



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

UN Training and Documentation Centre



**HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION TOOLKIT**
ON THE SHORT FILM COMPETITION
“HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE
LENS OF YOUTH”

ABOUT THE CENTRE AND THE FRAMEWORK OF THE YOUTH COMPONENT

The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region¹ (The Centre), part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/153 and is mandated to undertake and support training, education, knowledge management and documentation activities in the field of human rights in accordance with international human rights standards.

In the Arab region, the Centre contributes to the implementation of the fourth and fifth phases of the Plan of Action for the World Programme for Human Rights Education,² which provide guidance on developing national plans of action for human rights education for youth and with youth. This approach emphasizes the empowerment of young people through human rights education on equality, human rights and non-discrimination, as well as a shared understanding of the basic principles of human rights education, inclusion and respect for diversity, with a view to building inclusive and peaceful societies. The Centre also provides guidance on comprehensive national strategies for human rights education for youth.

The Plan of Action for the fourth and fifth phases stresses the need to engage young people as key partners in action across different areas, including policies, teaching and learning processes and tools, the training of educators and the creation of an enabling environment. It also highlights target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing youth development and participation as cross-cutting issues that intersect with other goals and targets.

In this context, young people are rights holders and key actors in the realization of human rights, the achievement of sustainable development, the maintenance of peace and the prevention of violence and conflict. Their inclusive participation in the design and implementation of policies that affect them is essential. Human rights education can enable young people to understand and exercise their role as active citizens, support their own rights and the rights of others, and participate in public affairs and democratic decision-making. The first priority of Youth 2030, the United Nations Youth Strategy, is engagement, participation and advocacy, and the amplification of young people's voices in efforts to build a sustainable world of peace and justice. Human rights education is therefore a key entry point for youth empowerment, development and participation.

¹ The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/153 of December 2005. It is part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and is based in Doha, Qatar.

The Centre is mandated to undertake and support training, education, and documentation activities in the field of human rights, in accordance with international human rights standards. It supports efforts undertaken by governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, national human rights institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

The Centre covers 25 countries, including 22 Member States of the League of Arab States and 3 countries in South-West Asia. These include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the State of Palestine.

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/world-programme-human-rights-education>

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION TOOLKIT

This human rights education toolkit seeks to provide an innovative learning and awareness-raising resource to strengthen human rights education among young people through the use of short films produced as part of the short film competition, "Human Rights Through the Lens of Youth". The toolkit uses art and visual media as an interactive educational method that helps young people understand human rights and youth-related issues in a way that is realistic and close to their everyday experiences.

The toolkit responds to the growing need for modern educational resources that help promote a culture of human rights and strengthen the values of human dignity, equality and non-discrimination, as reflected in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments. It aims to enable young people to analyse human rights issues, develop critical thinking and take part in discussions on human rights in their communities.

The toolkit seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen young people's understanding of human rights concepts and principles.
- Use films as an educational tool to stimulate dialogue and discussion on human rights issues.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills among young people.
- Encourage young people's active participation in the promotion and respect of human rights.

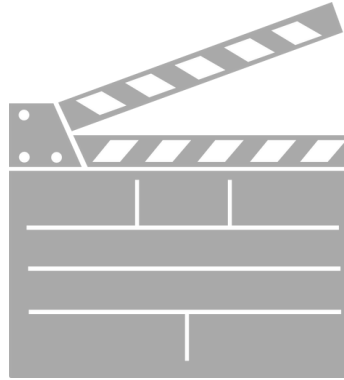


Target audience

The toolkit is primarily intended for:

- Young people and students in universities and schools.
- Human rights facilitators and trainers.
- Teachers and educators.
- Civil society organizations working with young people.





EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY OF THE TOOLKIT

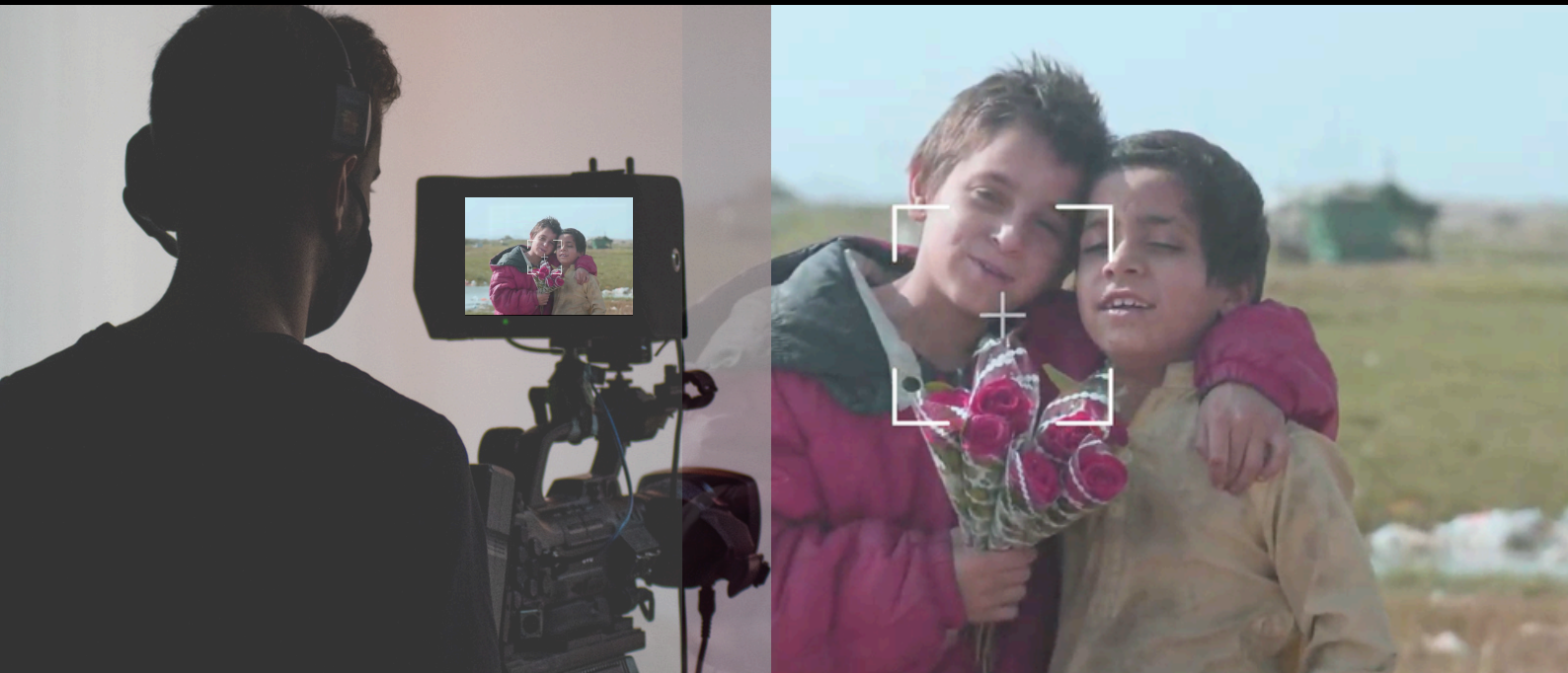
The toolkit is based on an interactive and participatory educational approach that uses short films as a learning tool to stimulate reflection and engagement. Films do not merely convey information; they create a learning experience that helps participants understand human rights issues, particularly youth rights, through human stories and real-life experiences.

By presenting short films produced by young people and rooted in lived experiences, the toolkit brings human rights issues closer to participants and strengthens empathy with individuals and communities affected by human rights violations. Watching and analysing these films can help participants develop critical thinking skills, understand the social, human, and rights-based dimensions of the issues presented, and engage in constructive dialogue on the fundamental values and principles of human rights.



BACKGROUND ON THE SHORT FILM COMPETITION "HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE LENS OF YOUTH"

As part of its new strategy to advance the objectives of the **Human Rights Education Unit** and the **Knowledge Management and Documentation Unit**, the Centre organized a short film competition entitled "**Human Rights Through the Lens of Youth**" in 2024 and 2025. The competition aims to empower and inspire young filmmakers aged 18 to 30 from the Arab region, in addition to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, to creatively shed light on human rights issues affecting their communities and to strengthen their role in expressing and defending these issues through cinema.



OBJECTIVES OF THE SHORT FILM COMPETITION “HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE LENS OF YOUTH”

The main objective of the competition is to enable young people aged 18 to 30 to use their talents and voices to highlight core human rights issues. Through this initiative, the Human Rights Education Unit, in collaboration with the Knowledge Management and Documentation Unit, seeks to encourage a new generation of human rights advocates. Through the power of storytelling in film, young people can promote dialogue, challenge prevailing perceptions and contribute to tangible change in communities around the world.

Film can influence behaviour, shape values and contribute to social change as a powerful means of communication that conveys messages in a unique and engaging way. The competition focused on six core themes related to youth rights, identified from the **Youth Rights Advocacy Toolkit**,³ which aims to empower young people of diverse backgrounds to advocate for their rights, especially young people in vulnerable situations. The competition seeks to encourage productions of value that inspire positive social change through distinctive forms of visual expression that can communicate more effectively than words, particularly for this age group.

The themes include selected economic, social and cultural rights and selected civil and political rights:

- The right to life.
- The right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- The right to decent work and the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and social services.
- The right to education.

³<https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/world-programme-human-rights-education>



COMPETITION CONTEXT

During its first edition in 2024, the competition received 24 films from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen. Participants attended awareness-raising sessions before production began, covering topics including human rights for youth and ethical approaches to human rights storytelling.

Following the evaluation by the jury, two winners were selected: Nader Khaled from Palestine for his film "Al Maha" and Iman Munir from Pakistan for her film "Beautiful Flowers". The winners had the opportunity to participate in the Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights in March 2025, including the Impact Days workshop.

Building on this success, the Centre, in partnership with the Al Jazeera Centre for Public Liberties and Human Rights, organized the second edition of the competition in 2025. Twelve films were submitted from nine Arab countries: Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. The films addressed, from the perspective of young people, fundamental rights such as the right to education, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to decent work.

Following the jury's evaluation, two winners were selected for the 2025 edition: Fadel Moawada from Yemen for his film "Jouniya" and Vanessa Kallas from Lebanon for her film "Pen in His Heart, Hammer in His Hand".

* The winning films can be viewed on the Centre's website <https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/en/film-competition>

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Below is the assessment criteria table which was used by the panel of judges. The panel included officers from the Centre, colleagues from UNICEF, partners from Al Jazeera Centre for Public Liberties and Human Rights as well as an independent film producer.

Criteria	Points				
	Poor 5	Acceptable 10	Good 15	Very Good 20	Excellent 25
Originality - <i>Does the film/animation exhibit innovative ideas? Are the story, settings and characters engaging? Does the concept seem unique or have you seen it before?</i>					
Visual Appeal – <i>How creative and imaginative are the visuals? Does the film/animation have a unique artistic style? How aesthetically pleasing is it?</i>					
Link to selected theme – <i>How successful are the ideas, story and visuals in representing the selected themes? How clear is the messaging specifically to the themes?</i>					
Understanding of Human Rights concepts – <i>How well do you feel that creator of the film/animation understands the human rights concepts and principles as delivered in the information sessions and as submitted in the synopsis?</i>					

BACKGROUND ON THE WINNER FILMMAKERS



Nader Khaled Al-Razzi (Palestine), director of “Al Maha”

A documentary filmmaker and digital media student at the Islamic University of Gaza, Nader has a deep-rooted passion for visual storytelling. He has received several local, regional and international awards in recognition of his work in photography and documentary filmmaking. He led the “Cinema for Children” initiative, which sought to bring joy, hope and psychosocial support to thousands of displaced children and girls in United Nations shelters in the Gaza Strip. He considers this work a turning point in his career, strengthening his belief in the role of cinema and film as tools for change. In 2025, he received the Best Documentary Film award in the first edition of the competition, in recognition of his impactful work focusing on human rights issues.



Iman Munir (Pakistan), director of “Beautiful Flowers”

Iman is a cinematographer, impact filmmaker and painter who sees herself as a bridge between human impact stories and powerful forms of expression. In 2021, she received Pakistan’s National Film Award, which enabled her to obtain a prestigious international scholarship to study advanced filmmaking at the New York Film Academy. She has since screened her fiction and non-fiction films in several countries, through special screenings and international film festivals. In March 2025, her short film won first place in the short film competition organized by the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, in collaboration with OHCHR headquarters in Geneva. The documentary addresses children’s education and the lives of out-of-school children and youth living on the streets in Pakistan. Her visual approach combines the realism of the moment with the beauty of simplicity, focusing on stories of hope, humanity, communities, culture and civilizations. She is currently collaborating with filmmakers from around the world to turn ideas into reality.

BACKGROUND ON THE FILMMAKERS



Vanessa Kallas (Lebanon), director of “Pen in His Heart, Hammer in His Hand”

Vanessa is a Lebanese journalist dedicated to storytelling that sheds light on environmental and human issues. Raised in Lebanon and moving between the city and the village during her childhood, she developed an early awareness of the challenges faced by marginalized communities. She graduated during one of the most severe economic crises in Lebanon’s history and witnessed first-hand the harsh changes affecting many families. This strengthened her conviction that journalism is essential to documenting realities and carrying the voices of those who lack a platform. Her work is grounded in empathy and professional responsibility, viewing journalism as a mission to preserve human dignity and deepen awareness of urgent issues. Alongside journalism, she uses drawing as a space for creative expression and aspires to establish an artistic space that brings together art and community activism. In 2025, her film received the Best Documentary Film award in the second edition of the competition, in recognition of work focusing on human rights issues.



Fadel Moawada (Yemen), director of “Jouniya”

Fadel is a dramatic photographer and independent filmmaker from Yemen, working in film with a particular focus on realism and human stories. Through his work, he seeks to produce films that touch viewers and invite them to question reality. He believes that cinema is a tool for reflection and contemplation. In 2025, he received the Best Documentary Film award in the second edition of the competition, in recognition of his impactful work focusing on human rights issues.

FILM INFORMATION CARDS



"Al Maha" – directed by Nader Khaled Al-Razzi – duration: 05:20

A film by Nader Khaled Al-Razzi, telling the story of a 16-year-old girl who is forced to work to support her family. The film highlights the right to education. The director seeks to send a strong message to those who overlook the fact that education is the foundation of human dignity.



"Beautiful Flowers" – directed by Iman Munir – duration: 05:13

A film by Iman Munir that highlights the right to education and the right to a life with dignity. It presents a day in the lives of children who are not attending school. Despite their difficult reality, the film focuses on the hope and happiness reflected in their faces.

FILM INFORMATION CARDS



“Pen in His Heart, Hammer in His Hand” – directed by Vanessa Kallas – duration: 03:26

A film by Vanessa Kallas that tells the story of a Syrian refugee child in the Bekaa Valley who works as a mechanic. He was forced to leave school after the death of his father. The film sheds light on the harsh conditions of child labour and the deprivation of the right to education.



“Jouniya” – directed by Fadel Moawada – duration: 06:37

A film by Fadel Moawada that highlights the right to work and tells the story of Ali Hassan, an 81-year-old former soldier. After retirement, his pension is no longer sufficient to cover his basic needs, forcing him to collect plastic bottles to secure his daily livelihood. Despite these hardships, “Uncle Ali” chooses hard work and the preservation of his dignity over asking for help. The film addresses the right to an adequate standard of living, including the rights to food, clothing, housing and health care.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO OPEN THE DISCUSSION IN FILM SCREENINGS

The Centre organized a screening of the winning films at the United Nations Palais des Nations in Geneva and at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. For those interested in organizing a discussion after screening one or more of the films, the following questions have been prepared as a facilitation guide. Facilitators should take into account the sensitivity of the issues presented and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to address any potential risks for the audience, including the possibility of recalling painful experiences. These general ice-breaker questions can help participants discuss, comment and raise any questions they may have.

- What is your overall impression?
- How did you feel after watching the short film(s), and why?
- Did any particular scene or shot catch your attention? Why?
- Which character or real-life story did you find most moving or most developed?
- Which human rights issues are addressed in the short film(s)?
- What human rights challenges and violations can you identify through the films?
- Were there any implicit messages or themes that you found interesting or problematic?
- How is the right to an adequate standard of living reflected in Amal's situation?
- How can people in similar situations be protected from these risks?
- How can human rights education help in understanding, identifying and addressing these challenges and violations?

GUIDED QUESTIONS BY FILM

"Al Maha", Palestine: education as the foundation of dignity

- The film suggests that education is the foundation of human dignity. How does Al Maha's story, as a girl forced to work at the age of 16, illustrate what is lost when access to education is denied? What are the consequences?
- The film seeks to send a "strong message" to those who ignore this issue. In your view, to whom is this message addressed, for example, policymakers, community leaders, or families, and what is its core meaning?
- How does forcing a girl to work at an early age affect her life beyond the loss of education? Consider the impact on her health, social development, and future opportunities.
- Economic hardship often forces families to make difficult choices, such as sending a child to work. What types of community or government support could help families like Al Maha's prioritize education?

“Beautiful Flowers”, Pakistan: the right to education and a dignified life

- The title “Beautiful Flowers” suggests the inherent value and potential of these children. How does this image contrast with the reality that they are out of school, and what message does this contrast convey?
- The film portrays out-of-school children while also focusing on their hope and happiness. How can joy and dignity coexist with the denial of a fundamental right such as education?
- How does the film show the long-term impact of being out of school on a child’s future and ability to live a life with dignity?
- Inspired by the film’s message of hope amid hardship, what actions can the State, society or individuals take to support children’s right to education in their communities?

“Jouniya”, Yemen: the right to an adequate standard of living

- How do you understand the right to an adequate standard of living?
- Who bears the primary responsibility for ensuring a dignified life for older persons and retirees in your community?
- The film description notes that the character’s self-respect prevents him from asking for help. Why do you think preserving human dignity is so important for him, even in difficult circumstances? How can support be provided in a way that respects the dignity of those receiving it?
- How can a film such as “Jouniya” help raise awareness of the economic challenges faced by older persons and encourage practical solutions, such as reviewing pension policies or social support programmes?

“Pen in His Heart, Hammer in His Hand”, Lebanon: the right to education

- The title suggests a conflict between the child’s desire for education and the reality of hard manual labour. How does the film visually represent this internal conflict?
- The film focuses on a child who is forced to work after losing his father and leaving school. How does this situation illustrate the links between poverty, displacement and denial of the right to education?
- In circumstances similar to those shown in the film, who is responsible for protecting the child’s right to education? What role should governments play, what are their obligations, and what is the role of international organizations and local communities?
- Beyond school enrolment, what does quality education mean for a child affected by trauma and displacement? What support does the child need in order to succeed?

SOURCES

1. Legal instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
2. World Programme for Human Rights Education. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training/world-programme-human-rights-education>
3. Youth Rights Advocacy Toolkit, 16 December 2022. This toolkit is the result of a joint effort by OHCHR, Education Above All and Silatech. It aims to empower young people in all their diversity to advocate for their rights, particularly young people living in vulnerable situations or belonging to marginalized groups, by bringing key information together in one publication to facilitate access to and use of the information needed. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools/youth-rights-advocacy-toolkit>
4. OHCHR page on human rights education and training: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/human-rights-education-training>
5. United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region. <https://untrainingcentre.ohchr.org/>

SAMPLE FILM SCREENING FACILITATION PLAN

Item	Details
Subject	<p>Film screening facilitation guide: “Al Maha” is used as an example. Directed by Nader Khaled Al-Razzi, the film tells the story of a 16-year-old girl who is forced to work to support her family. The director seeks to send a strong message to those who overlook the fact that education is the foundation of human dignity.</p>
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people and university students. • Young human rights defenders. • Education policymakers. • Civil society and humanitarian practitioners. • Persons interested in human rights, particularly the right to education.
Date and time	<p>Day – date – month – year. Time: from ... to ...</p>

SAMPLE FILM SCREENING FACILITATION PLAN

Item	Details
<p>Session sequence</p>	<p>Introduction to the film and the director (5 minutes). Screening of “Al Maha” (5:20 minutes). Facilitated interactive discussion (15–20 minutes).</p> <p>Theme 1: Initial reflections and impressions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your impression? • How did you feel after watching the short film, and why? • Did any scene or shot catch your attention? Why? • Which character or real-life story did you find most moving? • Which human rights issues does the film address? • What human rights challenges and violations can you identify through the film? • Were there any implicit messages or themes that you found interesting or problematic? • How does Al Maha’s story illustrate what is lost when a girl is denied education? <p>Theme 2: Guided questions related to the violated right.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The film suggests that “education is the foundation of human dignity”. • How does Al Maha’s story illustrate the impact of denial of education, and what are the consequences? • To whom is the film’s “strong message” addressed, and what is its core meaning? • How does forcing a girl to work at an early age affect her life beyond the loss of education? • What forms of community or government support could help families like Al Maha’s prioritize education? <p>Theme 3: Solutions and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of support could change the fate of children in situations similar to Al Maha’s? • Closing: summary and key messages (5 minutes).

SAMPLE FILM SCREENING FACILITATION PLAN

Item	Details
Total duration	75–90 minutes
Venue requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet screening room. • Dimmable lighting. • Accessibility for persons with disabilities. • Designated space for speakers or guests, if any. • Registration table. • Space for notes or a laptop. • Filming area that does not disturb participants. • Inform participants if filming will take place. • Suitable space for short interviews after the session. • Appropriate language support, including interpretation or explanation if the audience is diverse. • Clear emergency exits.
Equipment needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen or projector. • Computer. • Sound system. • Microphones for discussion. • Timer for time management. • Brochure about the Centre and its units. • Session agenda. • Flip chart and paper.