

# GLOBAL ISSUES

23 ISSUE

April  
2007

ISSN 1175-7655

Human Rights

*Apā Whāinga Tika o Te Tangata*



Change for a just world



# Human Rights

*Ngā Whāinga Tika o Te Tangata*

ASKING QUESTIONS

HE PĀTAI

Who can argue with the importance of freedom? Freedom to be who we are, think what we think and go where we please. Equality for all is what Human Rights are all about! Discrimination based on any grounds such as race, religion, political views, age, sex or sexual orientation, constitute human rights violations. Human rights are based on what is essential to human survival. They are also based on integrity and autonomy, and the fulfilment of human potential in society.

In Aotearoa New Zealand we grow up knowing we can vote for a political party of our choice, can express ourselves freely on any topic, marry who we love and divorce them too, own property

(if we can afford it!) and get an education. In some parts of the world many of these basic human rights are not upheld and this results in a great deal of human suffering. When human rights are not respected the most vulnerable in society; women, children, indigenous people, the poor and the disabled, often have no voice at all. Human rights provide protection and ensure that we live in a society where "social order" exists so we can participate fully in our culture and community. In this issue we will look at some of the positive human rights actions which everyday people have undertaken and show you how you can incorporate a human rights ethic into your own life.



## GLOBAL ISSUES

Many thanks to Te Kura Māori at Victoria University of Wellington College of Education.

*Global Issues* is a quarterly magazine produced for secondary schools and community education programmes by the Global Education Centre, which is part of the Development Resource Centre: a Wellington-based education and information service on global and development issues. We provide free services to the formal and informal education sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand.

If you have any enquiries or would like information on global or development issues, contact us:

phone 04 472 9549

fax 04 496 9599

email [schools@globaled.org.nz](mailto:schools@globaled.org.nz)

or check our website [www.globaled.org.nz](http://www.globaled.org.nz)

Unless otherwise indicated, Pania Walton and Noa Noa Von Bassewitz provided the text for this issue.

This resource has been produced with the assistance of Amnesty International New Zealand [www.amnesty.org.nz](http://www.amnesty.org.nz).

Copyright has been acknowledged where possible. Any concerns, please contact us.

This publication may be copied or downloaded from our website at [www.globaled.org.nz/schools/global.html](http://www.globaled.org.nz/schools/global.html) and distributed for educational and information purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form for commercial purposes without the prior permission of the Global Education Centre.

Global Issues is designed by:

the  
church



# What are human rights? *He aha ngā Whāinga Tika o Te Tangata?*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is based on the idea that all people, everywhere, are equal and should have the same rights as each other. There are thirty Articles in the UDHR and each describes a right that the members of the United Nations agreed in 1948 (and again in 1993) that everyone in the world should have. According to these rights, people are entitled to life, liberty, and security (Article 3); they will not be made into slaves (Article 4); and they have the right to equal pay for equal work (Article 23), amongst others.

There are international treaties, declarations, protocols, covenants and conventions on Human Rights, which are collectively known as the 'instruments'. An example is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). Individual countries incorporate Human Rights policies into their laws. Some countries do not enforce these laws, and some have legislation, such as allowing the death penalty, that is in direct opposition.

For a full copy of the UDHR go to: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

## ANOTHER '3 R'S' RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPECT E TORU ĒNEI PŪTAKE, NGĀ WHĀINGA TIKĀ, NGĀ HAEPAPA, ME TE MANAAKITANGA

Rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. In order to have our own rights respected every person bears the responsibility of behaving toward other people in a respectful way. For example, people learn and contribute more in a classroom where they feel safe volunteering ideas, are listened to, and are considerate of each other. Each of us is obliged to respect the inherent human dignity of others.



## ARE HUMAN RIGHTS AN ISSUE FOR US IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND? HE TAKE NUI NGĀ WHĀINGA TIKĀ O TE TANGATA MŌ TĀTOU I AOTEAROA?

No country has a perfect human rights record and Aotearoa New Zealand is no exception. In a recent UNICEF report Aotearoa New Zealand ranked 3rd worst out of 27 OECD countries for child deaths due to mistreatment. Our country still hasn't lived up to all the commitments it made when it signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). One of the recommendations the UNCROC committee made to Aotearoa New Zealand was to repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act, which allows parents to use 'reasonable force' to discipline children. This is now known as the anti-smacking bill and has become a hotly debated political issue.

Progress has been made in certain areas such as disability rights. Sign language is now an officially recognised language

of Aotearoa New Zealand. Before the Homosexual law reform bill of 1986 it was illegal for men to have sex together in this country. The 1993 Human Rights Act sets out the Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination, these include Gender, Marital Status, Religious Belief, Ethical Belief, Race/Ethnicity, Disability, Age, Political Opinion, Employment status, Family status, and Sexual Orientation. The Human Rights Commission operates a mediation system to resolve discrimination cases. For more information about how to access the assistance of the Human Rights Commission go to [www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz)



## KEY WORDS NGĀ KUPU MATUA

<b>Autonomy</b>	A state of being independent, free, and self-directing.
<b>Integrity</b>	The state of being whole, having moral principles
<b>Mediation</b>	Intervene in a dispute to bring about an agreement or reconciliation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



# Global Impact *Ngā Take O Te Ao*



## Around the world *Huri Rauna i te Ao*

Sometimes it may look as though everything to do with human rights is bad news. But if you dig a little deeper you find there are many good people taking positive action for

a better world in which human rights are respected for all. Check out the variety of methods people are using to make a difference in countries around the world.

**1** LIFT OFF is a successful human rights education initiative in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It aims to create a human rights culture by promoting the understanding of human rights among primary school children, their teachers and across the whole school. As a result, children are becoming more aware of how human rights apply to them. One child who took part in the programme said, "I was surprised to hear about all the girls who do not go to school and about the poor children that have to go to work."

**2** Peace Brigades International (PBI) organises for volunteers to accompany community leaders who are involved in pro-human rights activities, and whose safety is therefore at risk in their home country. In Guatemala the presence of the volunteers (who are generally from developed countries) serves to remind local authorities that the international eye is watching, and acts of violence will not be tolerated.

**3** Until recently, the indigenous Aka people in the Central African Republic (CAR) were regarded as slaves. They were often mistreated and had little access to education and the justice system. In 2004, a European Union funded project was developed to improve the social and cultural identity of the Aka. In the three years since the project began, the human rights of the Aka people have been greatly improved. They now have better access to legal services and education, and are recognised as citizens of

the CAR. "It is like a dream in that we are being regarded as human with recognised rights for the first time in our existence," says Germaine Dimanche, an Aka woman.

**4** Wendi Wicks is a founding member of the Human Rights Network of Aotearoa New Zealand, and has been an activist on disability and human rights issues at grassroots level for more than ten years. Although she has won awards for her work, Wendi says, "There is still a struggle to have recognition that we are fully human and that we have the same human rights as everyone else ... I have seen and experienced so much discrimination against disabled people. It fires my passion to see that kind of injustice."

**5** Up to two million people are trafficked into the sex trade across international borders each year, and thousands more are tricked or kidnapped into the sex trade within countries. Most are age 10 or younger, and many are young girls who are sold into prostitution and sent to brothels in big cities and tourist areas. Dr. Sunitha Krishnan, co-founder of the anti-trafficking organisation Prajwala, fights sexual violence and slavery in India and throughout Asia. She says, "The sense that thousands, millions of children have been sexually violated and there's this huge silence about it, angers me." In India, Krishnan's work has strengthened anti-trafficking laws and led to greater protection for trafficking victims.



## How can universal human rights exist in a culturally diverse world? *Me pēhea e ora ai ngā whāinga tika tangata torowhānui i tēnei ao, he tini ōna momo iwi?*

When people talk about human rights being 'universal' they mean that everyone, everywhere and regardless of anything, is entitled to the same rights. However, some people argue that human values are not universal, and that they change depending on which culture you're from. For instance, in countries such as Singapore and China, the rights of the individual are considered secondary to those

of the family. This means the emphasis on the individual in the UDHR may not always be considered culturally appropriate. Where this is the case human rights are viewed differently due to cultural, ethnic and religious traditions – and would not be universal! The term for this is kind of conflicting interpretation is 'Cultural Relativism'.

## LEGISLATION: helping or hindering human rights?

**NGĀ TURE:** *hei āwhina, hei whakapōrearea rānei i ngā whāinga tika o te tangata?*

Article 12 of the UDHR says that everyone has the right to ask for help if some one tries to harm them, and no one can enter your home, open your letters or bother you or your family without good reason. The USA Patriot Act was made law in the wake of the 9/11 bombings. The aim of the act was to provide US law enforcers with better weapons to wage the war on terrorism, yet many of these powers are in direct conflict with basic human rights. Under the act, personal communications can be seized, and houses can be searched based on the suspicion of terrorist activities. Due to the international nature of the “War on Terror” copycat legislation has been created in many countries. In Australia, terrorist suspects can be detained by police for up to a month, without even the right to a phone call.



Prisoners at Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The camp has drawn strong criticism both in the U.S. and world-wide for its detainment of ‘terrorist suspects’ without trial, and allegations of torture. Photo courtesy of Amnesty International

## INTERVIEW WITH A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST – *HE UIUITANGA I TĒTAHI TANGATA HĀPAI I NGĀ WHĀINGA TIKI O TE TANGATA.*



Maddy Drew

Maddy Drew is an activist for the gay and lesbian, bisexual, takatāpui, fa’afafine, intersex and transgender communities; and is also involved in other social justice and environmental conservation work. She talked to us about being an activist.

“Gay and lesbian rights are human rights. A lot of the discrimination against queer people is the same as against other groups, but less visible”. In her personal life Maddy has had first hand experience

with discrimination when she was refused service at a barber because of being female. This experience made her feel “really upset” and shamed in front of the other customers. Maddy took a complaint to the Human Rights Commission. She was asked to give a statement, and the barbers were also asked for their side of the story, before mediation between the parties

took place. The whole process took quite a long time, but the process was quite simple “I just walked in and told them what happened”. The mediation process was put in place by the Human Rights Commission to resolve disputes where people feel they have not been treated fairly. Maddy won her case and can have her hair cut where she chooses “The majority of queer people just want the same rights, the same respect, as everybody else.” Maddy’s advice for any budding activists out there is, “If there is an issue, and you’re feeling passionate about it, do something. Get involved with volunteer groups, you’ll be supported, will learn from other people’s experience, and you’ll get to see different styles of activism as well. Make sure that you’ve got it all in balance – with your study, and your work, and your life. Sit down and think, ‘What am I doing and how long does each of those things take?’ You’re going to be no good to anyone if you burn out.”

Founded in 1961, Amnesty International is a global movement of over 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries who contribute their time, money and expertise to the promotion of human rights for all and campaigning to end some of the most serious violations, including imprisonment for beliefs or identity, torture and killings. To find out more about Amnesty International, or to get involved with the work that they do, visit: [www.amnesty.org.nz](http://www.amnesty.org.nz)

## KEY WORDS *NGĀ KUPU MATUA*

<b>Activism</b>	The use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
<b>Citizen</b>	A person who is a legally recognised subject of a state or country
<b>Discrimination</b>	Making an unjust distinction in the treatment of different categories of people, for example on the grounds of race, sex, age, or gender.
<b>Queer</b>	In the 1980s the term began to be used by gay and lesbian activists as a term of self-identification. An umbrella term that includes gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, takatāpuhi, fa’afafine and intersex people.
<b>Terrorism</b>	Using violence and or intimidation in the pursuit of political aims.
<b>Trafficked</b>	To deal or trade in something illegal.



# Ko ngā Whāinga Tika Tuku Iho o te Iwi Māori

Traditionally Māori human rights were managed at an iwi (tribal), hapū (sub-tribe) and whānau (family) level, encompassing social, economic, spiritual rights, many of which are still actively practiced today. Many iwi today have long established rūnanga (organisations, trusts) that manage economic resources and social, cultural, political, educational and spiritual aspirations.

Historically the first major piece of political legislation, which had a huge impact on Māori rights, was the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, and is one of the most contestable and analysed founding documents in Aotearoa New Zealand's history. Under the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) the Waitangi Tribunal was established, and in 1984, analysts of the Treaty began to discuss the emergence of principles within the Treaty, which could support in the reconciliation of Māori rights, ignored after the signing of the Treaty.

The principles align with the articles of the Treaty including Protection, Partnership and Participation. These principles are quoted in a range of areas in legislation including education, where schools and teachers are required to reflect these principles in their management, professional and curriculum plans, to ensure the rights of both Māori and non Māori students in quality education. Other current New Zealand legislation which makes reference to human rights includes the Human Rights Act (1993) and the New Zealand Bill of Rights (1990).

As global citizens, Māori also have rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which contains 30 articles that relate to social, economic, spiritual,

educational, linguistic, cultural, and political rights. It's important for young Māori as New Zealand and global citizens to learn about and have an understanding of their rights at these different levels, to participate confidently in our society and be respectful of other's rights also. It is also important for young Māori to question whether their rights are being met through this collective set of rights, which would be a thought provoking starting point of discussion in a secondary classroom.

By: Na Hiria McRae, Te Kura Māori, College of Education, VUW



The Parihaka Peace Festival, is based on the principles of equality and non-violent resistance.

## THE DEATH PENALTY *TE WHIU WHAKAMATE TANGATA*

A sign in Malaysia warns travellers of the penalty for drug trafficking. Photo © <http://patakaliki.fi>

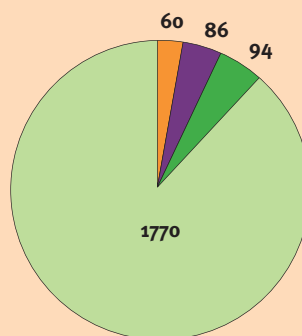


Article 3 of the UDHR tells us that, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." If everyone has the right to life, then how do we consider the death penalty? According to Amnesty International, at least 2,148 people were executed in 2005 and at least another 5,186 were sentenced to death. Many of those put to death had been denied a fair trial; they had "confessed" under torture,

had not had proper legal representation or were not given an impartial hearing. Among those put to death were children and people with mental disabilities. Interestingly, 94% of all executions in 2005 were in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the USA. One of the most powerful arguments against capital punishment is the risk of executing innocent people. In 2005

both China and the USA released people from death row who had been wrongly convicted, and China also admitted that innocent people had been executed in the past.

### TOP FOUR COUNTRIES FOR EXECUTIONS IN 2005



USA	60
Saudi Arabia	86
Iran	94
China	1770

In 2005, 94% of all known executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

# What do you think? *He Aha Ōu Whakaaro?*

WE INTERVIEWED TOBY, A 13 YEAR OLD STUDENT AT WELLINGTON GIRLS' COLLEGE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS.



Toby

## WHY SHOULD NEW ZEALANDERS CARE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS?

In New Zealand we should care about human rights because they help to ensure that life is as fair as possible, they create a positive outlook on everyone's customs, no matter how different they may be from our own. This is important because in New Zealand we have a

very diverse population so to accommodate for everyone's differences we need to be understanding of others. The human rights guide us into doing so.

## WHAT ARE THE HUMAN RIGHTS YOU FEEL MOST STRONGLY ABOUT?

All of the human rights are important to me. I find it hard to distinguish which ones are of greater importance, but the following are a few that really mean something to me: Everyone is equal despite differences in skin colour, sex, religion, language for example. Everyone has the right to be treated equally by the law. No one has the right to hurt you

or to torture you. Everyone should be considered innocent until guilt is proved. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help if they are ill. Everyone has the right to say what they think and to give and receive information.

## WHAT ARE SOME HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT RECENTLY, AND HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU FEEL?

Child slaves. It is disgusting that people take children, force them to do work for hardly any or no pay. Wars in general make me sick to the stomach. I don't understand how cruel, greedy and hypocritical people can be.

## HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND IF YOU FELT THAT YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS, OR THOSE OF SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU, WERE BEING VIOLATED?

I would be disgusted that anyone would wish to make life uneasy for another human being. If appropriate, I'd consult my parents or someone that could stop the violation. I would also be very opinionated and would definitely make my concerns known, so as to ensure that something's done about the violation.

## IF YOU COULD INVENT A NEW HUMAN RIGHT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

To abolish all wars. I just don't see the point in wars.

## HUMAN RIGHTS HEROINE *HE TUAWAHINE HĀPAI I NGĀ WHĀINGA TIKI O TE TANGATA*

Shirin Ebadi is an Iranian lawyer and human rights activist. She was one of the first female judges in Iran and is known for promoting peaceful, democratic solutions to serious problems in society. Ebadi argues for a new interpretation of Islamic law which is in harmony with rights such as democracy, equality before the law, religious freedom and freedom of speech. Ebadi is also an activist for refugee, women and children's rights. Shirin Ebadi was the first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her human rights work. She says of winning the award, "Harassment is a fact of life for someone pursuing human rights in Iran. Since winning the award I have been called to court three times and accused of subversive activity." Despite being imprisoned several times for her human rights work, Shirin Ebadi continues to fight for human

rights; saying, "My only power is my voice and my pen, with which I speak and write."



©Pars Times.

## KEY WORDS *NGĀ KUPU MATUA*

**Subversive**

To subvert, which is to undermine the power and authority of an established system or institution

# Taking Positive Action *Te Mahi Pai*

## WHAT CAN I DO? ME AHA AHAU?

Young people will participate in the decisions that affect them.

Young people will have improved self-esteem, and achievement.

Young people will be respectful of others and be active contributors to class, community and society.

Students, teachers and the community will have an increased knowledge and understanding of human rights and responsibilities, and of local, regional and global human rights issues.

Young people will be free to express their views.

**If your school were a 'human-rights community' what would it be like? How about the following?**

All people will be treated fairly and equitably, there will be less fear of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

The human dignity of all the people in the school will be respected and celebrated. Different perspectives, views and opinions will be expressed without loss of dignity.

Students and staff will feel great about going to school.

The school community will be more in touch and involved with the outside community.



UK Torture: A protester in the UK demonstrates against torture in the War On Terror. Photo courtesy of Amnesty International

**Start with YOU today: respect yourself, and insist that others act respectfully towards you and treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Human rights come alive when individuals take action!**

## WEBSITES TE IPURANGI

[www.amnesty.org.nz](http://www.amnesty.org.nz)

Amnesty is an international human rights organization that has active members around the world. Find out if there is an Amnesty group in your area and get involved or start your own. The website has information on various human rights themes and current news.

[www.globaled.org.nz/schools/documents/HumanRights\\_000.pdf](http://www.globaled.org.nz/schools/documents/HumanRights_000.pdf)

The Global Education Centre publishes a wide range of resources for schools (including Global Issues magazine!). Visit this web page for a fact sheet on human rights.

[www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz)

The Human Rights Commission champions fundamental human rights as a framework for a fair and just society for all the people of New Zealand. On their website you can find information on human rights, news on current events relating to human rights from around the country, and much more.

[Human Rights Education Association](http://www.hrea.org)

The Human Rights Education Association is an international

non-governmental organisation that supports human rights learning; the training of activists and professionals; the development of educational materials and programming; and community-building through on-line technologies. Their website includes a wealth of human rights related information for students, teachers, and anyone else interested in learning more about human rights.

[Human Rights Watch](http://www.hrw.org)

Human Rights Watch is a non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world. Their website includes information on the human right implications of a range of global issues.

[Human Rights Network](http://www.humanrights.org)

The Human Rights Network is a meeting place for New Zealanders with an interest and commitment to human rights.

[United Nations](http://www.un.org)

This website provides information on the many different ways in which the United Nations is involved with human rights.

**“If at first you don’t succeed try again when they’re not looking.”**

Wendi Wicks, Human rights activist, Aotearoa New Zealand



**Change for a just world**

Visit our website:  
[www.globaled.org.nz/schools/global.html](http://www.globaled.org.nz/schools/global.html)  
© Global Education Centre 2007