rights of people with special needs in order to break the barrier of fear and ignorance that some students may have. The School Parliament proposes to the school administration activities to facilitate this awareness-raising.

School Parliament members visit the local rehabilitation centre for people with special needs in order to learn more about the different types of disabilities they face. After learning more about special needs, the centre and School Parliament agree to have several children from the centre attend Art, Physical Education, Information Technology and Music classes at the school.
In order to prepare for the integration of these new students, the School Parliament launches an awareness-raising campaign to inform students.

**Why is this a Good Practice?**

This is a good practice because School Parliament members recognize the importance of inclusion in their schools. Inclusion implies recognizing the right to education for all; a belief in every child’s potential for learning; and the importance of child-friendly schools that are safe and healthy environments for all, where no one encounters any discrimination. The School Parliament members recognize that all students benefit from learning more about persons with disabilities, so they assume a leadership role to learn more about the issue themselves. In so doing, they visit the rehabilitation centre to understand the human rights issues and are then motivated to include children from the centre into some classes at their school.

Integrating new students, even for one or two classes a week, can be a difficult situation for existing students. This is especially true if students are unsure of what to expect from children with disabilities. Having an awareness campaign in the school about children with disabilities helps the students more fully understand the issues and how to help the children with disabilities feel at ease upon entering the school.

**More information:**

- As mentioned in the good practice ‘All Together,’ the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines the rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to education.
- The Agency’s Inclusion Policy also presents information regarding the rights of persons with disabilities.

**Follow-up:**

- The artwork (or anything else) produced by the children with disabilities can be presented in the form of an exhibition at the centre or elsewhere within the community.
- Teachers at the school can facilitate the HRCRT Toolkit activity 28 ‘One School for All’ to assess how much the school environment respects the rights of students with disabilities.
- School Parliament members can integrate similar activities with the centre into their annual plans.
Schools:
This practice is inspired in part by submissions from Gaza Primary Girls School (B) in Gaza and Nazzal Primary Girls School (2) in Jordan.

Field:
Gaza and Jordan

Type of action:
• Engaging others to improve conditions at school.

Description:
The school cafeteria is a busy area during lunch and recess. Often there are long queues of students waiting to purchase food. The result can sometimes lead to conflicts or accidents between students as they wait in line; for example, someone may cut in the line. Apart from this, there is sometimes a lack of respect for the environment on the part of the students as seen by the amount of litter they create by the end of a lunch period or recess.

The School Parliament meets to discuss these two issues: long wait times in the queue and littering in the cafeteria. In the end, the School Parliament, with the assistance of the school administration,
decides to launch a campaign to help improve cafeteria conditions. The following activities are the basis of the campaign:

- Awareness-raising information segments on school radio to remind students of the importance of keeping the school cafeteria clean.
- The creation of an ‘Environment Patrol’ group of students (from the School Parliament and the student body). The Patrol:
  - Facilitates the movement of students in queues in the cafeteria.
  - Helps diffuse conflicts among students in the cafeteria when they arise.
  - Reminds students in the cafeteria to collect their litter and to dispose of it properly.

Some examples to reduce queuing times in the cafeteria:

- Stagger the time for students to access the cafeteria. For example, students in lower grades access the cafeteria first, then the higher grades access it a few minutes later. The order can switch every few days or every week.
- If possible, another solution for reducing queue times is for students to pre-order set meals. In this case, they can go to a separate queue and pick up a meal they already paid for.
Achievements:
• School Parliament members gain leadership skills.
• Queue length in the cafeteria has reduced considerably since the Environment Patrol began.
• Students are inspired to take care of their school and improve the overall environment.

Why is this a Good Practice?
This is a good practice because the School Parliament recognizes the importance of keeping a clean and orderly environment in the cafeteria. The creation of the Environment Patrol is empowering for the students who are Patrol members while at the same time useful in educating all students on the importance of the environment and how to avoid conflicts and problems in queues while waiting for food.

Follow-up:
• Over time, there may be less of a need for the Environment Patrol, or at least the Patrol could operate with fewer members. The more students understand the issues, the less need there is for the Patrol.
Section 2. Guidelines for a School Parliament Action Plan

The guidelines in this section provide a set of steps and templates to help School Parliaments plan their activities throughout the year. A key aspect in the success of a School Parliament’s plan is to ensure participation at all levels: the School Principal and teachers can provide guidance, School Parliament members should be a part of all decisions, and all other students should also have the opportunity to participate in decisions related to activities they will undertake.

“If I’m not aware of my rights I will not be able to progress in life.”
Female student from Wadi Al-Seer Training Centre, Jordan.
In order for the guidelines to be useful, members of School Parliament should do the following:

1. Follow all steps in the table below, ‘Preparing a Plan.’ Most School Parliaments are used to creating a plan of activities at the start of each year. The steps in the table ‘Preparing a Plan’ help guide this process.

2. Develop activities related to the HRCRT themes. The HRCRT themes provide a clear and consistent framework for all UNRWA schools. The table ‘Suggested Activities Based on HRCRT Themes’ provides a list of activities that School Parliaments can undertake.

3. Use the templates provided to plan activities. There are three templates to help School Parliaments develop their work:
   • ‘School Parliament Annual Plan (Template).’ This is the template for the Annual Plan, and it includes a column for estimated resources and budget.
     A note about the budget: The budget for schools depends on available UNRWA funds. Because of this, it is best to plan for activities with minimal costs that can be absorbed within a school’s budget.
   • ‘School Parliament Activity Plan (Template).’ This is the template for planning one specific activity listed in the Annual Plan. Therefore, if the School Parliament plans four activities throughout the year, then it would fill out the Activity Plan four times, once for each activity.

4. Evaluate each activity using the ‘School Parliament Activity Evaluation Questions.’ These are questions that should be asked after an activity in order to see how well it went and what could be improved for next time.
## Preparing a Plan

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>What to Do</th>
<th>Additional Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The School Principal meets with the School Parliament to explain that they have funds to be used for Parliament activities.</td>
<td>Activities should be based on HRCRT themes. See the table below ‘Suggested Activities Based on HRCRT Themes.’ School Parliament can conduct other activities if the School Principal decides that the activities are relevant to promoting human rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School Parliament reviews the HRCRT themes and sample activities and, through a consultative process involving all students, asks for input on potential School Parliament activities.</td>
<td>Students can be asked for their input through a suggestion box or by completing a survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School Parliament, with the support of the School Principal and teachers, takes into consideration suggested activities from students.</td>
<td>The activities should be in line with the HRCRT themes and goals and contribute to a culture of human rights in schools / communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School Parliament develops a plan of activities for the year.</td>
<td>Use the ‘School Parliament Annual Plan (Template).’ The Annual Plan includes estimated resources and (if needed) a budget for all activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School Parliament shares the Annual Plan with the School Principal.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The School Principal discusses the Annual Plan with the School Parliament and makes suggestions if the proposed activity or activities are not in line with the HRCRT themes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>What to Do</td>
<td>Additional Suggestions</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Annual Plan is finalized and signed by the School Principal and a member of School Parliament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The School Principal files the Annual Plan and submits it to the HRCRT Focal Point at the Area / Field level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>For each activity, the School Parliament completes the Activity Plan.</td>
<td>Use the ‘School Parliament Activity Plan (Template)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Each activity is carefully planned and implemented by the School Parliament with the support of the School Principal.</td>
<td>There should be clearly defined roles from the beginning regarding the implementation of an activity. In other words, all School Parliament members should be clear on the roles they have and where to go to for support from school management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Each activity is evaluated.</td>
<td>Use the questions in the ‘School Parliament Activity Evaluation Questions’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A brief report on each activity is written and submitted to the School Principal.</td>
<td>The report should be brief, concise, and clearly indicate what the activity was meant to achieve, how well it went, what could be improved, how the funds were spent, and how it contributed to strengthening a culture of human rights.</td>
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</table>
Suggested Activities Based on HRCRT Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRCRT Theme</th>
<th>Example Activities</th>
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</table>
| **General human rights:**       | • Planning and conducting celebrations of human rights events.  
• Organizing awareness-raising events hosting Human Rights Organisations.  
• Hosting a debate on a human rights issue and inviting students to attend. |
| **Participation:**              | • Publishing a newspaper or an information leaflet that covers human rights issues.  
• Organizing meetings with community leaders to discuss human rights issues.  
• Conducting trainings on communication skills together with NGOs. |
| **Diversity:**                  | • Creating a campaign to value the diversity of students.  
• Making the school environment welcoming for students with special needs.  
• Promoting the participation of all students in the School Parliament activities.  
• Assessing, with school management, the accessibility of the school and how to improve it. |
| **Equality and non-discrimination:** | • Creating an awareness-raising activity on the needs of children with disabilities.  
• Organizing activities for students with special needs to help them integrate in school life.  
• Organizing workshops or school visits to talk to women’s organizations, NGOs working with people with disabilities, the elderly, or other groups that are sometimes marginalized.  
• Asking students (through interviews, focus group discussions or questionnaires) to share what they think are major obstacles to full equality in their school/society and to present a summary of findings in a discussion panel. |
| **Respect:**                    | • Campaign against negative behaviours towards students and teachers.  
• Encouraging other students not part of the School Parliament to become ‘respect ambassadors’ to ensure a healthy school climate.  
• Launching a poster competition with the theme ‘How to respect each other’ for all students. |
| **Conflict resolution:**        | • Designing and printing advocacy materials related to peaceful conflict resolution.  
• Conducting capacity-building trainings on topics related to communication skills, problem management and mediation skills in partnership with NGOs/CBOs.  
• Presenting issues related to conflict resolution using theatre. |
School Parliament Annual Plan (Template)

This is a template for a School Parliament Annual Plan. The Annual Plan should be developed at the start of the year, with the support of the School Principal and including suggestions from all students. When developing the Annual Plan, the School Parliament should identify two to four goals it wants to achieve this year. Each activity should have a brief description, related HRCRT theme(s), resources including an estimated budget, and a description of the expected outcomes. Note: The budget for schools depends on available UNRWA funds. Because of this, it is best to plan for activities with minimal costs that can be absorbed within a school’s budget.

The School Principal and a member of the School Parliament should approve the final Annual Plan.

| Field: | | | |
| Area: | | | |
| School: | | | |

School Parliament’s goals for this year (identify two to four goals):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Resources (including estimated budget)</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Parliament Activity Plan (Template) (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Resources (including estimated budget)</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total estimated budget:**

**Approval:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature School Parliament Representative:</th>
<th>Signature School Principal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Section 2. Guidelines for a School Parliament Action Plan
## School Parliament Activity Plan (Template)

This Activity Plan template is for individual activities that comprise the Annual Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Title:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal:

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

### How will the activity contribute to a culture of human rights?

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

### Relevant HRCRT Theme(s):

- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]

---

**Section 2. Guidelines for a School Parliament Action Plan**
## Steps Location of Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Month 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
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<td>W1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Parliament Activity Evaluation Questions

In order to effectively evaluate a School Parliament activity, it is important to assess both the process (how the activity was organised) and the outcome (how the activity raised awareness about human rights).

It is also important to get feedback from different people who either organised or participated in the activity. For example, if one activity is to have a play about human rights for community members, then it is important to get feedback from students who acted in the play, School Parliament members who organised it, the School Principal or other teachers who helped out, and the community members who saw the play.

Because each activity is unique, there is no set template for evaluating an activity. However, there are some basic evaluation questions that can be asked to evaluate any activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Type</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Evaluation questions about the process. | 1. How well did the planning of the activity go? Did everyone involved have the chance to fully participate? What could be done to improve the process if this activity is done again?  
2. If you had a budget to implement the activity, were the funds properly used?  
3. How well did the activity go? What went well (the successes) and what could be improved (the challenges)?  
4. Did the activity achieve its intended result?  
5. How well did the participants (such as students, parents, or community members) perceive the activity? |
| Evaluation questions about the outcome. | 1. How well did the activity go?  
2. What did you like most about the activity?  
3. Did you learn anything new about human rights?  
4. Did the activity make you think differently about your attitudes or behaviours with respect to human rights? If yes, in what way?  
5. What suggestions do you have to improve the activity? |
“Violence is much less prevalent at our school following the introduction of mediation groups by School Parliament members. If a problem happens, the School Parliament solves it.”

Male student from Al-Shajara Preparatory Boys School, Lebanon.
Running a School Parliament Election

The first step in creating an active School Parliament is to elect its members. While each school may already have its own process for electing School Parliament members, here are some general ideas on making sure the election process runs smoothly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1   | Identify how many School Parliament members there will be. For example, there can be:  
• One elected representative per class, or  
• A specific number of elected representatives per grade level. |
| 2   | Inform all students of the election process: A timeline has to be developed and agreed upon by the School Principal. For example, students can have one week to identify candidates, two weeks to campaign and a set date for the elections. |
| 3   | Students can nominate themselves or others to be School Parliament candidates. This usually happens at the start of the school year. |
| 4   | Any student interested in being a candidate will have their name written on the official list of candidates. |
| 5   | All candidates will have a fixed period of time in which to campaign for their election. They should clearly identify the issues they want to advocate for and use different ways to undertake their campaign, for example:  
• Creating flyers and pamphlets to publicize who they are and why students should vote for them.  
• Having a ‘meet the candidate’ meeting in a free classroom during a lunch period to discuss issues important to students.  
To help students make informed choices about the candidates before the election, teachers can facilitate the HRCRT Toolkit activity 33 ‘Our Ideal Candidate.’ This activity helps students explore the qualities needed for School Parliament candidates. |
| 6   | On election day, there should be an adequate number of volunteers to help with the election process. There should also be enough resources to carry out the election. For example:  
• Enough voting ballots, one for each student.  
• Ballot boxes to store the votes. |
| 7   | Counting the ballots has to be done in a transparent and clear way. For instance, make sure to have at least two people count the votes from each ballot box and to have both teachers and students participate in the process. The final votes should be tallied and the School Principal has the responsibility to oversee the entire voting process until all School Parliament members have been officially voted in. |
| 8   | Once the School Principal has confirmed the winning candidates, the new School Parliament is formed. |
| 9   | The new School Parliament holds its first meeting shortly after elections to discuss, among other aspects:  
• Their roles and responsibilities.  
• Their Annual Plan.  
• The contents of this Good Practices Booklet. |
Roles and Responsibilities of School Parliament Members

Once the School Parliament has been elected, its members should be clear on their roles and responsibilities. Each School Parliament is unique, and because of this, there is no fixed list of roles and responsibilities. However, here are a few suggestions:

**Sample School Parliament Roles**

- **President**: The President acts as the main liaison between the School Parliament and the School Principal.
- **Secretary**: The Secretary records notes of any meetings.
- **Treasurer** (if there is a budget available): The Treasurer takes care of any available funds, with the support of the President and the School Principal.
- **Communications Officer**: The Communications Officer disseminates information to students about upcoming activities or events that the School Parliament is organising.
- **Mediator**: The Mediator assists students to resolve conflicts, either between each other or between the students and the school management.

© 2014 UNRWA Photo by Henk Bos.
School Parliament member informing students about the upcoming School Parliament Elections, Jordan
Sample School Parliament Responsibilities / Characteristics

Each member of the School Parliament should have the following responsibilities or demonstrate the following character traits:

• Participate in all School Parliament meetings.
• Be attentive to any questions, comments, opinions, problems or other issues that students have and, when necessary, report them back to the School Parliament in order for the issues to be addressed.
• Act as a leader among students.
• Contribute to the development of the School Parliament’s Annual Plan and actively participate in School Parliament activities.
• Understand basic human rights concepts and reflect them in all interactions with students; teachers; school management; and any other actors that are involved in school activities, such as representatives from NGOs or invited guests.
• Treat everyone with equality and without discrimination.

Becoming an Active School Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Idea / Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have an equal representation of students from all grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meet about once per month or whenever special circumstances require a meeting (for example, to plan for International Human Rights Day celebrations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Actively listen to what students are saying about the school: what are the issues, the problems, the challenges, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Apart from listening to students, collaborate with school management to identify priorities and plan activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Be solution-oriented. If the School Parliament is addressing a problem, understand the root of that problem; seek out advice from the School principal and other teachers; and come up with a practical, easy-to-implement solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resolving Conflicts

The table below presents the four stages of conflict resolution with questions to ask and actions to undertake at each stage to help find a peaceful solution. The table is from the HRCRT Teacher’s Toolkit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to do / Questions to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Calm Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the problem and talk about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explore possible solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agree on a solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This Booklet is a shared resource of good practices, ideas and tools to help School Parliaments strengthen their roles as active and vibrant groups within their schools and communities. The common approach to planning and implementing School Parliament activities and processes presented in this Booklet paves the way for a greater number of good practices that School Parliaments in all Fields can develop on their own and share among each other. In doing so, students in all UNRWA schools will develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to strengthen a culture of human rights within their schools and their communities.

“No only are we increasing awareness about human rights at school, we are also transferring to our communities some of the things we learned.”

Male student from Baqa’a Boys School, Jordan
Annex 1: Criteria for Submitting a Good Practice

The following criteria were used to identify a school’s entry as a good practice in the Booklet:

1. Each school could submit one (1) practice.
2. The practice must be an actual practice undertaken by the School Parliament, not a planned one that has not taken place.
3. The practice must demonstrate strong initiative and leadership on the part of School Parliament members and show how they work in cooperation with school administration and teachers.
4. The practice must demonstrate a clear impact in raising awareness about human rights or taking action to help realize human rights, either within the school or in the community.
5. The practice must be clearly written, concise and well documented.
6. The lessons learned from the practice must provide practical ideas for other School Parliaments interested in adapting the practice.
7. A School Principal, a teacher working with the School Parliament, and members of the School Parliament should jointly complete the template.
8. If the practice includes photos or videos of students, there must be approval for the use of such media representing them. If the practice includes artefacts created by students (such as poems or artwork), there must be approval for the use of such artefacts.

This is a template for recording a School Parliament good practice.

1. School name: ________________________________
2. Contact name and position (School Principal, teacher, or member of School Parliament): ________________________________
3. Email: ________________________________
4. Title of practice: ________________________________
5. Type of action the practice demonstrates:
   - [ ] Raise awareness: Telling people about an issue, for example the right to a clean environment, the right to education, the issue of bullying in schools, etc.
   - [ ] Engage others: Organizing contests, activities, or special events to recognize human rights, either through art, plays, poetry, writing, or social media.
   - [ ] Research/creation or a tool/process: For example, undertaking research on students’ values, creating peer conflict mediation tools at school, etc.
   - [ ] School Parliament elections: How the election process is organised, how candidates campaign, how student participation takes place, etc.
   - [ ] Other, please specify: ____________________________________________
     ____________________________________________
     ____________________________________________
6. Brief description of the practice:
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

7. Planning process (including materials, communication, budget, etc.). How was this practice planned?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

8. Main HRCRT themes addressed (select all that apply):
☐ General human rights (learning about rights)
☐ Participation
☐ Diversity
☐ Respect
☐ Equality and non-discrimination
☐ Conflict resolution
☐ Community links

9. Main achievements: What were the main achievements and how were these evaluated? You may include how many people were reached, who benefited from the activity, and any reactions from the community.
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

10. What the School Parliament learned: As a result of the practice, what did members of the School Parliament learn? What advice would you tell others wanting to use this practice?
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

11. Please include any additional supporting documents, pictures, videos or testaments that would help describe your story.
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
Annex 2 Learning More about Human Rights

What Are Human Rights?

Human rights are basic entitlements all people should have simply by virtue of being human. Human rights are what people need to live a life of dignity. Human rights have many characteristics:

- Human rights are **universal**, meaning everyone has them, no matter who they are or where they are from.
- Human rights are based on **equality**, meaning everyone holds them equally. No one should suffer discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status as established by human rights standards. The meaning of “other status” has evolved over time and it is now widely agreed that grounds such as disability, age, gender identity, ethnicity and geographical origin are included in this definition.
- Human rights are **indivisible**, meaning there are no rights that are considered “more” or “less” important than others.
- Human rights are **inalienable**, meaning a person cannot lose a right or a right cannot be taken away from a person.
- Human rights are **interdependent**, meaning they depend on each other. For example, if a child does not have enough food to eat (the right to food), then he or she will have a difficult time learning in school (the right to education).
- Human rights go hand in hand with responsibilities. A person has rights but also has the responsibility to respect other peoples’ rights too.

What Is Human Rights Education?

Human rights education (HRE) is any form of education that helps develop knowledge and understanding about human rights; develop skills to take action to promote, respect and realize rights; and contribute towards the shaping of attitudes and values related to human rights. Human rights education helps strengthen what is commonly called a “culture of human rights” in which human dignity is valued and respected.

What type of knowledge do students need to understand human rights in their daily lives?

Examples of knowledge are:

- Knowledge of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in simple language. This includes learning about specific rights and their relevance to students’ lives.
- The characteristics of all human rights (for example, they apply to everyone and they cannot be taken away).
- Understanding the human rights context of Palestine refugees.
What attitudes and values do children need to develop and sustain a culture of human rights?
Examples of shaping and reflecting on attitudes and values are:

- How students respect each other and their teachers.
- A sense of responsibility for their own actions.
- Empathy and solidarity with others whose rights are denied.
- Acceptance and integration of all students in school activities, including those with disabilities.

What skills do children need to develop and sustain a culture of human rights?
Examples of developing skills are how to:

- Resolve conflicts.
- Express oneself with confidence.
- Speak about human rights issues using human rights language.
- Participate democratically in activities with other children.
- Vote and actively participate in School Parliament activities.