



A European Youth Forum definition of rights-based approach

Approved by Board in August 2014

"The European Youth Forum adopts a rights-based approach to youth policy that integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the development, implementation and evaluation of youth policy. A rights-based approach means that we:

- Empower young people to claim, exercise and defend their rights and fulfill their responsibilities through their active participation in society;*
- Encourage mutually accountable partnerships between young people and duty bearers responsible for validating youth rights;*
- Actively work against the discrimination of young people on age or any other grounds, and towards ensuring the full inclusion of youth within society."*

Annex 1

DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF RIGHTS BASED APPROACHES

(Source: IDS Working Paper 234, What is the “rights-based approach” all about? Perspectives from international development agencies, Celestine Nyamu-Musembi and Andrea Cornwall, November 2004).

A rights-based approach to development describes situations not simply in terms of human needs, or developmental requirements, but in terms of society's obligations to respond to the inalienable rights of individuals, empowers people to demand justice as a right, not as a charity, and gives communities a moral basis from which to claim international assistance when needed. (UN Secretary-General 1998)

The human rights approach to development means empowering people to take their own decisions, rather than being the passive objects of choices made on their behalf. (DFID 2000b: 7)

A democracy and human-rights approach translates poor people's needs into rights, and recognises individuals as active subjects and stakeholders. It further identifies the obligations of states that are required to take steps – for example through legislation, policies and programmes – whose purpose is to respect, promote and fulfil the human rights of all people within their jurisdiction. (SIDA Swedish Development Agency 2002: 34)

A rights-based approach affirms that all citizens are entitled to the resources that satisfy their basic needs. Additionally, every citizen – rich and poor – has the right to information and participation in the development process. (ActionAid Kenya 2002)

A rights-based approach deliberately and explicitly focuses on people achieving the minimum conditions for living with dignity. It does so by exposing the root causes of vulnerability and marginalization and expanding the range of responses. It empowers people to claim and exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities. A rights-based approach recognises poor people as having inherent rights essential to livelihood security – rights that are validated by international standards and laws. (CARE 2000: 38)

SCF supports a rights-based approach . . . because: rights imply obligations; . . . rights provide a move from dependency to empowerment; . . . rights can encourage responsibilities. (SCF UK website (www.scf.org.uk) 2002)

A rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. (Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 2001)

In this 50th anniversary year of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is important to remind ourselves of the value of a rights-based approach. Christian Aid affirms the equal rights of all people as 'made in the image of God'. (McGee, Robinson and van Diesen 1998)

An ethical approach to globalization can mean nothing less than a rights-based approach to development. We must struggle not only against torture, arbitrary detention and unfair trials, but also against hunger, illiteracy and discrimination if human rights are to be meaningful in developing countries. (Amnesty International 2002: 4)