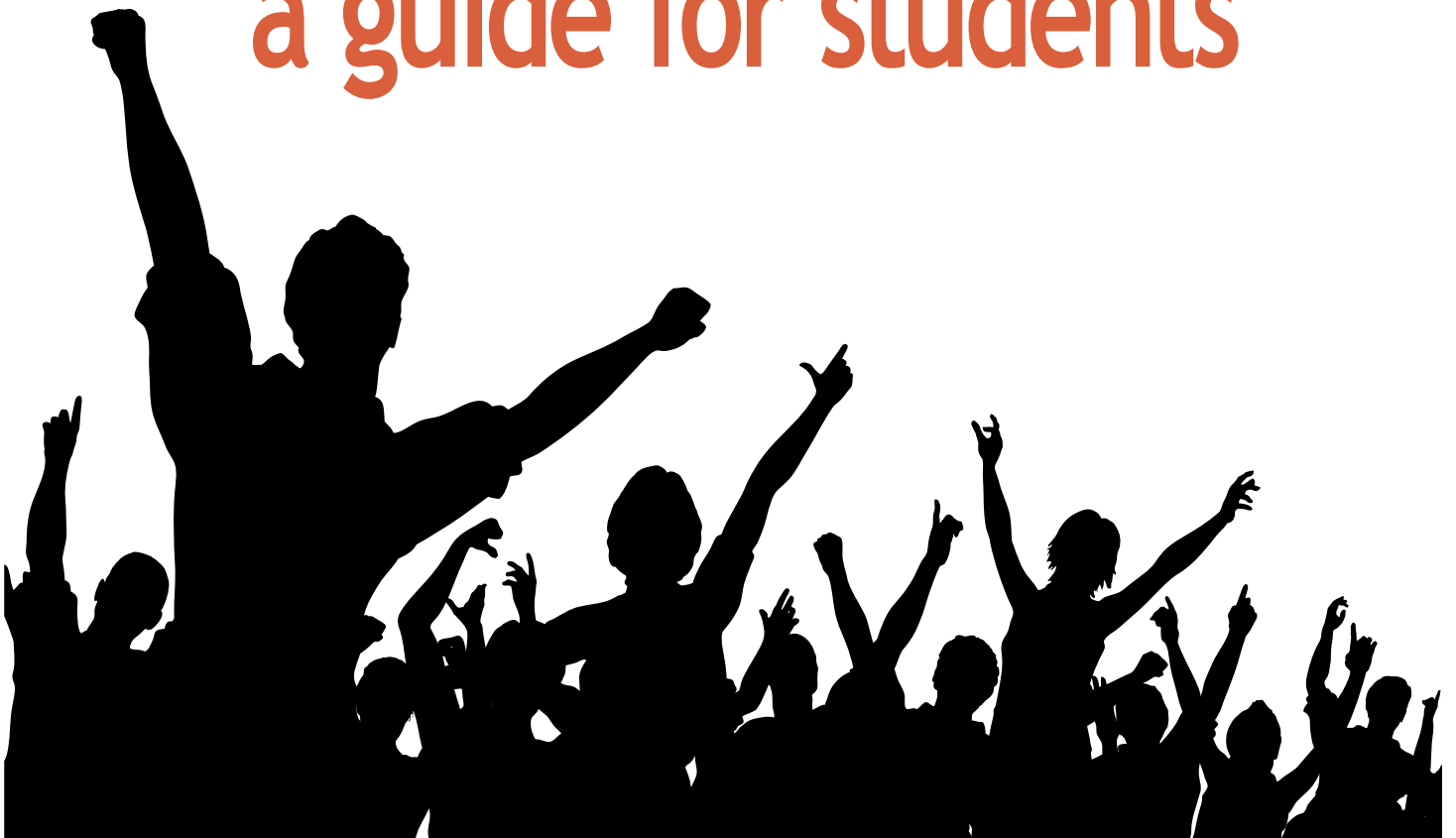




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Freedom of Expression Toolkit

a guide for students



Freedom of Expression Toolkit

a guide for students

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Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”

Article I The Constitution of UNESCO

“Collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image”

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Foreword

We know that freedom of expression is a crucial element in democracy, development and dialogue—without which none of these would function or flourish. Freedom of expression is a universal right to be enjoyed by all. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers as declared in Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UNESCO is the United Nations agency with the specialized mandate to promote freedom of expression and its corollary freedom of the press and freedom of information. Over the decades, UNESCO has labored to promote these fundamental human rights across the globe, amongst practicing media professionals, policy makers, politicians, governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, and more. The Freedom of Expression Toolkit: A Guide to the Concepts and Issues is a continuation of this ongoing effort.

Everyone should have all the necessary tools and mechanism to allow the free flow of information. Much has been written about freedom of expression, indeed it is one of the most debated concepts and issues of our times. However, few such publications are written with youth as the main target readers, especially for young women and men still in high schools and pre-university level. This Toolkit is one such tool targeted at high schools and pre-university students. Young women and men must be empowered and literate in the issues and concepts of freedom of expression in order to become a discerning citizen in a democracy.

- Why does freedom of expression matter?
- When is freedom of expression at risk?
- What are the conditions needed for freedom of expression to flourish?
- What are the special roles of journalist in freedom of expression?
- What about freedom of expression online?
- What can we do?
- What are the limitations?

These are some of the questions the Toolkit tries to answer through an easy and engaging manner. They are arranged into seven “tool boxes”, each with a different focus. The first toolbox discusses about the concept and explains the importance of freedom of expression. The second toolbox highlights the issues that threaten freedom of expression including controlled media, intimidations, and obstacles in access to information, restrictive laws and regulations. In the third toolbox, readers are sensitized to the conditions needed for freedom of expression to flourish such as the rule of law and having free, independent and pluralistic media in addition to an active civil society.

A special section is devoted to addressing the role of press and of journalists in freedom of expression in the fourth toolbox. In addition to traditional media such as print, radio and broadcasting, the fifth toolbox also brings in discussion on the recent development in social media and networking especially their uses in freedom of expression. The sixth part of the Toolkit is designed to enable readers to bring theory into practices through a wide variety of exercises, projects, and thought-provoking questions including activities such as celebrating the annual World Press Freedom Day or setting up Media Monitoring site. Lastly, the final toolbox discusses about the dilemmas of freedom of expression and its limitations. In addition to the seven toolboxes, there is a “bonus material” section based on the case study of the fictional country called Zangara which is an amalgamation of real world events allowing readers to further explore the concepts and issues in greater depth.

We thank all who have been involved in this process.

Jānis Kārklīš
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Introduction: The idea behind creating a Freedom of Expression Toolkit

Many have written on the topic of freedom of expression and from a variety of perspectives. There are literally hundreds of books and thousands of articles, monographs, and statements dedicated to this very important and controversial topic. However, not many are written with high school students as their target audience, and even fewer include practical activities designed to further engage the readers in the issues.

I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me.

Nelson Mandela
South Africa's first post-apartheid President,
1993 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

The Freedom of Expression Toolkit is UNESCO's contribution to freedom of expression and it is written with upper high school students in mind. The Toolkit covers the major concepts and issues and it is written in an easy to understand, conversational manner.

UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with the mandate to promote freedom of expression and to defend its corollary, freedom of the press. In other words, UNESCO is the lead agency in promoting, defending, monitoring, and advocating freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right within the United Nations system. UNESCO highlights media independence and pluralism as a fundamental component in the process of democracy. It also provides advisory services on media legislation and policy-making to governments who are members of UNESCO¹ (also known as Member States). This helps make governments, parliamentarians and other decision-makers aware of the need to guarantee the freedom of expression. One of UNESCO's flagship activities in advocating and campaigning for this issue is the World Press Freedom Day Celebration on 3 May of each year. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that a World Press Freedom Day is to be celebrated every year on 3 May following a recommendation by UNESCO's General Conference² and since then, the World Press Freedom Day has been celebrated globally every year on 3 May. Furthermore, in 1997 a UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize was established to honour a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, and especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

The Freedom of Expression Toolkit builds on the premise that freedom of expression, as well as press freedom and freedom of information, are indispensable elements in the attainment of all human rights. We hold true to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless frontiers" (Article 19, UDHR). Therefore, throughout this Toolkit, there will be an emphasis on the four key elements of Article 19, namely, the right to hold opinions without interference, the right to seek information, the right to receive information and the right to impart information to others.

How to use this Toolkit

There is no one particular way of utilizing the Toolkit. It could be used as a reference or a starting point on the concepts and issues related to freedom of expression or it could be used as a source of ideas for activities and projects to promote freedom of expression.

The Toolkit also contains extensive lists of other resources related to freedom of expression including websites, directories, etc. Instructors, students or other users may choose to follow the Toolkit as it is structured; beginning with an overview of the concept, then identifying the conditions where freedom of expression would flourish or flounder, followed by two chapters which explain the role of journalism and the Internet in freedom of expression, which are finally followed by a section which emphasizes the practical activities one could carry out. The last segment of the Toolkit consists of a section dedicated to case studies. Alternatively, the

