

Activist Pedagogies in Human Rights Education

Special Issue/Section: Journal of Human Rights Practice (JHRP)

A range of challenges, from the legacies of Covid 19 to shrinking political and civic space, are reshaping how human rights is taught within universities. This Special Issue will focus on new and emerging ways in which human rights curricula engage with practice, and specifically how such curricula incorporate activist knowledge, as one means of pluralising the forms of knowledge taught within universities and supporting activism and civil society. In doing so, we seek to go beyond traditional modes of activist and community engagement, such as legal clinics and placements, to identify and share novel forms of applied learning.

Expressions of interest are invited in the form of a short 500-word abstract (by 10 May 2024, if possible). This will be followed by a series of online workshops for the scholars and teaching initiatives selected for the Special Issue. Small amounts of funding are available to support relevant teaching-related research.

Among the questions that contributors are invited to consider are the following:

- How can an activist pedagogy be defined?
- What are the opportunities and challenges in delivering such a pedagogy in current university settings?
- How is it situated in relation to more conventional ways of teaching, learning and assessment in human rights education – does it replace, incorporate or complement conventional approaches?
- In what ways are activist forms of knowledge incorporated into courses/modules?
- How does the teaching programme engage with local and/or international activists / human rights defenders?
- Are there different challenges in working with local and international defenders?
- Are activists and human rights defenders brought into the classroom or do students engage with these constituencies in the community / wider society – in what formats?
- What innovative South-South, South-North, North-South and North-North collaborations are being tried and tested?
- How can decolonial practices of knowledge exchange be employed in activist pedagogy?
- How can intersectionality be integrated into activist pedagogy?
- What are the advantages for students of an applied pedagogy?
- What are the gains for activists and human rights defenders (enhanced capacities, project outputs, protection, opportunities for reflection on practice)?
- How can extractivism and uneven benefits be avoided?
- What ethical issues does such a pedagogy raise e.g. with regard to activist expectations or the capacity of students to engage with serious human rights violations?
- What assessment strategies can be applied within different aspects of activist pedagogy?
- What modalities developed during Covid 19, such as some forms of online teaching, remain innovative in its aftermath?

- Beyond classroom engagement, in what other ways can activist knowledge be used to enhance the delivery of human rights education? e.g. programme reviews and evaluation, careers, governance.

The Special Issue/Section will be co-ordinated by three of JHRP editors. Please submit expressions of interest – a 500-word abstract, short biographical paragraph, and an indication of whether funding support is needed - to all of the relevant co-editors:

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