

THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PRESENTS
FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UN

EMPOWERING TODAY'S YOUTH LEADERS TO
ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES
AND AROUND THE WORLD



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UNA-USA's 2016 Human Rights Initiative

Since 2012, UNA-USA's youth membership and campus chapter network have rapidly expanded in size and scale. This generation of Americans is uniquely equipped to advance international issues through creativity, entrepreneurship, and the unprecedented reach of collegiate networks; youth play a critical role as stakeholders in international affairs. UNA-USA campus chapter leaders are poised to impact human rights locally and globally.

UNA-USA's 2016 Human Rights Initiative will empower this emerging generation of leaders to work with the UN to advance human rights in their communities and around the world.

The initiative is a platform for college students to develop their leadership skills, build the capacity of their chapters, and participate in a national project with over 40 other UNA-USA campus chapters.

This guide is your road-map to participating in the program and making an impact. Be sure to note key dates and deadlines for opportunities, and contact UNA-USA with questions. We look forward to working together!



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By taking advantage of opportunities for leadership detailed in this guide, your campus chapter can impact human rights through the work of the UN. Follow these steps to get started:

1. Find the best ways and techniques to **impact human rights** through the United Nations. **Pages 4-7**
2. Note the **key dates** and mark in your calendar the opportunities you don't want to miss! **Page 8**
3. Review the **issue briefs** and consider which challenges your campus chapter is most passionate about. **Pages 9-15**
4. Take a look at the **project ideas** for impacting human rights issues. Think about how your chapter can plan an impactful activity or event that will gain attention on campus. **Pages 16**
5. Explore the Human Rights Initiative **opportunities for leadership and funding**, and apply for those you think would impact your chapter! **Pages 17**



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How to Impact Global Human Rights via the United Nations

While there are infinite ways to advance human rights, students are encouraged to focus on three main tracks within UNA-USA's human rights initiative. These tracks will enable campus chapters to advocate for the issues they care about, take action for cultural and policy change, and educate their campus communities about the importance of human rights awareness.

Track 1: Convening and Connecting

Track 2: UN Reporting and Consultations

Track 3: Trainings and Advocacy

See pages five, six, and seven to learn more about the above impact tracks.



By convening and connecting students on campus, working through the UN system on reporting and consultations, and facilitating training and advocacy focused on the UN's human rights work, campus chapters can help advance the national agenda.

Success is defined by three components:

1. Thematic human rights knowledge building: How many people did your project engage, and how did their understanding of human rights grow?
2. Results-oriented capacity building: How did this project help your chapter grow?
3. Empowering a new generation of UNA-USA champions: How did you connect to local and global policy makers, and what was the outcome?

Campus chapters are encouraged to use these three tracks as framework for their human rights impact projects.



Track One: Convening and Connecting

Raising awareness on the role of the UN in advancing human rights drives a critical aspect of UNA-USA's mandate and advocacy strategy. Innovative events and community recognition of key human rights moments can not only create a platform for chapter growth and partnerships, but also better connect Americans to a pillar of the UN's global efforts.

To connect your peers to human rights issues, convene them in a fun and engaging way. Check out the project ideas at the end of this document, and mark your calendar for important international days. A few of these moments include the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (May 17), World Day Against Trafficking (July 30), Human Rights Day (December 10), International Women's Day (March 8), and more.

Further, the United Nations launched two public campaigns to advance women's rights and LGBT rights: "He for She" and "Free & Equal." Your campus chapter can leverage these campaigns to raise awareness on campus, and be sure to reference the end of this guide to take advantage of opportunities for funding.



Track Two: UN Reporting and Consultations

From 2013-2015, UNA-USA hosted grassroots chapter consultations across the nation focused on the new Global Goals, the U.S. Universal Periodic Review, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the UN Human Rights Committee. These experiences were instructive in spotlighting intense interests from UNA-USA chapters and campus advocates in UN reporting, but also best practices for organizing consultation-oriented events as well as relevant follow-up advocacy.

Opportunities for 2016-2017 include grants for chapters to launch consultations with the goal of crafting concrete inputs on any the following:

Treaty Body Review Shadow Reports: CERD, ICCPR, CAT (2017)

Universal Periodic Review: Status of U.S. review, recommendations, implementation, and next steps

UN Special Procedures/Human Rights Office: Calls for inputs (TBD)

Stay tuned for updates on how to participate!



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Track Three: Trainings and Advocacy

In person trainings allow UNA-USA members to hear from professional staff on the issues facing the United Nations and global community. These activities include briefings for effective advocacy on Capitol Hill, the GenUN Fellows program, the U.S.-UN Youth Observer Program, and workshops related to UN reporting. Grants can be leveraged to broaden the scope of these trainings to include emerging campus leaders, as well as to connect more young human rights advocates to the UN human rights system. Opportunities include:

UNA-USA: Members' Day at the UN (February- NYC), Annual Leadership Summit (June- Washington, DC)

UN and Global: WFUNA Human Rights Training (July- Geneva), CSW (March- NYC)

Campus Chapters: On-site advocacy training for chapter members and presentations from UN speakers

Campus chapters are encouraged to invite UNA-USA and UN Foundation staff to come to campus. We can also conduct Skype or Google Hangouts if travel is prohibitive.



Key Dates

April 17, 2016

Deadline for 2016-2017 GenUN Fellowship Applications

April 18, 2016

Deadline for Leadership Summit Scholarship Applications

June 11, 2016

Campus Chapters Human Rights Initiative Training

June 12-14, 2016

UNA-USA Annual Leadership Summit

June 20, 2016

World Refugee Day

July 2016

Applications for Human Rights Project Funding Available

October 24, 2016

United Nations Day

December 10, 2016

Human Rights Day



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Issue Briefs: LGBTI Human Rights

Under the leadership of UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon, the UN has made major strides in the advancement of LGBTI human rights around the globe. This includes the first UN resolution on preventing violence and discrimination on the basis of gender identity passed by the UN Human Rights Council, the UN's top human rights organ, in December 2011.

In July 2013 the UN Human Rights Office also launched a groundbreaking global public information effort, the UN Free and Equal Campaign, aimed at changing hearts and minds to combat homophobia and transphobia. The UN Free and Equal campaign has since reached 2 billion persons via viral videos, factsheets, events, and local spin-off campaigns in nearly every region. In 2016, the UN Postal Administration and the UN Free and Equal Campaign launched the world's first ever stamps promoting global LGBTI equality. In late 2015, the United States convened members of the UN Security Council for the first time to discuss violence against LGBTI persons, focusing on threats to gay refugees from Iraq and Syria.

Despite this remarkable progress, 76 countries continue to criminalize same-sex relations, with some governments even having the death penalty. A UN report has found evidence of violence and discrimination in every region of the world. There is also need to ensure the LGBTI community is both engaged and included in new Sustainable Development Goals.



Resources

- UN Free and Equal Campaign
- UN Human Rights Office on the Prevention of LGBT Violence and Discrimination

Key Acton Dates

- May 17:** International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
- June:** International LGBTI Pride Month
- October 24:** UN Day
- December 10:** Human Rights Day

Key UN Organizations and Initiatives

- UN Human Rights Council
- UN Human Rights Office
- UN Free and Equal Campaign
- UN Development Program
- UNAIDS



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Issue Briefs: Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is widely considered a contemporary form of human slavery, impacting more than 20 million persons globally in virtually every country of the world, including the United States. The UN plays a critical role in combating trafficking ranging from supporting a universal international legal framework and spreading critical norms to providing direct assistance to victims of trafficking.

Importantly, the UN Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking, a legally-binding international treaty, provides an internationally definition for human trafficking and currently has over 165 ratifications. Similarly, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) not only conducts systematic reporting on trafficking patterns worldwide, it also aids victims of trafficking—including those in the United States—through the Voluntary Trust for Victims of Human Trafficking.

The UN General Assembly has also adopted a Global Strategy on combating trafficking by consensus, providing a non-binding road map for all UN member-states to follow. In September 2015, countries at the UN also unanimously agreed to a commitment in the Global Goals to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children” (Goal 16, Target 2). Recently, the UN Security Council also convened to discuss international efforts to combat trafficking for sexual abuse.

Despite these crucial mechanisms, there are more human slaves in the world today than during the Atlantic Slave Trade of the colonial period. Moreover, despite bipartisan efforts in the U.S. combined with international actors like the UN, more awareness is needed on the exceptional scale of human trafficking.



Key UN Organizations and Initiatives

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- UN Human Rights Council
- UN Human Rights Office
- Palermo Protocol
- UN Voluntary Trust for Victims of Human Trafficking

Key Action Dates

- July 30:** World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
- December 2:** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- December 10:** Human Rights Day

Resources

- UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons
- Palermo Protocol



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Issue Briefs: Women's Rights and Combating Gender-Based Violence

Empowering women and girls has emerged as a top-level global issue, especially at the UN. The binding UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been ratified by all but a handful of UN member states, including the United States.

The establishment of UN Women in 2010 also marked a historic step to support global norms on gender equality, help UN member states to implement key standards, and to coordinate UN efforts on gender equality.

Most recently, the new Sustainable Development Goals, agreed to at a historic convening of world leaders in September 2015, include an ambitious agreement to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” The Global Goals, while not legally binding, are meant to apply to all 193 member states and include targets on providing universal access to sexual and reproductive rights as well as combating violence against all women and girls, including human trafficking.

Global champions like Pakistan’s Malala Yousafzai have also used the UN to bring the international spotlight to the need ensure access to education by women and girls. Similarly, the UN He for She Campaign has galvanized global attention on the need to bring men and boys into dialogues on empowering women and girls. Finally, an international Cities for CEDAW movement has emerged attempting to connect the CEDAW to local communities, even in countries that have yet to ratify the treaty. Similarly, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women has also launched as a tool provide direct assistance to women and girls around the world.

Every March, gender-equality advocates from UN member-states, the private sector, and civil society all descend on the UN and convene worldwide to mark International Women’s Day and the launch of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This is key moment for agenda-setting on international efforts to advance gender equality as well as for advocates to share lessons learned and best practices.



Key UN Organization and Initiatives

- He for She Campaign
- UN Women
- CEDAW Convention
- Cities for CEDAW Movement

Key Action Dates

- March 8:** International Women's Day
- October 11:** International Day of the Girl Child
- December 10:** Human Rights Day

Resources

- Sustainable Development Goal 5
- Girl Declaration



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Issue Briefs: Refugees



The United Nations has played a critical role in providing essential services to refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and displaced persons around the world, including most visibly with the crisis in Syria. This includes the support of a robust international legal framework to protect the rights of refugees as well as the provision of food, education, housing, as well as health assistance to tens of millions people worldwide.

The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees is the core international legal framework defining what a refugee is and what international obligations are owed to refugees. The Convention not only defines what refugee is, it also includes the rights of refugees including access to courts, the right to education, right to housing, and the right to be issued identity cards and documents.

The UN Refugee Agency, which works to implement the Convention on Refugees, was established in December 1950 by a resolution in the General Assembly. The UN Refugee Agency is almost entirely funded by volunteer contributions from governments and the EU and has a staff of more than 9,300 people in more than 120 countries. Globally, not just in Syria, this includes assisting 38 million internally displaced people, 13 million refugees, 10 million stateless people, more than 1.2 million asylum seekers, and millions of returnees.

The World Food Program provided food assistance to over 4 million Syrians in 2015. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA), another UN Refugee Agency partner, has delivered key reproductive health and gender based violence services to affected Syrians in Damascus, Aleppo as well as Syrians in Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt among other areas. In 2015, member of the UN Security Council also convened for a historic meeting to discuss violence against LGBTI refugees in Iraq and Syria.

Key UN Organization and Initiatives

- UN Refugee Agency
- World Food Program
- UN FPA
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- UNICEF

Dates

- May 23-24:** World Humanitarian Summit
- June 20:** World Refugees Day
- December 10:** Human Rights Day



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Issue Briefs: Combating Racism

The UN human rights system includes several legally binding treaties relevant to combating racism, including the UN International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which the U.S. Senate has ratified. The UN Human Rights Council has also mandated several special mechanisms to assist member states on this issue, including the Working Group on Persons of African Descent, which UNA-USA members visited the U.S. in early 2015.

As part of its treaty commitments, for example, the U.S. has sent national reports to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the organ charged with assisting countries with implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, on progress related to combating racism in the United States. Both U.S. citizens as well as federal, state, and local U.S. officials have also testified on efforts to combat racial discrimination at the UN Human Rights Council based in Geneva.

Similarly, race-related issues featured prominently in the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review—a UN tool that evaluates the human rights records of all 193 UN member states—of the United States in 2015. Several U.S. civil society groups as well as countries have made policy recommendations to the U.S. on issues ranging from racial inequality, the conditions U.S. prisons, gaps in the U.S. criminal justice system to police brutality. Many human rights experts and advocates have suggested it is critical to monitor review U.S. efforts to implement of these recommendations on the ground.

Key UN Organizations and Initiatives

- UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Universal Periodic Review
- UN Working Group on People of African Descent
- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



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Issue Briefs: Tenth Anniversary of the UN Human Rights Council

In 2016, the UN will mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN's top human rights organ and only global-level intergovernmental human rights body. The UN Human Rights Council was established in 2006 to replace the troubled UN Human Rights Commission. The new Council included aspects distinguishing it from the Human Rights Commission including term limits for members, a membership-suspension mechanism, and a Universal Periodic Review tool to assess the human rights records of all 193 UN member states.

Initially, the U.S. refused to engage the Council, claiming that reforms had not gone far enough to distinguish it from its discredited predecessor. However, in 2009 the U.S. reversed this policy and has since served two full terms as an active Council member.

While not perfect, many Council experts believe U.S. leadership on the Council has allowed the body to mature as a global human rights organ. Over the last six years, for example, the U.S. has created commissions of inquiry to track human rights atrocities in North Korea and Syria as well as created a UN "special rapporteur" mandate to investigate rights violations in Iran. The Council also passed the first-ever UN resolution on the preventing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council, Keith Harper, has also called the Council's "Universal Periodic Review" tool a historic innovation for impacting human rights on the ground.

The Council's 10 year anniversary in 2016 marks a critical time to take stock on UN Human Rights Council. This includes the Council's impact in promoting universal human rights globally as well as the role of U.S. leadership on the organ.



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Issue: Water, Healthcare, and Economic and Social Rights



Drawing from the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed to by the UN General Assembly in 1948, a wide array of UN legally binding instruments and mechanisms promote “economic and social rights.” This includes the right to clean water as well as health care, housing, and food among other rights referred to as “positive” rights. These contrast with “civil and political rights” or “negatives” rights which tend to focus on things governments shouldn’t do such as torture or restrict the freedom of speech. Many UN agencies assist states with capacity building along these lines including the UN Development Program, International Labor Organization, and World Bank Group.

Most recently, the water contamination crisis in Flint, Michigan has raised both domestic and international attention on clean water as a critical human rights issue. In February 2016, a group of independent human rights mandated by the UN Human Rights Council released a joint statement calling the situation in Flint a “human rights issue.” While the U.S. has ratified a handful of core human rights treaties, it has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In several UN human rights forums, the U.S. has acknowledged the importance of issues like clean water and access to health care, but tends to focus frame these issues as significant development priorities rather than human rights issues per se.

On the other hand, the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, agreed to by all UN member states in September 2015—while non-binding on UN member—address many key social challenges. For example, the new agenda includes goals on ensuring clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), good health and well-being (Goal 3), eliminating hunger (Goal 2), as well as eradicating extreme poverty (1). UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called the new global goals a critical advancement for human rights and reiterated the need to ensure the goals reach everyone.



Project Ideas

On December 10th, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a groundbreaking document which outlined the 30 fundamental rights that people are entitled to across the world. In celebration, December 10th has been named Human Rights Day; how is your Campus Chapter going to celebrate it?

Human Rights Day is close to time for final exams, so commemorate it earlier or later if it works better for your campus. Remember that the administration or other organizations, such as Amnesty International, may be able to help support any events you want to hold. Ask them to join in! Most importantly, make a difference and take action today as a chapter.

1. Pass a student government resolution: Work with a member of your student government or student council to pass a resolution in honor of Human Rights Day.
2. Write an op-ed or article in your school's newspaper: School newspapers can be a great place to talk about the importance of human rights around the world. Learn how to write an effective and powerful article here.
3. Stage a public reading: Set up a microphone in your student center or, if the weather's right, outside and read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in full.
4. Set up a free expression wall: Set up a blank wall or giant piece of paper and encourage your friends to write about what human rights mean to them. Check-out an example here.
5. Sign up and advocate for issues important to the UN such as energy and climate, peace and security, global health, and girls and women. Learn more and take action here.
6. Attend UNA-USA's annual Member's Day and Leadership Summit to learn more about the issues important to the UN. Hear from speakers and connect with others to see what other chapters across the country are doing to raise awareness and engage the public. Register here.
7. Make a viral video about human rights day: Film your UNA chapter kicking it Gangnam style to celebrate human rights and put the video online: it'll go viral in a matter of minutes.
8. Start a Facebook campaign: Encourage your friends to change their profile pictures to an individualized Human Rights Day banner. Learn more here.
9. Hand out t-shirts and other gear: If you have the funds, buy t-shirts, sunglasses, or even 90's-style sweatbands featuring a slogan about human rights to give to your classmates.
10. Coordinate an extra-credit lecture: Work with professors in the history department, the law school, or the international relations program to host a lecture about human rights, and work with other professors in the department to get attendees extra credit—trust us, your friends will thank you. Learn more here.
11. Hold a candlelight vigil or other commemorative event: While it's important to have fun, human rights are serious business. Consider holding a vigil or other event to commemorate those who have suffered human rights abuses and those whose human rights are still violated.
12. Have a film screening to entertain and educate students and community members about pressing international issues. Documentaries, dramas, and student films alike can inspire action, providing great opportunities to recruit new members. Learn more here.
13. Hold a talent show, dance, or party: Big social events are a great way to bring awareness to an issue, so why not have a human rights-themed party? Free admission if you dress up like Eleanor Roosevelt or Ban Ki-Moon.



National and International Opportunities

Leadership Summit

The 2016 UNA-USA Leadership Summit & Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. will be hosted Sunday, June 12–Tuesday, June 14. An additional day for campus chapter leaders will occur on Saturday, June 11.

As the U.S. prepares for major public discourse on political and policy priorities throughout 2016, UNA-USA's Annual Meeting and Advocacy Day will be a pivotal moment to remind our lawmakers: U.S. leadership at the UN remains vital. Help make the case to Congress by joining us in Washington this June! The meeting will feature interactive skills trainings, issue briefings with high ranking officials, and networking opportunities that will give you the resources you need to be a successful advocate. The Leadership Summit will culminate with Advocacy Day, when UNA-USA members converge on Capitol Hill to meet with elected officials and make for a strong U.S.-UN relationship. Save the date for an incredible Leadership Summit and Advocacy Day!

WFUNA Human Rights Training

The annual WFUNA Human Rights Training in Geneva aims to empower UNA youth members to take a leading role in upholding human rights in their communities and around the world. The program informs and educates young UNA members about human rights standards, human rights instruments and related implementing mechanisms, and train them on how to conduct effective human rights education and awareness raising activities within their communities. The four days training includes intensive tutoring, discussions with key human rights actors and provides instructions on how to follow up on education activities to be carried out by participants with the support of the UNAs. UNA-USA will fund the attendance of two or three campus chapter leaders, so look for the application to attend in June.

Project Micro-Grants

In the lead up to Human Rights Day on December 10, we hope to highlight at least 50 events nationwide. To support the human rights work of campus chapters, UNA-USA will provide micro-grants to groups with innovative project ideas. Funding will range from \$100-\$500, depending on the scale and impact of the event. After reviewing the issue briefs, impact methods, and project ideas in this document, submit an idea for project funding through the online application, which will be available in July.



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