



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as a tool
for human rights education“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2021 / Vienna 2021

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 992 884

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt /
Postgraduate programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Human Rights

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Research Question and Methodology	3
1.2	Limitations	4
2.	Key Terminology	4
2.1	Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	4
2.2	Human Rights Education (HRE)	6
3.	Massive Open Online Courses as a tool for human rights education	8
3.1	A brief overview of human rights MOOC providers.....	9
3.1.1	Coursera.....	9
3.1.2	EdX.....	10
3.1.3	FutureLearn	10
3.1.4	Global Campus of Human Rights.....	11
3.1.5	Other platforms.....	11
3.2	Human rights and MOOCs	12
3.2.1	The right to education.....	12
3.2.2	The right to equality and non-discrimination	16
3.2.3	The right to freedom of expression.....	17
3.2.4	The right to privacy	19
3.2.5	The right to human rights education.....	20
3.2.6	Other human rights	20
4.	Designing MOOCs for human rights education.....	22
4.1	Key roles in the production process.....	22
4.2	The process of designing MOOCs for human rights education.....	25
4.2.1	Design methodology.....	25
4.2.2	Step 1: Setting up the design team.....	26
4.2.3	Step 2: Conducting a needs assessment.....	26
4.2.4	Step 3: Drafting learning outcomes	27
4.2.5	Step 4: Envisioning the course build-up.....	28
4.2.6	Step 5: Designing storyboards.....	28
4.2.7	Step 6: Migrating to the learning journey document.....	29

4.2.8	Step 7: Developing course content	29
4.2.9	Step 8: Facilitating user-testing	30
4.2.10	Step 9: Launching the course	31
4.2.11	Step 10: Monitoring and moderation	31
4.2.12	Step 11: Evaluating the course	32
4.2.13	Step 12: Re-launching learning experiences	32
4.3	Design principles for human rights education MOOCs.....	33
4.3.1	Documents and pedagogical frameworks informing HRE design principles 33	
4.3.1.1	World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-2024).....	34
4.3.1.2	UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training	37
4.3.1.3	Transformative human rights education (THRED).....	39
4.3.1.4	The Council of Europe Charter	41
4.3.1.5	Establishment of HRE design principles.....	42
4.3.2	HRE Design principles for MOOCs.....	43
4.3.2.1	Learner-centered design	44
4.3.2.2	Participatory design.....	47
4.3.2.3	Accessible design	52
4.3.2.4	Inclusive design.....	56
4.3.2.5	Action-oriented design	59
5.	Critical Analysis of human rights MOOCs	61
5.1	Selection criteria	61
5.2	Corpus.....	62
5.3	Analytical framework: HRE design principles	64
5.4	Case studies.....	66
5.4.1	Human Rights Defenders (Amnesty International) via edX	66
5.4.2	Promoting and Defending Human Rights (Global Campus of Human Rights) 71	
5.4.3	International Women's Health and Human Rights (Stanford University) via Coursera.....	74
5.4.4	Defending Dignity (Amnesty International UK) via FutureLearn	78
5.4.5	Global Business and Human Rights (ZHAW) via edX.....	81
5.4.6	Comparative Analysis of all MOOCs.....	84

6.	Good practices designing MOOCs for HRE	85
6.1	Eight good practises for HRE MOOC design.....	85
6.2	Design templates.....	87
6.3	Purpose of design templates	87
6.4	Challenges of design templates.....	87
6.5	Prerequisites of templates	88
6.6	Template development.....	89
6.7	About the templates	90
6.8	Templates: Example of exercise typology.....	91
6.9	Templates: Example of learning journey template (3 hours)	92
7.	Conclusion.....	95
8.	Bibliography.....	101

List of Abbreviations

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACHR	American Declaration of Human Rights
AIHRD	Amnesty International: Human Rights Defenders
AIUDHR	Amnesty International: Defending Dignity – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
CAST	Center for Applied Special Technology
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFR	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
CMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
COE	Council of Europe
COVID-19	Corona virus disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EDC/HRE	Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
EU	European Union
GCHR	Global Campus of Human Rights
GCPDHR	Global Campus of Human Rights: Promoting and Defending Human Rights
HRD	Human Rights Defender
HRE	Human Rights Education
HTML	HyperText Markup Language
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDs	Instructional designers
IT	Information Technology

KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KU	Katholieke Universiteit
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Subject matter expert
SUWHHR	Stanford University: International Women's Health and Human Rights
THRED	Transformative Human Rights Education
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDHRET	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WPHRE	World Programme for Human Rights Education
ZHAW	Zurich University of Applied Sciences
ZUGBHR	Zurich University of Applied Sciences: Global Business and Human Rights

1. Introduction

The following thesis was written in the framework of the Vienna Human Rights Master's Program in 2021 and is informed by my previous assignment as Global Education Technology Project Manager at Amnesty International. During my assignment, my team and I developed a variety of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that were launched on edX and FutureLearn with the aim of equipping hundreds of thousands of new learners with knowledge and skills for taking action for human rights.

With the rapid evolution of education technology, new and innovative ways of teaching and learning have emerged. Today, 'Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have become one of the most popular ways of acquiring new knowledge and skills.'¹ Hence, it is not surprising that renowned universities, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations have utilized MOOCs to equip learners globally with the knowledge, skills, and values to promote a universal culture of human rights.

A variety of international documents explicitly reference MOOCs as a tool for change: The fourth Action Plan of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education² refers to MOOCs as a tool for HRE and similarly, UNESCO has specifically endorsed MOOCs as one strategy to further inclusive and equitable quality education.³

The outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of education technologies across all educational sectors. Millions of learners have joined MOOC platforms as alternatives to in-person learning opportunities. Meanwhile dozens of universities have turned to MOOC providers to ensure learning

¹ M. Taheri, K. Hölzle, C. Meinel, 'Towards Culturally Inclusive MOOCs: A Design-Based Approach', *CSEDU 2019 - Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Computer Supported Education*, vol. 1, 2019, p. 597.

² See 4.3.1.1.

³ See 3.3.2.

continuity. With the ongoing rise of MOOCs for learners globally, new requirements and responsibilities emerge.

As learning management systems and authoring tools for MOOCs become more accessible to organizations and other human rights entities, there is a need to provide practical guidance on the development and implementation of MOOCs based on design principles that are firmly rooted within human rights. This guidance should also take aspects of instructional design into account to cater towards education *for* and *through* human rights.⁴ Multiple studies have highlighted the fact that many MOOCs do not live up to high pedagogical standards and focus entirely on knowledge delivery.⁵ Quality assurance frameworks on the global level are scarce, and although practical guidance on MOOC development exists, there is a lack of guidance specifically tailored to global HRE MOOCs.

This thesis will first explore how MOOC technology advances or hampers the realization of human rights and based on these premises examine MOOCs as a tool for human rights education with special emphasis on pedagogical design principles that can guide MOOC production. After outlining a prototypical production process of HRE MOOCs in the context of human rights organizations, the thesis will critically analyse a variety of HRE documents and frameworks to establish HRE design principles for MOOC development. For this purpose, the thesis will approach the subject matter from an interdisciplinary perspective at the crossroads of human rights and instructional design. After establishing the HRE design principles, the thesis will analyse five MOOCs to identify to what extent various MOOC design teams have prioritized these design principles. The analysis will provide the basis for developing design templates that fulfil HRE design principles.

This thesis aims to contribute in three ways to the ongoing discussion: by outlining a prototypical MOOC production process in the context of human rights entities, by establishing HRE design principles based on existing HRE documents and pedagogical

⁴ Cf United Nations General Assembly Res 66/137, 19 December 2011, Article 2.

⁵ Cf J. Duarte, R. Rosabel, S. Mengual-Andres, et al., 'The pedagogical quality of MOOCs based on a systematic review of JCR and Scopus publications (2013-2015)', *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, vol. 75, 2017, pp. 29-46.

frameworks from an instructional design perspective, and by practically applying these design principles to existing HRE MOOCs in order to derive good practises for HRE MOOC templates that help inform the practical implementation of MOOCs.

1.1 Research Question and Methodology

This thesis aims to contribute to the development of HRE design principles for online learning, and more specifically in the context of MOOCs as a tool for HRE. First, the thesis will explore how MOOCs as technology affect the realization of human rights to highlight shortfalls and potentials of MOOCs for HRE purposes. Secondly, the thesis will outline the design process of HRE MOOCs to encourage a better understanding of challenges and opportunities during the production process and provide entities that are interested in developing their own MOOCs with basic guidance. The thesis will then critically analyse UNDHRET and other relevant documents to condense their stipulations into HRE design principles that can practically be applied to HRE learning through MOOCs. Based on the established HRE design principles, the thesis will define key performance indicators that will be used as framework to analyse five HRE MOOCs to answer the research question:

How and to what extent do human rights MOOCs meet the HRE design principles set forth by the UN Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training and HRE pedagogical frameworks?

The results of the analysis will be used to describe the production of design templates based on the derived HRE principles that can be used as a starting point for developing HRE MOOCs. To ensure that the design templates are useful tools for HRE MOOC design, special attention will be given to the realization and practical implementation through currently available MOOC platforms. The templates will be informed by the research in Chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis and enhanced by my own experience designing MOOCs as part of Amnesty International's Global Human Rights Education Programme.

1.2 Limitations

Due to the rapidly evolving online learning space and the steady increase in global, regional, and local MOOC providers, this thesis will focus solely on a selection of HRE MOOCs offered on the largest providers and Global Campus of Human Rights. This should not be misconstrued or misinterpreted that smaller scale platforms do not also significantly contribute to the dissemination and facilitation of HRE through MOOCs.

Another limitation of this thesis is that it can only provide a snapshot of the current status of the analysed MOOCs. MOOCs evolve over time. Features and learning components might be updated, removed, or added with the next course run, or courses might disappear entirely from provider catalogues when design teams do not have the time to re-run or update courses. With these limitations in mind, the analysis in the last chapters of this thesis is representative of a specific moment in time. While it will continue to be demonstrative of good practise and areas for improvement that can be generalised to inform the production of HRE MOOCs, we may see new emergent issues as technology and standards change and similarly some current issues may well become obsolete.

2. Key Terminology

The following chapters provide a short introduction to the definitions and terminology of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Human Rights Education (HRE). Definitions of MOOCs and HRE have evolved over time. MOOCs due to a rapidly changing technological environment, and HRE due to the need to develop stronger and tailor-made pedagogical and educational frameworks that strengthen its goals.

2.1 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

The term Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was coined in 2008 by Dave Cormier at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada. Three years later, in fall 2011, Sebastian Thrun and Peter Norvig from Stanford University launched a course on

Artificial Intelligence that reached around 160,000 learners globally. It was the first time in history an online course was delivered at massive scale to a worldwide audience.⁶

Hoy and Brigham define MOOCs as ‘a new type of online class that allow anyone, anywhere, to participate via video lectures, computer graded tests, and discussion forums.’⁷ Recent definitions are more nuanced and recognize that MOOCs do have prerequisites such as internet access and bandwidth. Castaño-Muñoz, Kalz, Kreijns and Punie (2018) define MOOCs as ‘online courses without entrance requirements other than Internet access. Consequently, MOOCs are free for the learners and do not set a maximum number of participants.’⁸ Deng, Benckendorff and Gannaway (2019) put emphasis on the *course providers* and describe MOOCs as ‘open, large-scale web-based courses designed and delivered by accredited higher education institutions and organisations in which anyone with a smart device and internet connection can participate.’⁹ Other researchers put the *learner intention* at the heart of their definitions:

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) offer people the opportunity to study a variety of courses for a variety of reasons, including personal interest, professional development, and social networking. Likewise, the MOOCs themselves vary in intended purpose, in terms of how designers intend their MOOC to serve the needs of prospective students, especially in addressing intrinsic goals (e.g., general interest), or extrinsic goals (e.g., professional development).¹⁰

Due to the rapid evolution of education technology, early definitions of MOOCs would be considered inaccurate in today’s context. To a large extent this is owing to changes introduced by MOOC provider platforms themselves. However, today MOOCs are still

⁶ Cf A. Kaplan and M. Haenlein, 'Higher education and the digital revolution: About MOOCs, SPOCs, social media, and the Cookie Monster', *Business Horizons*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2016, pp. 441–50.

⁷ M. Hoy, 'MOOCs 101: An Introduction to Massive Open Online Courses', *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, vol 33, no. 1, 2014, pp. 85-91.

⁸ J. Castaño-Muñoz, M. Kalz, K. Kreijns, et al., 'Who is taking MOOCs for teachers’ professional development on the use of ICT? A cross-sectional study from Spain', *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2018, pp. 607-624.

⁹ R. Deng, P. Benckendorff, D. Gannaway, 'Progress and new directions for teaching and learning in MOOCs', *Computers & Education*, vol. 129, 2019, pp. 48-60.

¹⁰ A. Brooker, L. Corrin, P. De Barba, et al., 'A tale of two MOOCs: How student motivation and participation predict learning outcomes in different MOOCs', *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2018, p. 73.

largely defined by their format and scale. MOOCs hosted by the largest MOOC providers in the world (edX, Coursera, FutureLearn) who continue to shape our understanding of MOOCs are neither always massive nor entirely open. Consequently, a universally accepted, valid definition of MOOCs, does not exist. MOOCs are different from traditional online courses because they provide learners with the option to discuss, share and actively engage with each other in the online environment. Often, and although there is still much development needed, MOOCs are scroll-based to enhance usability for mobile users and facilitate forms of collaborative learning through discussion forums, peer-activities and other interactive spaces that enable participation and collaboration among learners. The definition that will be used for the purpose of this thesis is: MOOCs are online learning experiences designed for unlimited participation available through the internet. They are *massive*, due to their potential to reach large numbers of learners, *open* because they are publicly accessible through the internet, *online* as they are made available through the world wide web and *courses* because they enable participants to reach specified learning outcomes. MOOCs encompass self-paced, self-directed, and instructor-led learning journeys with strong variations in length, purpose, and methodology.¹¹

2.2 Human Rights Education (HRE)

Definitions of HRE frequently have in common an emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes or values in alignment with universally agreed human rights principles for the purpose of promoting a universal culture of human rights.¹² The following paragraphs will outline some of the most commonly cited definitions. Art. 2 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET), the first UN document that was specifically dedicated to HRE, states that:

Human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and

¹¹ Cf D. Jansen and R. Schuwer, *Institutional MOOC strategies in Europe*, Heerlen, Fontys Hogescholen, 2015, pp. 3-6.

¹² Cf P. Brander, L. De Witte, N. Ghanea et al., *COMPASS - Manual for human rights education with young people*, 2nd ed., 2020, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, pp. 17-19.

observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.¹³

The second article of the declaration also highlights, the now commonly accepted approach, that HRE encompasses learning *about, through* and *for* human rights.¹⁴ Tibbitts concludes in this regard, that ‘definition also draws attention to teaching and learning processes and reaffirms the outcomes of HRE as being oriented towards taking action (...).’¹⁵

The Council of Europe, an international organisation with 47 member states and the aim to uphold human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Europe, launched a Human Rights Education Youth Programme in 2000 as ‘a direct contribution to the core mission of the organisation to promote and protect human rights.’¹⁶ The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education defines HRE as:

education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁷

¹³ United Nations General Assembly Res 66/137, 19 December 2011, Article 2(1).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ F. Tibbitts, 'Evolution of Human Rights Education Models', in M. Bajaj (ed.), *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017, p. 71.

¹⁶ Council of Europe, 'HRE Youth Programme', available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-education-youth/human-rights-education-youth-programme> [accessed 28 June 2021]

¹⁷ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007) C 303/01, section 2b, p. 6.

Amnesty International, one of the world's largest human rights NGOs, has published a variety of definitions of HRE in their publications. Amnesty's guide on human rights friendly schooling puts emphasis on participation and communities:

Human rights education is a participatory practice aimed at empowering individuals and communities, equipping them with the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that they need to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.¹⁸

Another grassroots initiative that defines HRE more as a way of living than a process, is the People's Movement for Human Rights Learning.¹⁹ The organization focusing on 'promoting, enhancing and providing learning about human rights as relevant to people's daily lives at all levels of society'²⁰ also prefers the term 'human rights learning' instead of 'human rights education' to emphasize the importance of the individual over the system.

3. Massive Open Online Courses as a tool for human rights education

It comes as no surprise that major educational institutions and human rights organisations, from Amnesty International and Oxfam to Global Campus of Human Rights and Stanford University have explored MOOCs as tools to deliver HRE to global audiences. The following chapter will provide an overview of some of the largest, current providers of human rights MOOCs on the global level.

¹⁸ Amnesty International, 'Becoming a Human Rights Friendly School', Pol 32/001/2012, 2012, p. 2., available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/HRELibrary/pol320012012eng.pdf> [accessed 28 June 2021]

¹⁹ Cf The People's Movement for Human Rights Learning, 'A Brief Introduction To Our Thinking', available at: <https://www.pdhre.org/about.html> [accessed 28 June 2021].

²⁰ Ibid.

3.1 A brief overview of human rights MOOC providers

With a combined 180 million learners, Coursera, edX and FutureLearn are the largest MOOC providers in the world.²¹ Beyond these three MOOC behemoths, regional and local MOOC provider platforms continue to emerge to serve learners in multiple languages, regions, and countries. The only independent MOOC provider examined in this thesis is Global Campus of Human Rights, which provides both the technical framework as well as the design and content of its MOOCs. The following paragraphs will provide a brief overview of human rights MOOC providers.

3.1.1 Coursera

Coursera is an American online course provider launched by the Stanford university professors Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller.²² The platform offers MOOCs in more than 40 languages and works with more than 200 partners to deliver MOOCs to more than 70 million learners. In 2020, the countries with the most learners were United States, India, Mexico, China and Brazil, while Bangladesh, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Argentina and Philippines were among the fastest growing countries.²³ The platform shows 177 search results for the keyword 'human rights' but in most of these courses human rights plays a minor role and is mentioned briefly in a chapter or module. Some MOOCs specific to human rights are: International Women's Health and Human Rights (Stanford University), Refugees in the 21st Century (University of London), Children's Human Rights (University of Geneva), Human Rights for Open Societies (Utrecht University), Introduction aux Droits de l'Homme (University of Geneva), International Labour Law (Saint Petersburg State University), and Inequality and Democracy (Utrecht University). As MOOC offerings are updated regularly, this list can only provide a snapshot. Most of the courses on Coursera are available free to audit. Learners must pay for verified certificates.²⁴

²¹ Class Central, 'By The Numbers: MOOCs in 2020', 2020, available at:

<https://www.classcentral.com/report/mooc-stats-2020/> [accessed 28 June 2021]

²² Cf C. Severance, 'Teaching the World: Daphne Koller and Coursera', in *Computer*, vol. 45, no. 8, California, 2012, p. 8.

²³ Cf. Coursera, *Impact Report 2020*, pp. 6-7, available at: <https://about.coursera.org/press/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Coursera-Impact-Report-2020.pdf> [accessed 28 June 2021].

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 16-20.

3.1.2 EdX

Edx is a non-profit organisation founded in 2012 by Harvard university and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.²⁵ The US based organization reported more than 110 million learners by the end of 2020.²⁶ A search for ‘human rights’ returns 57 results. Courses include International Human Rights Law (Université catholique de Louvain), Human Rights: The Rights of Refugees (Amnesty International), Human Rights Defenders (Amnesty International), International Women’s Health and Human Rights (Stanford University), Human Rights, Human Wrongs: Challenging Poverty, Vulnerability and Exclusion (SDG Academy), Digital Security and Human Rights (Amnesty International), Global Business and Human Rights (ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences), The EU and Human Rights (KU Leuven), Human Rights: The Right to Freedom of Expression (Amnesty International), Make Your School Human Rights Friendly (Amnesty International), Child Protection: Children’s Rights in Theory and Practise (Harvard University), The Right to Protest (Amnesty International), Indigenous Peoples’ Rights (Columbia University) and multiple other courses on related subjects such as sustainable development, democracy and international law. EdX MOOCs are free to audit. Learners who wish to obtain a verified certificate need to pay a fee.²⁷

3.1.3 FutureLearn

FutureLearn is a UK-based MOOC provider founded by the Open University.²⁸ With more than 10 million learners FutureLearn is one of the largest MOOC providers in the world.²⁹ A search for ‘human rights’ returns 30 results. The most relevant courses are Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Amnesty International), Human Rights and International Criminal Law: An Introduction (University of Padova),

²⁵ Cf Edx, 'About us', available at: <https://www.edx.org/about-us> [accessed 28 June 2021].

²⁶ Cf Edx, '2021 Impact Report', available at: https://assets.ctfassets.net/ii9ehdcj88bc/5xW5SCQ7eYU8hEYPEyL4l/4ad615c638f281085af0ce18f59de874/2021-edx-impact_report-english.pdf [accessed 28 June 2021]

²⁷ Cf Edx, 'Learner Help Center', available at: <https://support.edx.org/hc/en-us/articles/206914937-How-do-I-take-a-course-for-free-> [accessed 28 June 2021].

²⁸ Cf FutureLearn, 'About us', available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/about-futurelearn> [accessed 28 June 2021].

²⁹ Cf FutureLearn, 'FutureLearn reaches 10 million learners', 14 November 2019, available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/press-releases/futurelearn-reaches-10-million-learners> accessed 28 June 2021].

Freedom of Movement, Refugees, Traffickers, and Smugglers (University of Kent), Law's absence and Law's Failings (University of Kent) and Critical International Migration Law (University of Kent).

3.1.4 Global Campus of Human Rights

Another provider of human rights education MOOCs, that hosts the technical framework and develops the content, is Global Campus of Human Rights (GCHR), an interdisciplinary centre of excellence supported by the European Union.³⁰ The only truly free platform in this list, GCHR offered five human rights MOOCs in 2020 with 4587 participants.³¹ Courses offered include Child Participation and the Right to a Sustainable Environment, Promoting and Protecting Human Rights: a Global Overview, Children Deprived of Liberty: Learning from the UN Global Study, Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Citizenship and Human Rights Education for Change, Disability as a human rights issue: global and national perspectives, Children's Rights and Technology in the Digital Age, Business and Human Rights, Children Deprived of Liberty: Enacting the recommendations of the UN Global Study, Memory Sites and Human Rights, Monitoring the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons - 2020 Edition, and Gender-based Violence in the Context of Migration.

3.1.5 Other platforms

In line with the definitions of MOOCs as participatory, open, scalable learning spaces, a variety of online course providers will not be subject of this thesis. Most notably Amnesty's *Human Rights Academy* that, according to its HRE progress report 2020, boasts more than 200,000 learners.³² While certainly having massive reach, Amnesty's Academy does not feature collaborative spaces such as discussion forums and

³⁰ Cf Global Campus of Human Rights, 'About us', available at: <https://gchumanrights.org/about-us.html>, [accessed 12 June 2021].

³¹ Cf Global Campus of Human Rights, 'Annual Report 2020', February 2021, p. 63., available at: <https://repository.gchumanrights.org/handle/20.500.11825/1935>, [accessed 12 June 2021].

³² Cf Amnesty International, *2020 HRE Progress Report*, POL 32/4026/2021, 2021. available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol32/4026/2021/en/> [accessed 12 June 2021]

consequently does not host any MOOCs but online courses.³³ Other platforms are not included because they are still in development or do not have comparable massive reach.

3.2 Human rights and MOOCs

As an emerging technology with the potential to deliver education at scale, MOOCs have human rights implications of their own. In particular, on (1) the right to education, (2) the right to equality and non-discrimination, (3) the right to freedom of expression, (4) the right to privacy, (5) the right to human rights education and maybe less obviously (6) other human rights such as right to peaceful assembly, the right to participate in cultural life, and environmental rights.

3.2.1 The right to education

The right to education is enshrined in a variety of internationally recognised human rights documents including Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)³⁴, Art. 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)³⁵, Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)³⁶, Art. 25 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)³⁷ and Art. 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR)³⁸.

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.³⁹

³³ See *ibid.*, on Amnesty International's use of the term MOOCs.

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948.

³⁵ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3.

³⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990) 1577 UNTS 3.

³⁷ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (adopted 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986) 1520 UNTS 217.

³⁸ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007) C 303/01.

³⁹ United Nations General Assembly Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, Article 26(1).

Regarding the right to education, there are three essential components: (1) Education should be *free*, (2) education should be *accessible* and, especially in the context of higher education, (3) *equally accessible*.

With more than 180 million enrolments across Coursera, edX and FutureLearn,⁴⁰ MOOCs have undoubtedly enabled millions of learners to access quality education online. According to Coursera's Impact Report 2020,⁴¹ the fastest growing regions based on enrolment are Asia Pacific (+416%), Middle East and North Africa (+283%), and Latin America (+234%). The countries with the biggest growth in 2020 were Bangladesh, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Argentina, and Philippines. Beyond that, Coursera has 'fostered an initiative across 140 countries to provide learning for tens of thousands of refugees'⁴² and served 10,000 universities by providing 'any college or university impacted by COVID-19 free access to its course catalogue through Coursera for Campus to help them quickly transition to online learning.'⁴³ Similarly, edX launched an Online Campus, 'serving 465 institutions from 72 countries'⁴⁴ by providing a free option for universities to ensure learning continuity. MOOCs do have a variety of other benefits that support the right to education, insofar that they: provide access to materials from renowned institutions that are not accessible to most learners due to high tuition fees or rigorous entry requirements,⁴⁵ enable learners with busy schedules to continue learning in self-paced courses,⁴⁶ and increase the variety of learning opportunities available. A recent study also suggests that MOOCs 'could provide a real opportunity to create learning environments that are beneficial to persons with disabilities.'⁴⁷ Finally, MOOCs also contribute to the dissemination of information about the right to education itself, one

⁴⁰ Class Central, 2020.

⁴¹ Coursera, p. 6.

⁴² Ibid., p. 21.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁴ Edx, 2021, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Cf L. Waks, *The Evolution and Evaluation of Massive Open Online Courses*. New York, Palgrave Pivot, 2016, pp. 103–120.

⁴⁶ Cf M. Li and W. Zou and Y. Shi, 'What Do Participants Think of Today's MOOCs: an Updated Look at the Benefits and Challenges of MOOCs Designed for Working Professionals', *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2020, pp. 307–329.

⁴⁷ P. Cinquin and P. Guittou and H. Sauzéon, 'Designing accessible MOOCs to expand educational opportunities for persons with cognitive impairments', *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 2020., p. 1.

example is available on FutureLearn, 'The Right to Education: Breaking Down the Barriers'⁴⁸, a MOOC offered by University of Glasgow.

Despite these achievements, a deeper look reveals a less encouraging picture, that clearly hampers MOOCs ability to realize their potential as tools for change. According to Mitchell, there 'are a variety of mitigating factors that limit access to MOOCs, many of which are the same as those that also exclude disadvantaged groups from traditional educational models and stem from financial, geographical and educational disparity.'⁴⁹ Four (1) technological, (2) economic, (3) political, and (3) educational barriers, will be further explored below.

(1) Technological barriers: According to Statista, the global digital population encompassed 4.66 billion active internet users in January 2021, meaning that roughly 40% of the world's population did not use the internet during that month. 92.6% of the active users access the internet on their mobile devices.⁵⁰ Many MOOCs are not yet fully optimized for mobile consumption.⁵¹ Expensive or limited bandwidth makes it difficult, costly, or impossible for learners in some locations to download video files and large visual assets that might be essential for following through with the learning experience. And lastly, even if learners do have access to the internet, in some cases learners need to commute vast distances to have access.⁵²

(2) Economic barriers: Contrary to the original idea of MOOCs providing free education to everyone, all major MOOC providers have integrated paywalls in their platforms.

⁴⁸ University of Glasgow, *The Right to Education: Breaking Down the Barriers*, available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/right-to-education> [accessed 12 June 2021].

⁴⁹ A. Mitchell, 'The underlying inequality of MOOCs', 22 August 2013, available at: <https://oeb.global/oeb-insights/moocs-the-hidden-inequality/> [accessed 12 June 2021].

⁵⁰ Cf Statista, 'Global digital population as of January 2021', available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/> [accessed 12 June 2021].

⁵¹ Cf K. Park, H. So, H. Cha, 'Digital Equity and Accessible MOOCs: Accessibility Evaluations of Mobile MOOCs for Learners with Visual Impairments', *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 35, no. 6, 2019, pp. 48-63.

⁵² Cf T. Eriksson and T. Adawi and C. Stöhr, "'Time Is the Bottleneck": A Qualitative Study Exploring Why Learners Drop out of MOOCs', *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2017, pp. 141-142.

Although learners can freely access the bulk of the course materials, certificates and graded activities are often locked out, unless payment is made to upgrade their experience.⁵³ Coursera, edX and FutureLearn have established procedures that provide learners with discounts of up to 90%, but learners who do not have access to the required payment methods, such as credit cards or PayPal, cannot benefit from this support.

(3) *Political barriers*: edX and Coursera are US companies and as such bound by US embargos against other countries. Learners who want to access courses from Cuba, Iran, Syria, and Sudan will see the following message:

Our system indicates that you are trying to access this edX course from a country or region currently subject to U.S. economic and trade sanctions. Unfortunately, because edX is required to comply with export controls, we cannot allow you to access this course at this time.⁵⁴

(4) *Educational barriers*: Digital literacy remains a barrier for a significant amount of people, especially in the Global South.⁵⁵ Even if learners possess sufficient digital literacy skills, many MOOCs are only accessible in the English language. Class central, the world's largest curator of MOOCs, lists 32625 courses in English, 2948 courses in Spanish, and 1043 courses in French, as compared to 86 courses in Hindi.⁵⁶ With the emergence of regional and national platforms such as the Indian government MOOC platform Swayam, language barriers might become less of a concern than the actual course contents.

⁵³ I. Langseth, D. Lysne, S. Nykvist et al., 'MOOC Platforms: A Nordic Approach to Research Informed Education in Higher Education', in Reich et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of EMOOCs 2019: Work in Progress Papers of the Research, Experience, and Business Tracks at EMOOCs 2019*, Norway, Sun SITE Central Europe, 2019, p. 157.

⁵⁴ Edx, *This course is unavailable in your country*, available at: <https://courses.edx.org/embargo/blocked-message/enrollment/embargo/> [accessed 12 June 2021].

⁵⁵ Cf World Bank Group, *World Development Report 2021: Data For Better Lives*, p. 164-166, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2021>, [accessed 12 June 2021].

⁵⁶ Cf Class Central, 'MOOCs by Language', available at: <https://www.classcentral.com/languages> [accessed 12 June 2021]

(5) *Pedagogical barriers*: Studies have shown that MOOCs sometimes lack good educational practise. Clinnin concludes that if ‘MOOCs remain ‘nonsocial media environment[s]’ then ultimately MOOCs are a massive form of educational malpractice by perpetuating teacher-focused, knowledge disseminating according to the banking model as evidenced by quizzes and instructor-produced video lectures.’⁵⁷

With the barriers outlined above, much remains to be done on governmental, corporate, and institutional levels for MOOCs to become more effective tools for the realization of the right to education. Better support systems are required for learners who lack digital literacy skills, political embargoes that negatively impact access must end, the infrastructure for sufficient bandwidth and internet access needs to be created,⁵⁸ and economic barriers for learners need to be alleviated for MOOCs to truly fulfil their ‘promise to democratize education.’⁵⁹ Design teams can contribute by delivering MOOCs that live up to high pedagogical standards and evolve from traditional, teacher-centered pedagogies and by designing courses with accessibility for all learners in mind.

3.2.2 The right to equality and non-discrimination

The rights to equality and non-discrimination enshrined in Art. 1 and 2 form the basis of the UDHR and multiple other human rights documents such as Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Art. 2(2) of the ICESCR, Art. 2 of the CRC, Art. 7 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)⁶⁰ and Art. 5 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁶¹. Beyond the international documents, the rights to equality and non-discrimination are codified in

⁵⁷ K. Clinnin, 'Redefining the MOOC: Examining the multilingual and community potential of massive online courses', *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2014, p. 158.

⁵⁸ Cf V. de Moura, C. Souza, N. Oliveira et al, 'MOOCS' Potential for Democratizing Education: An Analysis from the Perspective of Access to Technology', in M. Themistocleous and V. Morabito (eds.), *Information Systems. EMCIS 2017. Lecture Notes in Business Information Processing*, vol. 299, Springer International Publishing AG, 2017, p. 139.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁰ Cf United Nations General Assembly Res A/RES/45/158, 18 December 1990.

⁶¹ Cf United Nations General Assembly Res A/RES/61/106, 24 January 2007.

regional instruments such as Art. 2 and 24 of the American Declaration of Human Rights (ACHR) and Article 2 and 3 of the ACHPR.

‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.’⁶²

‘Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.’⁶³

In 2015, UNESCO specifically endorsed MOOCs⁶⁴ as a strategy to further inclusive and equitable quality education. According to a systemic review of 46 globally diverse MOOC studies between 2014 and 2018 conducted by Lambert, 87.5% of the reviewed programs ‘met their aims to enable both student equity and/or social inclusion.’⁶⁵ All programs that Lambert reviewed, reached more than 440,000 learners combined.⁶⁶

3.2.3 The right to freedom of expression

The right to freedom of expression and to seek, receive, and impart information is enshrined in a variety of human rights documents including Art. 19 of the UDHR, Art. 11 of the CFR, Art. 19 of the ICCPR and Art. 9 of the ACHPR.

⁶² United Nations General Assembly Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, Article 1.

⁶³ Ibid., Article 2.

⁶⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action for the implementation of sustainable development goal 4*, ED-2016/WS/28, 2015, p. 42.

⁶⁵ S. Lambert, ‘Do MOOCs Contribute to Student Equity and Social Inclusion? A Systematic Review 2014–18’, *Computers and Education*, vol. 145, 2020, p. 103693.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

‘Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his [sic!] choice.’⁶⁷

Instructors of MOOCs aim to create safe and enabling learning environments for all course participants. However, the massive scale at which MOOCs operate, generate new challenges for instructors and facilitators. Discussion forums in MOOCs often contain tens of thousands of posts making moderation an overwhelming task. Design teams and facilitators need to find ways to uphold the right to freedom of expression and moderate entries that contain advocacy of hatred or put learners’ security and safety at risk, when they intentionally or unintentionally disclose personal information about themselves or others. Given that any restriction to the right to freedom of expression must be provided by law, necessary, proportionate, and legitimate,⁶⁸ course moderators might not always have the adequate tools to assess and decide which comments to delete or to keep, where to interfere or ignore. To become suitable tools for the realization of freedom of expression, the Codes of Conduct issued by MOOC providers might not provide sufficient orientation for moderation teams to make sound decisions.

Another aspect that relates to freedom of expression and MOOCs is that for some learners, online spaces might be a safer place to express themselves than the physical classroom,⁶⁹ especially in the context of discussing controversial human rights issues. Because learners can sign up to MOOCs anonymously, they may feel more comfortable to engage with topics that are stigmatized or frowned upon in their own societies. Hence, MOOC environments can become vivid spaces for self-expression and for seeking, imparting, and receiving information, that circumnavigates governmental censorship and internet

⁶⁷ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171, Article 19.

⁶⁸ General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, 12 September 2011, CCPR/C/GC/34.

⁶⁹ Cf S. Rezaei and A. Latifi, 'Iranian EFL Learners' Identity Construction in a Critical Reflective Course: a Case of an Online Course', *Open Learning*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2020, p. 74; J. Al Hosni, 'ESL Online Courses: A New Space for Redefining Social Identities', *INTESOL Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 30.

blocks. Since MOOC contents are often hidden behind registration walls and hence not indexed in search engines, human rights content may be more likely to fly ‘under the radar’ of automated censorship systems.

3.2.4 The right to privacy

The right to privacy is enshrined in various human rights documents including Art. 12 of the UDHR, Art. 17 of the ICCPR and in Art. 14 of the CMW. Beyond the international documents, Art. 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Art 11 of the ACHR contain stipulations about the right to privacy.

‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.’⁷⁰

‘No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.’⁷¹

As learners need to verify their identity to get certificates, people’s personal details are only as secure as the platform systems themselves. This may expose learners to persistent threats. The MOOC provider edX holds an Internet Content Provider filing through a third party in Shenzhen, China to be able to provide services within China. They also partner with Peking University and Tsinghua University as well as two Universities situated in Hong Kong, which means that they likely have been vetted and approved to some extent by the Chinese government.⁷² This could therefore be a particular risk to HRDs and dissidents from China. Additionally, course instructors have access to the emails of all learners, which could be used to identify people personally. Since learners from countries under US embargo are excluded from using the platform, it is likely IP

⁷⁰ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171, Article 17.

⁷¹ United Nations General Assembly Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, Article 12.

⁷² Cf Edx, available at: <https://www.edx.org/>. [accessed 6 July 2021].

addresses, and the locations of learners are tracked to comply with the embargo. Although learners may use VPNs to circumvent the restrictions, the use of VPNs expose learners to additional risks in some countries where the usage is prohibited.⁷³

3.2.5 The right to human rights education

Article 1 of UNDHRET outlines that everyone ‘has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training.’⁷⁴ Kirchschlaeger states that without the realization of the right to human rights education, ‘human rights declarations and treaties run the risk of remaining wonderful pieces of paper without any impact on the reality of the lives of humans who are actually human rights holders and duty-bearers (...).’⁷⁵ With MOOCs such as Harvard’s *Child Protection: Children's Rights in Theory and Practice* reaching more than 240,000 learners, Amnesty’s *Human Rights: The Rights of Refugees* reaching more than 91,000 learners and Louvain’s *International Human Rights Law* MOOC reaching more than 80,000 learners, as publicly disclosed on the edX registration pages, there is plenty of evidence to support how MOOCs can positively contribute to the promotion of the right to human rights education by reaching vast numbers of learners.

3.2.6 Other human rights

MOOCs may play a positive role in the realization of other human rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living,⁷⁶ the right to participate in cultural life⁷⁷ and the right to peaceful assembly.⁷⁸ MOOCs enable learners to commute less, hence reducing carbon

⁷³ Cf Amnesty International, ‘VPNs are a vital defence against censorship - but they're under attack’, 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/08/vpns-are-a-vital-defence-against-censorship-but-theyre-under-attack/>, [accessed 25 June 2021].

⁷⁴ United Nations General Assembly Res 66/137, 19 December 2011, Article 1(1).

⁷⁵ P. Kirchschlaeger, ‘The Right to Human Rights Education: Conceptual Perspectives’, in M. Bajaj and N. Flowers (eds.), *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017, p. 110.

⁷⁶ Cf International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3, Article 11.

⁷⁷ Cf United Nations General Assembly Res 217 A (III), 10 December 1948, Article 27.

⁷⁸ Cf International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3, Article 21.

emissions and air pollution that negatively affect the climate and the environment.⁷⁹ MOOCs also enable participants to engage in (inter-)cultural learning activities, watch videos, interpret poems, listen to music, express themselves artistically and enjoy other content types made available through online courses.⁸⁰

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has multiple times re-affirmed that human rights apply in digital spaces.⁸¹ Human rights MOOCs where learners collaborate publicly in discussion forums or engage in other forms of collective action, can be considered as exercising the right to peaceful assembly in the digital space.⁸² It is not uncommon for MOOCs to have more than 200,000 learners who are, especially in the context of human rights MOOCs, encouraged to sign petitions, write letters or engage in other types of collaborative action. In Amnesty International's first MOOC on Freedom of Expression, learners were encouraged to tag vulnerable groups that are especially at risk of violations of their right to freedom of expression in an interactive world map. With the rise of virtual reality applications, digital protests and other forms of digital collective action are more likely to emerge from MOOC spaces.⁸³ It is surprising that the massive scale of MOOCs has not yet been utilized more extensively to inspire and facilitate informed collective action leveraging the knowledge and skills learners can obtain during the learning experience.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ M. Versteijlen, F. Salgado, M. Groesbeek et al., 'Pros and cons of online education as a measure to reduce carbon emissions in higher education in the Netherlands', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, vol. 28, 2017, p. 81.

⁸⁰ Cf R. Kerr, I. Merciai, M. Eradze, 'Addressing cultural and linguistic diversity in an online learning environment', *Educational media international*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2018 pp. 319-321.

⁸¹ Cf United Nations General Assembly, 'The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet', (A/HRC/32/L.20), para 8.

⁸² Cf United Nations General Assembly, 'Report on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association: The Digital Age', (A/HRC/41/41, 41st Session, 2019), para 21 – 28.

⁸³ Cf M. Zaharia, F. Tam, C. Jim, 'Frontline protesters make case for violence in Hong Kong protests', 22 August 2019, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-protests-violence-analysis-idUSKCN1VB2LV>, [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁸⁴ Cf H. Celina, A. Kharrufa, A. Preston et al. 'SOLE meets MOOC: Designing Infrastructure for Online Self-organised Learning with a Social Mission', in *Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems*, Association for Computing Machinery, New York, 2016, p. 484.

4. Designing MOOCs for human rights education

The following chapters encompass three major areas that are essential aspects of developing MOOCs for human rights education: (1) key roles in design teams and their tasks and duties, (2) the production process from initiation to launch and (3) the practical application of HRE design principles.

4.1 Key roles in the production process

Design teams of MOOCs vary strongly based on the resources available and the outputs required. Every design team, however, will aim to cover at least four essential roles: Instructional designer, subject matter expert, project manager and visionary.⁸⁵

Subject matter experts (SMEs) have in-depth knowledge and expertise in the topic of the course. They understand ‘the bigger picture’ of the subject area and deliver accurate content according to brief. For SMEs to develop relevant content, they require a solid overview of current human rights trends and developments, human rights mechanisms, relevant documents and treaties, and at least a basic understanding of the diverse realities learners might face in their countries. Although the entire design team aims to ensure the safety and security of learners, SMEs will be especially wary that action-oriented contents do not encourage behaviour that exposes learners to unintended risks and that taking action for human rights in many countries will lead to increased risks, threats and repercussions.⁸⁶

Instructional designers (IDs) are pedagogical experts with technical expertise. They lead the design team through the production process, ensure that the MOOC meets the necessary pedagogical standards, and develop the learning experience and curriculum together with the SMEs. IDs possess an in-depth understanding of how to create relevant,

⁸⁵ Cf R. Bartoletti, 'Learning through Design: MOOC Development as a Method for Exploring Teaching Methods', *Current Issues in Emerging eLearning*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 12-13.

⁸⁶ Cf University of Edinburgh, *MOOC Handbook for Academics/Subject Matter Experts*, p. 4-6, available at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/mooc_handbook_for_academics_subject_matter_experts.pdf, [accessed 6 July 2021].

engaging, learner-centered and participatory learning materials. They are well-versed with authoring software and learning management systems, their advantages, and disadvantages, and implement the learning contents on the learning platform. IDs also often take subject matter and adapt it to create or improve learning materials, draft the instructions of exercises, craft interview questions, develop graphics, edit videos, and perform a variety of other tasks, as needed. Their performance will be measured on the extent to which learners meet their learning outcomes. IDs need strong interpersonal skills to build relationships with SMEs and other design team members, because they are strongly dependent on the outputs and cooperation of every other team member.⁸⁷

(3) *Project managers* manage the production process, setting the timeline and milestones. They coordinate between stakeholders, team members and adjust the course requirements based on the available resources and development progress. Project managers need basic human rights expertise and intercultural competence because their decisions directly impact how inclusive and diverse the final product can be. They may select and approach the interviewees for the course videos, identify the suppliers for digital assets and review asset materials for meeting certain quality criteria. They may handle processes that relate to consent and data protection, and they increase or decrease the engagement of technical advisors to support the production process. Beyond that, project managers may also be engaged in other structured processes that heavily rely on project management skills such as the pre- and post-course evaluations, user- and beta-testing, video recordings, setting up and facilitating meetings, and advising on decisions project sponsors need to make when the requirements cannot be met or providing team members with the tools to execute their tasks including authoring software and graphic design programs. Project managers may also prepare guidelines for external stakeholders e.g. for interviewees in preparation of video recordings, asset suppliers to better match organizational requirements and style guides for instructional designers and subject matter experts to ensure consistency in branding and appearance.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Cf R. Kenny, Z. Zhang, R. Schwier, 'A Review of What Instructional Designers Do: Questions Answered and Questions Not Asked', *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*, vol. 31, no. 1, p. 55-67.

⁸⁸ University of Edinburgh, p. 5.

(4) *Visionaries* are essentially ‘guardians’ of the learning experience. They ensure the final output matches the original vision. Visionaries do not participate in the day-to-day production process but review the development progress regularly, provide strategic direction and often sign off on the final product. Visionaries are often senior-level professionals who understand the overall goals of the human rights organization. The role is ‘held by a single individual since a project needs a single clear vision to avoid confusion and misdirection.’⁸⁹ Visionaries have a clear idea about the scope of the production and help bring the team back on track.⁹⁰

If any of the roles is not adequately empowered and equipped with the required authority, it can severely hamper the production. In some cases, one person can fulfil more than one role during the production process, although the quality of the course development often derives from the healthy friction of competing priorities of the stakeholders who take part in the production process. Instructional designers aim to deliver a high-quality learning experience that is accessible, engaging, and inclusive, while project managers are more likely to focus on ‘getting the job done’ and meeting project milestones. Subject matter experts will aim to ensure a high level of accuracy and completeness, while visionaries ensure that the production does not lose its original scope.

Beyond the core design team that consists of instructional designer, project manager, visionary and subject matter expert, other participants in the course production may help increase the overall quality of the final learning product.

Policy experts ensure that the final product is in-line with internal organisational or institutional policies. This is especially relevant for human rights organisations that hire external subject matter experts that might not be familiar with all internal policies, terminology, and jargon. Human rights organisations often have their own policies on

⁸⁹ Agile Business Consortium, *DSDM Agile Project Framework Handbook*, Chapter 7: Roles and Responsibilities, available at: https://www.agilebusiness.org/page/ProjectFramework_07_RolesResponsibilities [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

gender-sensitive language or the human rights terminology that is used. Examples include to replace hate speech with advocacy of hatred, avoid the term capital punishment or to use of gender-sensitive pronouns and avoid gendered nouns when referring to professions.

Visual designers support the production with visual assets and require expertise in inclusive design. They are aware which symbols and icons are diverse, inclusive, and globally understood.

4.2 The process of designing MOOCs for human rights education

Designing MOOCs for human rights education is an iterative process of continuous refinement.⁹¹ Indeed, the commitment required from design teams can be ‘hundreds of hours’⁹² for MOOC development. This part of the thesis will outline *one* effective way of developing MOOCs for HRE.

4.2.1 Design methodology

Although every organization will aim to develop their own design methodology to accommodate internal processes and effectively utilize the available resources, the concept of *design thinking*⁹³ is an adequate methodology to underpin the development of Massive Open Online Courses. Design thinking is a non-linear, iterative process to develop and implement innovative solutions to problems.⁹⁴ It consists of five phases: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test.⁹⁵ The following chapters outline a 10-step process for developing MOOCs for human rights education. Although described as ‘steps’, for the sake of clarity, this process too, is iterative and non-linear. Design teams may refine the outputs of previous steps later in the process and skip ahead to consecutive

⁹¹ Cf K. von Schmieden, L. Mayer, M. Taheri, C. Meinel, 'Iterative Course Design in MOOCs: Evaluating a ProtoMOOC', in *Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Engineering Design (ICED19)*, Hasso Plattner Institute, The Netherlands, 2019, p. 540.

⁹² Cf I. Doherty, D. Harbutt, N. Sharma, 'Designing and Developing a MOOC', *Medical Science Educator*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2015, p. 177.

⁹³ Cf Von Schmieden, p. 540.

⁹⁴ Cf Interaction Design Foundation, 'Design Thinking', available at: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking> [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁹⁵ Cf *ibid.*

steps as they see fit. To provide an example, it is not uncommon to refine learning outcomes later in the process, when the realization of learning components takes place. Another example is that the initiation of the asset production will strongly depend on the type of assets. Animated videos, that need to be created from scratch and normally require storyboards, are more time-consuming to produce than interviews conducted through video conferencing tools.

4.2.2 Step 1: Setting up the design team

As outlined in previous chapters, key roles in the design team are instructional designer, project manager, subject matter expert and visionary. Technical experts, visual designers, translators, video editors may join the wider team. The setup of the design team will also depend on the scope, length, goals and priorities of the course.

A diverse and multi-faceted design team is very beneficial to better accommodate the diverse needs of the learners represented in a massive audience. Diverse design teams may also be better equipped to provide learners with an environment that creates a sense of belonging. This in turn, influences to what extent learners will be able to achieve their learning outcomes.⁹⁶

The key to a successful production is respectful relationships between all stakeholders and especially the instructional designer and the subject matter expert. They have partly competing priorities that will require compromises on both sides throughout the entire production and tensions can be a regular occurrence.⁹⁷

4.2.3 Step 2: Conducting a needs assessment

A needs assessment can be defined as ‘a systematic process to gather information and opinions from different sources on a particular problem or issue in order to make effective decisions or recommendations about appropriate actions to take.’⁹⁸ In the context of

⁹⁶ Cf L. Thomas, J. Herbert, M. Teras, 'A sense of belonging to enhance participation, success and retention in online programs', *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, vol 5, no. 2, pp. 69-80.

⁹⁷ Cf Y. Chen and S. Carliner, 'A Special SME: An Integrative Literature Review of the Relationship between Instructional Designers and Faculty in the Design of Online Courses for Higher Education', *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 4, p. 483.

⁹⁸ International Centre for Human Rights Education and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Evaluating Human Rights Training Activities. A Handbook for Human Rights Educators*, Montreal, 2011, p. 36.

MOOCs for human rights education, needs assessments are an essential tool to capture the overall learning goals, to identify learner needs and capacity gaps as they relate to the promotion and defence of human rights and to develop a better understanding of the challenges and human rights contexts of learners. The results of the needs assessment provide a clearer picture of the change that is needed and enables instructional designers to choose appropriate learning designs. Needs assessments can be conducted in a variety of ways, from surveys to interviews and focus groups to examining existing resources. In the context of MOOCs, human rights entities will likely choose their existing channels to distribute surveys in their support networks.⁹⁹

4.2.4 Step 3: Drafting learning outcomes

Learning outcomes define what the learners will be able to do after completing the learning experience. They are an essential tool to set learner expectations, guide learning design and content development, and play a key role in the course evaluation.¹⁰⁰ Learning outcomes need to be concise, measurable, and clear. A common way to develop learning outcomes is through action verbs that enable measurable outcomes.¹⁰¹ Since its inception, Bloom's taxonomy, the most popular framework of action verbs, has been updated several times to accommodate the digital space and it is not unlikely that new action verbs will emerge as the sophistication of online interactions evolve.¹⁰² One action verb or phrase that is not normally outlined in Bloom's taxonomy but is common in human rights education MOOCs is to *take action* for human rights. It depends on the context but *taking action* can be measurable, e.g., through petitions and letter writing marathons.

Learning outcomes are different from learning objectives and learning goals. While learning outcomes put emphasis on the learner, learning objectives and learning goals are instructor-focused categories.¹⁰³ For human rights education MOOCs, clearly defining

⁹⁹ Cf Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Cf De Paul University Center for Teaching and Learning, 'Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes', available at: <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/course-design/Pages/course-objectives-learning-outcomes.aspx> [accessed 6 July 2021].

¹⁰¹ Cf Ibid.

¹⁰² Cf H. Amin and M. Mirza, 'Comparative Study of Knowledge and Use of Bloom's Digital Taxonomy by Teachers and Students in Virtual and Conventional Universities', *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2020, pp. 223–225.

¹⁰³ Cf A. Jenkins and D. Unwin, 'How to write learning outcomes', 2001, available online: www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/education/curricula/giscc/units/format/outcomes.html [accessed 6 July 2021].

learning outcomes is helpful to ensure measurability, set clear expectations before learners join the course, enable accurate assessment, and shift the focus of the design team towards the learner throughout the entire production. Goals and objectives are therefore categories that many design teams will abandon in the early production stages. They may still use them as reference to refine learning outcomes in later stages of the production.¹⁰⁴

4.2.5 Step 4: Envisioning the course build-up

One key aspect of the design process is to develop the build-up of the learning experience. The build-up defines how the learning experience unfolds and can be considered the ‘red thread’ that goes through the learning experience. An effective and simple way to ensure a consistent, and effective build-up is to imagine it in concentric circles that start with the self (or the learner) and then gradually expand from close to broader contexts.¹⁰⁵ Amnesty utilizes this methodology in the structure of its Human Rights Defenders MOOC, where learners gradually move from the (1) self to (2) individual action to (3) collective action, (4) to human rights mechanisms. Another way to develop a course build-up is by resembling a sequence or story. Amnesty’s course on Refugee Rights is an example where the course follows the journey of a refugee from displacement (1) to flight (2) and resettlement (3). The build-up is often represented as chapters or modules. While it might be tempting for subject matter experts to simply resemble the structure of source material such as a publication or textbook, the structure will rarely be adequate for an online learning. Developing the build-up should be a task of the entire design team.

4.2.6 Step 5: Designing storyboards

Storyboarding is the process of putting the elements of a learning experience in a linear order to enable and facilitate the smooth progression of the journey. An effective way to identify learning elements is to brainstorm collaboratively to collect ideas for learning components, exercises, and text chunks. After clustering the suggestions and merging duplicates, the team can collaboratively set priorities. In this stage instructional designers

¹⁰⁴ Cf De Paul University Center for Teaching and Learning.

¹⁰⁵ Amnesty International, 'Facilitation manual: A guide to using participatory methodologies for human rights education', ACT 35/020/2011, 2014, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/>, [accessed 12 June 2021].

will likely go back to the learning outcomes to either adjust them based on the inputs from the learning components or to highlight any learning components that do not fit the scope of the learning outcomes. They might assign each component to at least one of the learning outcomes to ensure consistency and pave the way for assessments.¹⁰⁶ During the process of creating storyboards, the team might also want to consider adding recurring elements to the learning experience. In the context of HRE MOOCs this could be learning components such as taking action prompts, action plans, or web quests. Instructional designers will use the previously developed build-up as framework to allocate the learning components that together form the storyboard.

4.2.7 Step 6: Migrating to the learning journey document

The instructional designer normally chooses when to move from the visual representation of the learning journey flow (the storyboard) to the learning journey document. The learning journey document is a text-based representation of the storyboard. It contains meta-descriptions of the different learning components, contains instructions from instructional designers on technical requirements such as word-count limits, and technical parameters with regards to the authoring software e.g. that a multiple choice activity requires a response based on user-input. Effective learning journey documents contain information to address the needs of every stakeholder in the design team and enable the smooth transfer of information and knowledge between the different stakeholders. Ineffective learning journey documents lead to prolonged drafting processes and can create significant delays in the process, whereas instructional designers need to bounce back to subject matter experts more often before they can implement contents. It is therefore highly recommended for the instructional designers to develop the document specific to the organizational requirements.¹⁰⁷

4.2.8 Step 7: Developing course content

Design teams handle the production of course content in a variety of ways. Content is either drafted by the instructional designers, subject matter experts, educators,

¹⁰⁶ Cf University of Edinburgh, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Cf J. Pomerol, Y. Epelboin, C. Thoury, *MOOCs: Design, Use and Business Models*. ISTE Ltd., John Wiley and Sons, Hoboken, 2015, pp. 19-21.

consultants, or copywriters. In many cases it is a collaborative task. Before developing the course content, the design team needs to agree on writing guidelines that ensure consistency in styling, tone, and voice. This can include how the learners are addressed ('you' or 'we'), how gender-sensitive language is applied and if any specific terms should be used or avoided (e.g., capital punishment). In all cases the course content should achieve solid readability scores to be accessible to learners. One study by Carlon, Keerativoranan and Cross concludes that by increasing readability for texts and video transcripts, 'MOOCs could potentially increase educational equity by increasing the achievement rates of learners from less developed countries, which are typically non-native English speakers.'¹⁰⁸

In the case that course content is being translated it is essential to keep in mind that translated content might occupy additional space and therefore may not fulfil the technical requirements e.g. of word-count limits anymore.

4.2.9 Step 8: Facilitating user-testing

User-testing is an essential aspect of developing MOOCs for human rights education. The purpose of user-testing is not exclusively to assess the course quality or spot technical errors, but to steer the production of content and assets. Design teams that are not trained in design thinking, often user-test the learning experience at the end of the production, when it is difficult, costly, or not feasible to change video assets, audio recordings or develop new learning components. Ideally, user-testing will happen multiple times throughout the process. The first user-testing can happen as early as during the storyboarding phase because at this stage, assets, that are more difficult to change (especially e.g. animated videos and audio) are still in production and can still be adapted.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ M. K. Carlon, N. Keerativoranan, J. S. Cross, 'Content Type Distribution and Readability of MOOCs', *Proceedings of the Seventh ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale*, 2020, p. 404.

¹⁰⁹ Cf Taheri, p. 602.

4.2.10 Step 9: Launching the course

MOOCs are normally launched on previously specified launch dates. A variety of tasks are tied to the launch date. Learners may receive emails to let them know that the course is available, while instructional designers will monitor learner analytics and discussion forums for any urgent issues that need to be resolved. It can be helpful for design teams to celebrate the launch together to strengthen and revitalise the relationships that were drained during the sometimes difficult production processes. With the launch of the MOOC, the phase of monitoring and evaluation begins.

4.2.11 Step 10: Monitoring and moderation

MOOCs for human rights education exist in instructor-led and self-paced versions. Regardless of the format, moderation plays an important role to ensure that learners feel safe to express themselves and are not exposed to hate speech and online bullying.¹¹⁰ With some MOOCs such as Amnesty International's course on Refugee Rights reaching well over 100,000 registrations, course moderation can become a resource-intensive task. Although most MOOC provider platforms such as edX, FutureLearn and Coursera have reporting features, where learners can help with the moderation, community moderators who regularly tidy the discussion forums and skim posts for violations of the code of conduct can be one way to mitigate the negative consequences of advocacy of hatred and online bullying.

Beyond the course moderation, that also provides invaluable qualitative insights into how the learners interact with the course experience, most MOOC provider platforms have inbuilt analytics systems that provide insight how learners engage with the course content. In an age where self-directed, non-linear learning is common, they provide better insights for course evaluation than completion rates, that are low for many MOOCs, especially if they lack engaging instructional design.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Cf L. Hackett, Cyberbullying and Its Implications for Human Rights, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/cyberbullying-and-its-implications-human-rights> [accessed 12 June 2021]

¹¹¹ Cf L. Romero-Rodriguez, R. Soledad, I. Aguaded et al. 'Determining Factors in MOOCs Completion Rates: Application Test in Energy Sustainability Courses', *Sustainability*, vol. 12, no. 7, 2020, pp. 1-11.

4.2.12 Step 11: Evaluating the course

Course evaluation should be addressed at the beginning of the planning process. It is necessary for the design team and key stakeholders to agree upon the indicators to monitor and what to measure. Effectively, what change it is that the design team is hoping to see as a result of the learners taking the course. It is a relatively simple task to review learner response accuracy to gauge the efficacy of the learning material as an indicator of learners achievement of course learning outcomes. However, it is a much more difficult task to gauge the impact a course has in effecting human rights change, or changing attitudes towards human rights issues, particularly in a MOOC environment. As such, consideration needs to be given to the resources and time that can be allocated to the evaluation and expectations should be adjusted accordingly. One of the limitations of MOOCs is inability to access the audience and follow up to the extent one would expect in both smaller learning formats and more traditional face to face learning. The simplest and most frequent evaluation method within MOOCs is to make use of pre- and post-course surveys to monitor the desired indicators. This has limitations as the design team relies on learner self-reporting and is not able to make direct observations. Using hybrid surveys, it is still possible to assess to some extent changes in attitudes and behaviours as well as increases in knowledge.¹¹²

4.2.13 Step 12: Re-launching learning experiences

MOOC provider platforms like edX and Coursera often state in their agreements with universities, partner institutions and organizations that courses need to be re-run on a regular basis to keep the content accurate and up to date. Instructional designers trained in human rights know which contents and elements commonly present in human rights MOOCs are more likely to become outdated quickly. Unfortunately, these contents are often used to make courses more action oriented. Examples are human rights petitions, case studies, urgent actions, online actions and letter writing.

¹¹² Cf Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Evaluating the impact of human rights training: guidance on developing indicators', *Professional Training Series*, no. 18, add. 1, pp. 29-50.

Beyond the content itself, internal references and external hyperlinks should be kept to a minimum and be documented. Links become outdated and change their Uniform Resource Locator (URL), and internal links may become outdated when learning components change in future iterations. Small updates can then require significant resources and time because they affect other learning components. Beyond the technicalities, post-course surveys are a suitable tool to ask learners how to improve course contents for future iterations and instructional designers can leave placeholders in the learning journey for implementation at a later stage. Design teams may also choose to use learner-generated content from previous course runs for future iterations to facilitate a more learner-centered design.

4.3 Design principles for human rights education MOOCs

To be effective tools for human rights education, MOOCs must adhere to certain minimum standards and pedagogical design principles. After a review of foundational human rights documents and relevant sources that have shaped HRE pedagogy, the following chapters will outline design principles, derived from these sources, and apply them practically to tools and learning components available to educators on MOOC platforms.

4.3.1 Documents and pedagogical frameworks informing HRE design principles

Several documents that describe HRE after the UN Decade for Human Rights Education which ended in 2004, state that HRE must include both, content and adequate pedagogical practise to be effective.¹¹³ While the contents of HRE learning experiences have been described intensively in the past, the following chapters will focus on the pedagogical aspects that are less well established.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Cf Bajaj, Monisha. 'Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2011, p. 482.

¹¹⁴ Cf A. Keet, 'Discourse, Betrayal, Critique', in C. Roux (ed.), *Safe Spaces*, Human Rights Education in Diverse Contexts, Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, p. 7.

4.3.1.1 World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-2024)

The World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) was established to promote the ‘development of a culture of human rights’¹¹⁵ and to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors globally.¹¹⁶ Each phase of the programme is dedicated to specific sectors, issues and audiences including formal and non-formal settings from (1) primary and secondary school systems and (2) higher education to (3) media professionals and (4) Youth.

The Programme’s Plans of Action¹¹⁷ define ten principles for human rights education activities drawing on the frameworks set out by international human rights instruments such as the CRC, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the UDHR. While all principles outlined in the action plans are essential, three deserve special attention in the context of designing MOOCs for human rights education. HRE activities should:

- (h) Make use of participatory pedagogies that include knowledge, critical analysis and skills for action furthering human rights and that take into consideration the age and the cultural specificities of the learners;
- (i) Foster teaching and learning environments free from want and fear that encourage participation, the enjoyment of human rights and the full development of the human personality;
- (j) Be relevant to the daily life of the learners, engaging them in a dialogue about ways and means of transposing human rights from the expression of abstract norms to the reality of their social, economic, cultural and political conditions.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2009) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education' (A/59/525/Rev.1), p. 4-5, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/FirstPhase/Pages/planaction.aspx> [accessed 12 June 2021]

¹¹⁶ Cf *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁸ United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action for the third phase (2015-2019) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education' (A/HRC/27/28), p. 5, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/ThirdPhase/Pages/ThirdPhaseIndex.aspx> [accessed 12 June 2021]

In this context, the action plans describe a variety of strategies for a more effective implementation of HRE activities including that ‘sound methodology is key to the success or failure of any educational effort’¹¹⁹ and that ‘effective human rights education is participatory, experiential, learner-centred, action-oriented and takes into account cultural contexts.’¹²⁰ The learning activities should encourage ‘motivation, self-esteem and emotional development leading to human rights sensitization and action’¹²¹ and utilize a variety of educational methodologies to ensure the active involvement of the learners.¹²² Examples include: ‘brainstorming, role playing, group work, case studies, panel discussions and field trips, possibly with the use of audio-visuals’¹²³ as well as peer-learning activities.¹²⁴ All plans mention the relevance of audience-specificity for training tools and processes.¹²⁵

With a stronger focus on educational methodologies, the fourth draft Action plan is the most valuable resource for designing MOOCs for human rights education. It states that methodologies should include:

- (a) ‘Learner-centred, gender-sensitive, contextualized methodologies and approaches that empower youth and solicit their active participation; activities that challenge their own biases, perspectives and privileges and encourage critical thinking and the exploration of alternative perspectives, paying attention to different needs and abilities and adapted across formal and non-formal settings; inclusive approaches so that different young voices, perspectives, cultures and experiences are heard and represented;
- (b) Experiential learning methodologies that enable young people to apply human rights concepts to their lives and experiences, including through community

¹¹⁹ Ibid., para. 25.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., para. 22.

¹²² Cf *ibid.*, p. 15.

¹²³ United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action for the second phase (2010-2014) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education' (A/HRC/15/28), p. 21, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/SecondPhase/Pages/Secondphaseindex.aspx> [accessed 12 June 2021]

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

- service and entrepreneurial activities, engaging in human rights advocacy on the local or global level, community organizing, meeting with government representatives and raising awareness among youth and community members about human rights;
- (c) Peer-to-peer learning – in safe spaces, possibly unsupervised by adults and where young people usually gather, which allow for emotional connections, dialogue and understanding among youth; soliciting input from youth participants and centring youth voices; featuring youth social movements, youth advocates and other leaders; supporting efforts of youth-led organizations, as they are especially placed to engage their peers in situations of exclusion or vulnerability and build upon young people’s diversity of experiences. The peer-to-peer approach can be accompanied by intergenerational dialogue and human rights campaigns to strengthen solidarity between generations;
 - (d) Varied and engaging educational methods and settings such as sport, film, arts, culture, games, storytelling, drama and role playing which can engage collaboratively learners of all backgrounds and are useful in developing knowledge and leadership skills, supporting intercultural competencies and providing safe spaces to engage women and girls and promote female leadership. These can challenge societal gender norms, foster youth-led programming regardless of identity, promote understanding across different identities to build peaceful, inclusive and equitable societies and foster team-building, empathy and respect.’¹²⁶

Notably, the document also refers explicitly to social media, online learning programmes and MOOCs as ‘technology to increase access to human rights education’¹²⁷ in paragraph 22 (d) and outlines that an ‘appropriate methodology for human rights education [...] is participatory, learner-centred, experiential and action-oriented [...]’.¹²⁸ In comparison,

¹²⁶ United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action for the fourth phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education' (A/HRC/42/23), p. 12, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/Fourthphase/Pages/FourthPhaseIndex.aspx>, [accessed 12 June 2021]

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET) that was adopted eight years earlier, appears much less specific in regard to pedagogical guidance.

4.3.1.2 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

Following a consultation with governments, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organisations, international organizations, and academia, the UNGA adopted the UNDHRET in 2011. The innovative document constituted the first UN instrument specifically focused on HRE.¹²⁹ But despite its importance, it was not without its flaws. As Gerber points out, teachers criticized the declaration for the lack of pedagogical guidance and the preamble failed to specifically mention discrimination based on sexual orientation, age, nationality, and disability.¹³⁰ Article 2 of the Declaration states that HRE aims at

‘promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights (...) by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.’¹³¹

It further outlines that human rights education encompasses education *through, about* and *for* human rights and that HRE should use ‘methods suited to target groups, taking into account their specific needs and conditions.’¹³² The Declaration also puts emphasis on the accessibility in Art. 5:

‘Human rights education and training should be accessible and available to all persons, and should take into account the particular challenges and barriers faced by, and the needs and expectations of, persons in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations and groups, including persons with disabilities, in order to promote empowerment and

¹²⁹ Cf Brander, p. 21.

¹³⁰ Cf Gerber, Paula. 'Education about Human Rights: Strengths and Weaknesses of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training', *Alternative Law Journal*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2011, p. 245-49.

¹³¹ UNDHRET, Art 1.2.

¹³² Ibid., Art. 1.3.

human development and to contribute to the elimination of the causes of exclusion or marginalization, as well as enable everyone to exercise all their rights.’¹³³

The third and fourth paragraph of the same article highlight the importance of embracing the diversity of cultures and traditions and to take into account economic, social and cultural circumstances to ‘encourage ownership of the common goal of the fulfilment of all human rights for all.’¹³⁴ Art. 7 relates to the implementation of HRE activities that should be conducted in the ‘spirit of participation, inclusion and responsibility.’¹³⁵

Learner-centred design	Art. 2b: education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners; Art. 3.3: Human rights education and training should use languages and methods suited to target groups, taking into account their specific needs and conditions.
Participatory design	Art. 7: ensure human rights education and training, developed and implemented in a spirit of participation (...).
Accessible design	Art. 5: Human rights education and training should be accessible and available to all persons (...); Art. 1: Everyone (..) should have access to human rights education and training.
Inclusive design	Art. 7: ensure human rights education and training, developed and implemented in a spirit of (...) inclusion (...) ; Art. 7.1: Human rights education and training (...) should be based on the principles of equality (...), inclusion and non-discrimination.
Action-oriented design	Art. 2b: Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.

Table 1: HRE design principles in UNDHRET.

¹³³ Ibid., Art. 5.2.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Art 7.1.

4.3.1.3 Transformative human rights education (THRED)

The community-based, decentralised concept of transformative human rights education encompasses cognitive, affective, and action-oriented components, in which participatory methodologies are merged with a contextualized curriculum.¹³⁶ THRED exposes learners ‘to gaps between rights and actual realities and provokes group dialogue on the concrete actions necessary to close these gaps.’¹³⁷ Critical reflection, social dialogue, individual and collective action are only a few methods utilized by THRED, to ‘pursue the realization of human rights locally, nationally, and globally.’¹³⁸

THRED was developed partly in response to the UN’s Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), and its successes and failures. Bajaj states that the reforms following the UN’s Decade often ‘involved little more than incorporating human rights language into the educational standards or textbooks of Member States’¹³⁹, while recognising some of the key achievements outlined in the final report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the UN Decade, as policy makers started to engage with human rights education, school systems revised their curricula, universities started to develop human rights-related courses and degrees, and HRE was integrated in professional trainings of justice and government officials.¹⁴⁰ The final OHCHR report on the UN Decade also identified major shortcomings related to pedagogy, methodology and program evaluation and impact assessment:

‘One challenging area that needs further development is the issue of appropriate methodologies for human rights education, and in particular how to develop human rights learning starting from the daily life of people. [...] Accordingly, some

¹³⁶ M. Bajaj, B. Cislighi, G. Mackie, *Advancing Transformative Human Rights Education*, Open Book Publishers, 2016, p. 3.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ UN Commission on Human Rights, 'United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004): Report on achievements and shortcomings of the Decade and on future United Nations activities in this area', (E/CN.4/2004/93), p. 6-7., available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/decade.aspx> [accessed 12 June 2021]

Governments highlighted the need for research on educational methodologies as well as evaluation tools and impact assessment.’¹⁴¹

As a response to this deficit, THRED rejects traditional, teacher-centered forms of human rights education as outdated and incomplete. Bajaj describes them as ‘the passive paradigm, [where] teachers possess knowledge that they share with students, and students acquire that knowledge by listening and memorizing’, in contrast to THRED’s participatory approach that empowers learners to act, collaborate and apply those rights in a real-life settings:

‘Although teaching human rights might help students learn their rights and the mechanisms available to them to demand protection, it doesn’t empower them with the capacity to collaborate for the promotion of those rights in their social setting. Knowing about human rights can be helpful, but people need to practice and value those rights to gain the capacity to act upon and transform the world together.’¹⁴²

In this sense, THRED advocates for HRE as a participatory, learner-centered process and dialogue that aims at empowering learners by strengthening their agency through active participation.¹⁴³ Derived from this evolution from a passive to an active pedagogy, Bajaj describes six principles that outline the distinctive features of THRED: (1) The first principle highlights the importance of encouraging and facilitating a critical reflection on human rights to promote their collaborative realization. (2) The second principle emphasizes collaborative, contextualized learning through entertaining, experiential, and participatory methods. (3) The third principle recognised that HRE happens in a variety of contexts and encompasses formal, non-formal and informal contexts. (4) The fourth principle outlines the importance of fostering solidarity and empathy, insofar that THRED can help people contextualize global ethics within local values. (5) The fifth principle states that THRED provides people with new models of the self, others and the world.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁴² Bajaj, p. 17.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 18.

Like the fourth action plan draft of the WPHRE, (6) the sixth principle outlines that THRED leads to individual and collective action.¹⁴⁴

4.3.1.4 The Council of Europe Charter

The Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) was adopted by ministers and representatives of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe in May 2010 in the 120th session of the Committee of Ministers.¹⁴⁵ Consequently the Charter pre-dates the adoption of UNDHRET and was adopted shortly before the Action plan of the second phase of the UN WPHRE. While a significant part of the Charter focuses on the importance of partnerships and co-operations, alongside the stakeholders that need to be involved in informal and formal educational settings, the Charter also provides guidance on HRE pedagogy.

‘Teaching and learning practices and activities should follow and promote democratic and human rights values and principles; in particular, the governance of educational institutions, including schools, should reflect and promote human rights values and foster the empowerment and active participation of learners, educational staff and stakeholders, including parents.’¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the charter highlights the particular importance of the ‘promotion of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue’¹⁴⁷ as well as non-violence in the resolution of disputes.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 17-29.

¹⁴⁵ D. Kerr, *The Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) and its Implementation*, Citizenship Foundation, University of Bristol, 2013, p. 2., available at: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/cce2013rome_s2_the-council-of-europe-charter-on-edc-and-hre.pdf [accessed 12 June 2021]

¹⁴⁶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 (adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 11 May 2010), para 5e.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., para 4f.

‘In all areas of education, member states should promote educational approaches and teaching methods which aim at learning to live together in a democratic and multicultural society and at enabling learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote social cohesion, value diversity and equality, appreciate differences – particularly between different faith and ethnic groups – and settle disagreements and conflicts in a non-violent manner with respect for each other’s rights, as well as to combat all forms of discrimination and violence, especially bullying and harassment.’¹⁴⁸

The Charter puts specific emphasis on the fact that HRE should go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills, to empower learners ‘with the readiness to take action in society in the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.’¹⁴⁹ Beyond that, the Charter highlights the obligation of member states to equip educators and teachers with suitable training that goes beyond a discipline’s objectives and principles towards ‘appropriate teaching and learning methods, as well as other key skills appropriate to their area of education.’¹⁵⁰

4.3.1.5 Establishment of HRE design principles

In the previous chapters several relevant sources have been analysed with the aim to identify HRE design principles for MOOC development. Looking at the sources through an instructional design lens, five focal points can be observed in UNDHRET, CM/Rec(2010)7, A/HRC/42/23, THRED that can be utilized to establish HRE design principles for MOOC development. These principles are: (1) learner-centered design, (2) participatory design, (3) inclusive design, (4) accessible design and (5) action-oriented design. The table below provides an overview of some of the most insightful text parts where each source refers, either explicitly or in a closely related terminology, to one of the above design principles.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., para 13.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., para 5g.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., para 9.

	UNDHRET	CM/Rec(2010)7	A/HRC/42/23	THRED ¹⁵¹
(1)	Art. 2b; 3.3	Art. 2e,	Para. 28a, 35d	p. 18, 26
(2)	Art. 7	Art. 3, 5e, 8	Para. 10h, 35d, 36	p. 12, 19, 20, 77
(3)	Art. 1; 5	Art. 2a, 5f, 13	Para.	p. 20, 23-24,
(4)	Art. 7	Art. 13	Para. 28c, 28g, 39	p. 23, 24, 26.
(5)	Art. 2b	Art. 2b, 5g	Para. 35d, 36	p. 3-4, 19, 82,

Table 2: Overview: HRE design principles reflected in UNDHRET, CM/Rec(2010)7, A/HRC/42/23, THRED.

4.3.2 HRE Design principles for MOOCs

Based on the reviewed material in the previous chapters from an instructional design perspective, five principles are especially relevant for designing MOOCs for human rights education: (1) learner-centered design, (2) participatory design, (3) inclusive design, (4) accessible design and (5) action-oriented design. Although all design principles have distinct features, they overlap and are mutually reinforcing. The following chapter will explore what they mean in the practise of designing MOOCs for HRE. The chapter will also provide a typology of exercises, techniques or methods that allow for the realization of these principles and outline practical examples from HRE MOOCs currently available online. It is important to note that many of the activity types outlined below unfold their educational potential as part of a larger journey or in combination with each other, nevertheless they fulfil a specific pedagogical function or goal that can be tied to the above-mentioned design principles.

¹⁵¹ Cf Bajaj.

4.3.2.1 Learner-centered design

Learner-centered course design enables learners to bring their own experiences, context, and ideas into the learning journey.¹⁵² It starts already prior to the course production when design teams conduct needs assessments to identify learner needs. During the early stages of production, moving from the instructor-centered learning objectives, that outline what the instructors want to achieve, to the learner-centered learning outcomes, that describe what learners will be able to do after course completion, is another essential step. Learner-centered activities and exercises are not necessarily participatory, in fact, since all elements of a MOOC need to be scalable to cater to massive audiences, they are a way to enable learners to bring their own context into the learning journey without requiring intense moderation or ongoing maintenance. Course components and activities are prepared in a way that they build on and respond to learner input dynamically.

Self-assessments (SA)

SAs are the process of looking at oneself with tools, rubrics or criteria provided by the facilitators. They are a useful way for learners to apply what they have learnt to their own context, to assess their own behaviours and practises, and to reflect on their own environment. They are especially useful to equip learners to investigate security-related issues, where instructors lack context, insight, or the technical means to provide more concrete recommendations. A practical example of a self-assessment can be found in Amnesty International's MOOC on *Digital Security and Human Rights*,¹⁵³ where learners assess their own behaviours regarding digital security. Difficult topics, such as the usage of virtual private networks (VPNs), that can significantly enhance security for learners and human rights defenders in some countries but can add and additional layers of risk in others,¹⁵⁴ can still be part of the learning experience this way. Instead of providing 'solutions' or 'one-size-fits-all' approaches, self-assessments provide the baseline and

¹⁵² Cf B. Hains and B. Smith, 'Student-Centered Course Design: Empowering Students to Become Self-Directed Learners', *The Journal of Experiential Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2012, pp. 358–361.

¹⁵³ Amnesty International, *Digital Security and Human Rights*, available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/digital-security-and-human-rights> [accessed 8 July 2021].

¹⁵⁴ Electronic Frontier Foundation, 'Choosing the VPN That's Right for You', *Surveillance Self Defense*, 2019, available at: <https://ssd.eff.org/en/module/choosing-vpn-thats-right-you> [accessed 12 June 2021].

framework for learners to develop their own strategies. Self-assessments can be included in all major MOOC platforms simply by adding interactive .pdf files.

Web-Quests

WebQuests are another highly scalable exercise type, whereas learners are encouraged to explore a subject matter outside of the course environment on their own, and eventually report back to their peers through discussion forums. The fourth module of Amnesty International's MOOC on *Human Rights Defenders*¹⁵⁵ contains a WebQuest where learners are encouraged to explore Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations for their country with regards to the protection of human rights defenders. WebQuests are especially useful when instructors want learners to explore a level of detail that would, if brought to the course, become irrelevant, redundant or too time-consuming for other learners. Another advantage of WebQuests is that they are a suitable tool for delivering dynamic content that might change regularly. UPR recommendations are not static and new recommendations will be added regularly. Hence, if the external links do not become outdated, learners will be able to access the latest and most accurate information, without requiring regular updates from the course designers.

Learning Paths

Some MOOC providers such as edX offer design teams the opportunity to develop multiple paths that learners can be assigned to or choose from. This activity types are useful to enable a more personalised learning experience that caters better to the needs and preferences of the individual learner. Personalized learning paths can also be used to encourage a dialogue between learners by providing cohort A with information cohort B needs to complete an activity and vice versa. Although personalized learning paths would be an excellent way to provide learners with a more tailor-made experience e.g. on opportunities to take action for human rights, they are rarely used because they can be time-consuming to create, and may require some manual management e.g. by assigning learners to cohorts. One example could be to provide a global learner-base with tailor-

¹⁵⁵ Amnesty International, *Human Rights Defenders*, available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/human-rights-defenders-2> [accessed 8 July 2021].

made personalized paths about the human rights protection mechanisms, cases or instruments most relevant in a specific region. Another option would be to let learners choose how they want to take action based on their skills and competencies. Learners who prefer writing could be encouraged to start their own blog, write newspaper articles, or engage in letter writing marathons. Learners with persuasive and negotiation skills, may prefer to lobby a politician or meet with a representative. Personalized learning paths can also be used to address competency levels by providing learners with basic or more advanced materials. Organisations with local chapters can provide learners with more tailor-made, contextualized and locally relevant content.

Quizzes

Although maybe less engaging, Quizzes enable design teams to provide learners with personalized feedback at scale and they often function as means of assessment to test to what extent learners achieved certain learning outcomes. As the most frequent activity, Quizzes can be adapted to single and multiple choice, true or false-activities and other variations. Quizzes either reinforce what participants have learnt in previous chapters or gauge comprehension for the purpose of evaluation.¹⁵⁶ Quizzes can be learner-centered activities because they provide dynamic feedback based on choices users make.

Manifests, Learner diaries, Portfolios, Blogs

Manifests are motivational activities that learners can use as reference as they move through the learning experience. Another ‘approach that is proving to be valuable in making students reflect [...] is to have them maintain learner diaries or logs.’¹⁵⁷ Coursera, FutureLearn and edX provide means for learners to capture notes and make diary entries.

Regardless which activity types are being used to facilitate learner-centered design, the content of all activities needs to be drafted in a learner-centered style to avoid that the

¹⁵⁷ R. Godwin-Jones, 'Contributing, Creating, Curating: Digital Literacies for Language Learners', *Language Learning & Technology*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2015, p. 15.

learners feel they are a third party in the process. The questions outlined below can help educators to self-assess their activities and contents.

- Is my instruction relevant and sensitive to learners from a broad variety of backgrounds? (e.g., people who were and were not exposed to human rights violations, people who can or cannot fully enjoy their rights, people who do identify in a binary way...)
- Is my instruction universally understood or does it reference culturally specific icons or denominators that learners might not understand and be able to interpret?
- Does my instruction address learners directly and focus on the relevance to their lives or are learners addressed as a third party?
- Do learners have the resources and skills to access and act on what they have learnt? Can they directly and practically use and apply what they learn to their own lives? (e.g., the same action that might be doable in one country might put learners at severe risk in others, legal remedies might be accessible only to specific learners, ...)
- Are contents developed with non-native speakers in mind who might have difficulties understanding complex terminologies?
- Does the content encourage and motivate learners to develop in their own ideas? Does the instruction build on contributions from learners (e.g., from previous course runs or workshop-contributions)?

4.3.2.2 Participatory design

Participatory design enables learners to actively participate in the learning experience and become active agents who engage, share, and collaborate with others. Participatory design shifts the emphasis from teaching to learning and puts the needs and interests of the learners first, instead of perpetuating a strictly defined curriculum based on instructor preferences.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Cf Amnesty International, *Facilitation Manual: A Guide to Using Participatory Methodologies*, Amnesty International Ltd, 2011, p. 11, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/24000/act350202011eng.pdf> [accessed 8 July 2021].

‘Participatory methodologies are a framework for conceiving and carrying out education that promotes shared reflection, critical analysis, in-depth questioning and collective problem solving. This enables participants to deepen their knowledge and come to a better understanding of the particular human rights issues they are facing and articulate proposals and strategies for change.’¹⁵⁹

The goal of participatory methodologies is social transformation through empowerment, strengthening commitment, challenging existing attitudes, and consolidation of action.¹⁶⁰ Contrary to teacher-centered methodology, participatory methodologies re-define the role of the instructors, who, instead of representing the primary or sole source of knowledge and expertise, become ‘catalyst for processes of reflection and analysis that lead to transformation’¹⁶¹. Participatory learning commonly starts with the experience and self of learners to inspire, engage, motivate, and build confidence.¹⁶² Following a critical analysis of their own experiences, learners identify patterns, commonalities and draw conclusions. In the next step, learners are exposed to new information, to enhance and deepen their analysis leading to new perspectives and re-evaluation. Finally, learners apply what they have learnt to tangible, real-life situations and take action to create positive change in their lives and the lives of others.¹⁶³

Technical capabilities enhance and restrict to what extent MOOCs can be participatory. To be participatory, MOOCs must provide opportunities for learners to actively engage and participate in shaping the learning through their own realities, experiences, aspirations, hopes, challenges, and ideas. All participatory design elements contain some form of learner-generated content that, after submission, is accessible to other learners, who analyze, discuss, assess, and evaluate the submitted material. Participatory activity types can be used for developing ideas, critical analysis and reflection, problem solving, cooperation, debating, and creative expression. Common learning components used to facilitate participatory design are polls, word-clouds, peer-instructions and -assessments, (social media) groups, wikis and, most importantly, discussion forums.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ Cf *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² F. Tibbitts, 2017, pp. 69–95.

¹⁶³ Amnesty International, 2011, p. 12.

Word clouds and polls

Word-clouds enable learners to brainstorm ideas, critically reflect and creatively express themselves. After enough learners have submitted responses, the submissions will be displayed in the form of a word-cloud.¹⁶⁴ The more often a particular term is submitted, the larger it will display in the word cloud. Since learners collaboratively create a new visual asset, word clouds can be used as basis of forum discussions, as initial step for other activities or to inspire and motivate the next cohort of learners in the next course iteration. Instructors can choose to surface learner-generated content by highlighting it in the learning journey, not only encouraging participation but also making the course more learner-centered and inclusive. One example of a word cloud can be found in Harvard's MOOC on *Child Protection: Children's Rights in Theory and Practice*,¹⁶⁵ where learners are encouraged to reflect on what child protection means to them. Among the 25331 submissions, 'safety', 'protection', 'security', 'love' and 'education' were some of the most frequently used terms.

Contrary to word-clouds, polls contain pre-defined answers learners can choose from. The results are publicly shared and can be used as basis for analysis and forum discussions. Polls are highly scalable learning components because they do not require any moderation and still enable learners to contribute. In the same MOOC as mentioned above educators also make use of polls. Learners are asked 'Which of the following statements about corporal punishment do you believe?'. Among the possible answers are 'Corporal punishment is never acceptable', 'Corporal punishment should also be an option', 'Sometimes children don't listen and corporal punishment is the best way to get through to them'. The course designers then visualized the data from the poll in an interactive world map.

Peer-Assessments

¹⁶⁴ Cf. D. Skiba, 'Bloom's Digital Taxonomy and Word Clouds', *Nursing Education Perspectives*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2013, pp. 277–280.

¹⁶⁵ Harvard University, 'Child Protection: Children's Rights in Theory and Practice', available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/child-protection-childrens-rights-in-theory-and-pr>, [accessed 8 July 2021].

Peer-assessments are multi-step activities available on Coursera, edX and OpenEdx. They enable learners to write down ideas, opinions, or reactions. After submitting the text, other learners assess the submission based on rubrics provided by instructors and provide personalized feedback. Gamage et al, have researched the use of peer-assessments in MOOCs, concludes that they ‘a particularly prominent role as it is the only tool that enables course instructors to enhance their courses with open-ended and creative assignments’¹⁶⁶ despite the large numbers of participants. Peer-assessments promote collaboration, critical analysis, and creative expression. They enable individualized feedback at scale without requiring significant resources from course moderators.¹⁶⁷ In some cases, it can be advisable to provide sample responses as reference system for learners. One MOOC that utilizes peer-assessments frequently is Wesleyan University’s *Take Action: From Protest to Policy*.¹⁶⁸ Throughout the course learners use peer-assessments to provide feedback on a court visit, analyze the communication strategy of a changemaker organization, develop a stakeholder chart or learn how to cultivate allies to support their position.

Discussion forums

In most MOOCs discussion forums play an essential role throughout the entire experience. They enable critical discussions, debates, collaborative reflection, and mutual problem solving, sharing ideas and opinions, creative expression and more. Discussion forums are often used to start and conclude the learning experience. An initial learner prompt may ask learners to introduce themselves and share their motivations to take part in the course, while a final prompt may encourage learners to reflect on what they have learnt and how they plan to use their new knowledge and skills for taking action.

¹⁶⁶ D. Gamage and T. Staubitz and M. Whiting, 'Peer Assessment in MOOCs: Systematic Literature Review', *Distance Education*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2021, p. 269.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 268-269.

¹⁶⁸ Wesleyan University, 'Take Action: From Protest to Policy', available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/take-action-from-protest-to-policy/>, [accessed 8 July 2021].

Peer-Instruction

This multi-step activity is specifically available on edX but could be mimicked with the tools available on other MOOC providers. Learners first receive a question and respond to it via multiple choice. After they have submitted their responses, they argue why they have picked this answer in a open text response. Learners can then see the reasoning of their peers and, based on what they have learnt from others, refine their response. One example of a peer-instruction can be found in Amnesty's MOOC on *Digital Security and Human Rights*. Learners are encouraged to reflect on the question 'How is digital security a matter of claiming our rights?' with the possible answers 'Claiming my rights helps protect myself and others against human rights violations', 'Claiming my rights reinforces human rights as universal standards and helps to hold governments to account', 'Claiming my rights challenges the misunderstanding that digital security is about concealing malicious activity'. As the example illustrates, there does not have to be *one* correct response if the purpose of the peer instruction is to engage in a discussion, convey your perspective and learn from the perspectives of others.

Social Media Groups and tools

The usage of social media tools alongside MOOCs have proven to enhance student engagement and retention.¹⁶⁹ Social media groups are also a viable way to extend the learning experience beyond the timeframe of the specific MOOC that normally ends upon course completion. Another way to integrate social media into MOOC learning experiences are social walls. Amnesty International's course on *Freedom of Expression*¹⁷⁰ utilized a social wall and hashtag to encourage learners to promote their right to freedom of expression on twitter, the social wall would then display all tweets inside the course to encourage other learners to join in.

¹⁶⁹ Cf Saijing, Z., Kyungsik, H., Rosson, M. et al, 'The Role of Social Media in MOOCs: How to Use Social Media to Enhance Student Retention', in *Proceedings of the Third (2016) ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale*, p. 427.

¹⁷⁰ Amnesty International, 'Human Rights: The Right to Freedom of Expression', available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/human-rights-the-right-to-freedom-of-expression> [accessed 8 July 2021].

Wikis

Etymologically derived from the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, wikis are knowledge repositories, databases, directories, or websites developed collaboratively. One significant feature of wikis is that all users can edit its content. Amnesty's *Freedom of Expression* MOOC also makes use of Wikis, encouraging learners to collaboratively investigate the human rights situation in their countries. After learners submit a short paragraph on a major human rights challenge in their country, others can contribute, comment and amend the entries of their peers.

4.3.2.3 Accessible design

Accessible design aims to reduce barriers for all learners to actively take part in the learning experience.¹⁷¹ As the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines in Article 8, the 'technology design should take into account accessibility and usability features for the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities.'¹⁷² Accessibility concerns technical and content-specific aspects of the final learning product. As new technological tools and activity types in MOOCs emerge, accessibility features must evolve as well. Accessible design is also not a clear-cut issue, actions taken by design teams to enhance accessible for one group of learners may reduce accessibility for another.

Because MOOCs are delivered online through the world wide web, they should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) of the Internet. Since the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) launched the first WCAG in 1999, multiple versions have been developed to increase accessibility for everyone using the internet. The currently latest version WCAG 2.1 was published on 5 June 2018 and contains 78 success criteria. Conformance with the WCAG is measured by how many criteria are met by the final product and described with the conformance levels A, AA, AAA.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ J. Seale, 'E-Learning and Disability in Higher Education: Accessibility Research and Practice', United Kingdom, Routledge, 2014, p. 9.

¹⁷² United Nations General Assembly Res A/RES/61/106, 13 December 2006, Art. 8.

¹⁷³ Cf World Wide Web Consortium, 'Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Overview', available at: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/> [accessed 1 July 2021].

Another framework that can be applied to MOOCs is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), a nonprofit education research and development organization based in the United States. Their guidelines differentiate between three cognitive areas that affect learning: (1) engagement, (2) representation and (3) action & expression. The guidelines are based on the idea that learners should be provided with a variety of options to engage with, interact and comprehend the learning material. This includes among other criteria (a) providing alternatives for visual and auditory information, (2) varying methods of response, display and navigation, (3) using diverse tools and media for expression and reception, and (4) fostering collaboration and community.¹⁷⁴ The complexity of accessibility in MOOCs can best be demonstrated through examples relating to a variety of special needs of learners with autism, low vision, physical or motor disabilities, deafness or hardness of hearing, and dyslexia. To provide practical examples in the following paragraphs, I will use Karwai Pun's 'Do's and Don'ts on designing for accessibility'¹⁷⁵ as reference system and resource. Because MOOC design teams are, in many accessibility aspects, dependent on the technology MOOC platforms and authoring tools provide, the following are examples that design teams can practically implement on the largest MOOC providers and Open edX.

Visual impairment and blindness

When designing for users with low vision or no vision, instructional designers need to ensure contents are accessible for screen-readers. On the most fundamental level, this means that visual assets have alternative text-based descriptions that screen-readers can output in audio format.¹⁷⁶ All images in MOOCs should contain alt description tags, videos should contain transcripts that describe what is happening on-screen when it is relevant for the learning and button-text should indicate what learners can expect when

¹⁷⁴ Cf Center for Applied Special Technology, 'The UDL Guidelines', available at: <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁷⁵ UK Government, 'Dos and don'ts on designing for accessibility', available at: <https://accessibility.blog.gov.uk/2016/09/02/dos-and-donts-on-designing-for-accessibility/> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁷⁶ Cf Park, p. 48.

clicking on them.¹⁷⁷ For learners with visual impairment font-size needs to be sufficiently large, visual assets should have strong contrast and text-on-image should be made available in html format. All text should contain html markups such as <h1>, <nav> and <label> to enable learners to easier navigate the course and better understand the structure of the learning content. Instructional designers should also be wary when it comes to locational descriptions ('Below', 'above', 'on the right') because screen-readers will read out the information in the chronological order of the html code, which might not always match the visual output people with vision can experience. Furthermore, locational descriptions may become inaccurate when displayed on mobile devices because the different learning components that may display horizontally on a desktop device, appear vertically on a mobile phone. It can be tempting, especially for new instructional design teams, to load MOOCs with fancy third party tools and activity types that are not natively offered by the authoring software. Although such tools can make the learning experience more engaging for some learners, they can hamper accessibility severely because they need to be embedded through iframes and other means that are not fully accessible for screen readers.

Deafness or hardness of hearing

While audio files, interviews and audio testimonies by human rights defenders can be an excellent way to make text content more personal and authentic, deaf learners or learners hard of hearing are or may be locked out of experiencing audio content entirely. For this reason, it is essential to offer transcripts of audio files and to enable subtitles for videos. Deaf learners can also not hear computer audio signals that outline that an error is happening e.g., when prerequisites for moving to the next page or chapter are not yet fulfilled. It is therefore advisable to add a statement in proximity to the related buttons outlining the requirements to continue. However, to make contents fully accessible to learners with deafness or hardness of hearing, MOOCs 'would need to offer picture in

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

picture capability of a pre-recorded interpretation (by a qualified/certified interpreter) of the video content in the sign language of choice.’¹⁷⁸

Autistic spectrum, dyslexia, and motor disabilities

For learners in the autistic spectrum flashy, animated and highly contrasting colors, as well as the use of idioms, figures of speech and vague buttons can be a challenge, while for other learners they might make the experience more engaging or more accessible.¹⁷⁹

According to Karwai Pun and the accessibility group at Home Office Digital, underlining and formatting text in italic makes learning more difficult for learners with dyslexia, while offering course materials in multiple formats such as video or audio might make it easier for dyslectic learners.¹⁸⁰

Since many MOOCs still rely on activity types that require a mouse such as drag and drop exercises or clicking buttons or hotspots on interactive maps or images, learners with motor or physical disabilities might struggle to access and interact with the content. Activities and exercises should not require a high degree of precision, buttons should be large enough, the contents should be navigable through keyword only and short time out windows should be avoided.¹⁸¹

At the crossroads between accessible and inclusive design: Plain Language

For all learners, the use of plain language is one of the most essential actions design teams can take to make their MOOCs more accessible and inclusive. Plain English is relevant for all learners to make learning contents easier to process and understand.¹⁸² Design teams should dedicate a significant amount of time improving overly complex sentences, jargon, and vocabulary to deliver effective HRE. In the context of human rights policies, laws, and documents, this can be a particular challenge because learning materials need to be simplified while not jeopardizing or sacrificing accuracy. A study by Carlon, Keerativoranan, and Cross focused on MOOCs concludes:

¹⁷⁸ G. Pooja and F. Shahnaz, 'Massive Online Course for Deaf and Dumb People', *Proceedings of the 21st Western Canadian Conference on Computing Education*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁷⁹ Cf UK Government.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Cf Carlon, p. 401.

‘current courses have reasonable readability scores though improvements can still be introduced both in the text components and video transcripts. By doing so, MOOCs could potentially increase educational equity by increasing the achievement rates of learners from less developed countries, which are typically non-native English speakers.’¹⁸³

Multiple frameworks are available for assessing the readability of text-based content, including the Flesch Reading Ease / Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the Dale-Chall Score, the Lexile Framework, Powers-Sumner-Kearl Readability Formula, and the Fry Graph Readability Formula. A variety of websites can be used to assess the readability of text passages according to multiple such frameworks. The website Readable.com evaluates readability according to 18 frameworks. Assessing the UDHR using readable.com, the document passes the requirements of only 1 readability framework and is accessible to only 64% of the literate public. In contrast, the simplified version of the UDHR is accessible to 85%.

4.3.2.4 Inclusive design

Inclusion plays an important role in MOOCs already during the registration process. One study by Kizilcec and Saltarelli, performed a split test on MOOC registrations by adding a diversity statement to the enrollment page. They concluded that ‘diversity statements can drive changes in enrollment patterns’¹⁸⁴ and found that enrollment in underrepresented sociodemographic groups increased when adding diversity statements.¹⁸⁵

The goal of inclusive design is to make a product usable by as many people as possible without the need for adaption.¹⁸⁶ Inclusive design in the context of MOOCs is the process

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 404.

¹⁸⁴ R. Kizilcec and A. Saltarelli, 'Can a diversity statement increase diversity in MOOCs?', *Proceedings of the Sixth (2019) ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale*, 2019, p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Cf University of Cambridge, 'What is inclusive design?', *available at: <http://www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com/whatis/whatis.html>* [accessed 1 July 2021].

of establishing a more equitable, diverse, and supportive learning environment where everyone feels safe to express themselves and speak out.¹⁸⁷ Studies have shown that inclusive design directly impacts the sense of belongingness learners feel when taking part in MOOCs.¹⁸⁸ Belongingness, in return, positively impacts student engagement, improves learning outcomes, and increases course completion.¹⁸⁹ Hence design teams will take special measures to ensure MOOCs especially cater to their target audiences and leverage and build on their diversity.¹⁹⁰

Inclusive design goes beyond tokenistic representation and leverages diversity to highlight the intersectionality and complexity of human rights in a global and intercultural context to promote universal human rights values and principles. The wide breath of diverse experiences enables learners to understand the challenges and opportunities for human rights action in a variety of contexts. Inclusive design also encompasses upholding learner's right to freedom of expression, regardless of whether they agree or disagree with the concept of human rights. Below are some suggestions to enhance inclusion in MOOCs targeting global audiences.

Representation in assets

In global productions, case studies, videos, visual assets and testimonials of HRDs should be chosen on a diverse set of criteria to cater towards people from a variety of backgrounds, regions, ethnicities, genders and walks of life. 'Bringing in narratives and individuals from different cultures helps students to understand their commonalities as well as differences among cultures.'¹⁹¹

Gender-sensitivity

Special considerations should be given to gender-sensitive description and depiction of people and audio representation of different accents and lingual varieties. To provide an

¹⁸⁷ Cf R. Kizilcec and G. Davis and G. Cohen, 'Towards Equal Opportunities in MOOCs: Affirmation Reduces Gender & Social-class Achievement Gaps in China', *Proceedings of the Fourth ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale*, 2017, pp. 121-130.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas, pp. 78-79.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Cf Taheri, pp. 597-599.

¹⁹¹ Taheri, p. 600.

example, stick figures that have typical male and female features, although a cost-efficient way to produce videos, may perpetuate a binary perception of genders. The use of gender-sensitive language and the pronoun ‘they’ instead of ‘he’ or ‘she’ in fictional scenarios allow representation beyond binary thinking and categories. Because MOOCs can only be as inclusive as the design teams can envision, user-testing with a diverse group can help identify biases and stereotypes that the design teams unintentionally replicate.

User-Testing

Feedback from learners plays an important role already during the production process and can enhance the inclusive design of MOOCs. One research project supporting the realization of the website MOOC4all.com, collects user feedback for a MOOC recommender system based on UDL principles.¹⁹² They conclude that ‘user feedback is of great value for the future development of MOOC platforms and MOOC educational resources, as it will help to follow Design for All guidelines’¹⁹³ and it can ‘advise MOOC providers about the missing means for meeting learner needs.’¹⁹⁴ Similarly, user-testing at early stages during the production, enables design teams to tailor their learning material to learner needs, requirements and preferences before contents and assets are finalized and difficult to amend.

Surfacing Learner Responses

Another way to make MOOCs more inclusive is to surface learner submissions or contributions and feature them more prominently in the learning journey.¹⁹⁵ This can happen in a variety of ways throughout the learning experience: (1) forum submissions can be pinned to the top to enhance visibility, (2) learner-generated contents such as word-clouds can be featured in the course updates or used for follow-up activities, (3) learner-

¹⁹² F. Iniesto and R. Covadonga, 'YourMOOC4all: A Recommender System for MOOCs Based on Collaborative Filtering Implementing UDL', *Transforming Learning with Meaningful Technologies*, vol. 11722, 2019, p. 746.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Cf Taheri, p. 601.

feedback or reviews can be sent out via emails to encourage learners to finish the course (4) initiatives or actions of learners can be featured in blog posts or videos, (5) course contents can be updated to highlight valuable forum discussions, and last but not least (6) MOOCs can contain assets and materials developed by learners in offline-settings e.g. during workshops in blended scenarios.

4.3.2.5 Action-oriented design

Action-oriented design is determined by the extent to which the learning experience provides opportunities to improve confidence and practice key behaviors to take action for human rights. The use of MOOCs as a tool for individual and collective action is still in its early days. Few organizations, universities and educational entities have harnessed the massive scale of MOOCs to mobilize and facilitate actions. However, Tibbitts outlines that the ‘self-selection of learners into HRE programming allows for an alignment of preexisting personal values with the message of HRE and increases the possibility that participation will lead to taking action of some kind.’¹⁹⁶ In this sense, MOOCs might be one suitable option to inspire learners for taking action, despite the fact that there is a lack of evidence to what extent MOOCs are suitable tools for triggering behavioural change due to the difficulties to evaluate them. In the context of this thesis taking action will be understood as any activity that aims to inspire, facilitate or create positive human rights change with the goal of social transformation.¹⁹⁷

Online Actions

One way to leverage MOOCs for human rights action is to facilitate and encourage actions that are taken online already. Signing petitions, writing letters, engaging in forms of digital advocacy e.g. through social media, blog posts, urgent actions and similar activities can be used to provide learners with simple, low-barrier opportunities to take action for human rights. One downside of encouraging online actions through MOOCs is that they become outdated fairly quickly. Human rights organizations will aim to avoid

¹⁹⁶ Tibbitts, 2017, p. 79.

¹⁹⁷ Cf Ibid., p. 70.

that learners continue to advocate for a particular case, when the situation has changed significantly e.g. the person has been freed or is no longer alive. Hence, the use of online actions in MOOCs requires constant monitoring and updating.

Action plans

Another way to promote action-oriented designs in MOOCs is through action plans. Action plans can take a variety of forms and can either be implemented at the end or throughout the learning experience. Taking into account that the majority of the learners who registered to a MOOC are unlikely to complete the learning experience, it may be advisable to incorporate action plans early on, to encourage and inspire learners to follow through with their plan and actions. Similarly to learning diaries and portfolios, action plans are tools to encourage learners to continue their human rights journey beyond and after course completion. Typical contents of action plans include risk assessments for human rights defenders, stakeholder analysis to map allies and supporters, self-assessments to map strengths and weaknesses, strategies for action and tips to evaluate the success of the action.

World maps

The versatility of world maps has been demonstrated by organizations such as Ushahidi in the past. Ushahidi is both, an organization, and an open-source application for submitting user-generated reports and collate data.¹⁹⁸ The tool has been used for crisis response in Nepal, election monitoring in the United States and reporting of sexual harassment in Egypt. World maps in MOOCs can be used in a variety of ways as well, e.g., to encourage learners to tag their country and outline why they joined the course, to map human rights violations or to celebrate actions and initiatives taking place around the world. One aspect to consider, when using world maps is the security of learners. Tagging their exact location may put learners at risk and should be explicitly highlighted

¹⁹⁸ Cf Ushahidi, 'Monitor, Map and Mobilize Your Community with Ushahidi', available at: <https://www.ushahidi.com/>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

to the learners. Some tools such as Zeemaps offer the option to restrict the zoom level, making it more difficult to identify exact locations.¹⁹⁹

5. Critical Analysis of human rights MOOCs

This chapter will assess to what extent chosen human rights MOOCs prioritize the design principles derived from existing HRE frameworks and documents to answer the research question of this thesis, how and to what extent human rights MOOCs prioritize the HRE design principles set forth by the UNDHRET and HRE pedagogical frameworks.

5.1 Selection criteria

As previously established, the HRE design principles can be applied to all MOOCs focused on HRE regardless of length, language, scope, delivery mode or target audience. Although these varying attributes can impact what tools and means can be utilized to uphold them. Nevertheless, the MOOCs analysed in this thesis were chosen based on a variety of criteria that support their comparison at the end of the analysis. Beside the fact that all learning journeys had to meet the definitions of MOOCs as outlined in the beginning of this thesis, all courses had to fulfil certain selection criteria: (1) The learning outcomes, objectives or goals have a clear focus on HRE. (2) The target audiences are global. (3) The language of all courses is English. (4) The delivery mode (e.g., instructor-led, self-paced, sequential/non-sequential) is the same. (5) The courses are publicly available to everyone with internet access. (6) The MOOCs are designed with similar authoring software and tools.

With these criteria in mind, five MOOCs were chosen for an in-depth analysis. These courses and the acronyms that will be used in the analysis are: Amnesty International: Human Rights Defenders (AIHRD) via edx, Global Campus of Human Rights: Promoting and Defending Human Rights (GCPDHR) via openedx, Amnesty International: Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (AIUDHR) via FutureLearn, Stanford University: International Women's Health and Human Rights

¹⁹⁹ Cf Zeemaps. Available at: <https://www.zeemaps.com/>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

(SUWHHR) via Coursera and ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences: Global Business and Human Rights (ZUGBHR) via edX.

5.2 Corpus

The target audiences of the MOOCs hosted on Coursera, FutureLearn and edX are to some extent pre-determined by the learner demographic present on these platforms, and hence young university-aged people between 24 and 35 from all over the world.²⁰⁰ In a similar way GCPDHR targets students, NGO staff and committed citizens around the world, who are ‘actively interested and engaged in human rights work’²⁰¹.

GCPDHR	‘We designed this course for participants (students; governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental staff; social workers; researchers; committed citizens...) around the world who are actively interested and engaged in human rights work and wish to gain a general overview of historical and current developments at the international and regional level.’ ²⁰²
AIHRD	‘Our online course on Human Rights Defenders is free and open to all. Everyone with online access can take this course, whether you are in school or college, at university, taking the course as a group, or following it on your own in your free time.’ ²⁰³
AIUDHR	‘This course is for everyone who wants to know, claim and defend their human rights and the rights of others. You don’t need any previous knowledge of human rights.’ ²⁰⁴
SUWHHR	‘It is important to us that this course be available to all learners. We encourage you to apply for Coursera’s financial aid (see link to left) if the cost of the course certificate is difficult for you to afford. Please note that you may view all materials in this course, and participate in it, without purchasing a certificate’ ²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Cf R. Glass, M. Shiokawa-Baklan, S. Andrew, 'Who Takes MOOCs?', *New directions for institutional research*, vol. 2015, no. 167, p. 42.

²⁰¹ Global Campus of Human Rights, 'Promoting and Protecting Human Rights: a Global Overview', available at: <https://gchumanrights.org/education/e-learning/moocs/promoting-and-protecting-human-rights-a-global-overview/about.html>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Amnesty International, 'Free online course on Human Rights Defenders - Register now!', 24 October 2017, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2017/10/human-rights-defenders-online-course/>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

²⁰⁴ Amnesty International, 'Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights', available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

²⁰⁵ Stanford University, 'International Women's Health and Human Rights', available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/womens-health-human-rights>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

ZUGBHR	‘This course delivers a fundamental understanding of the connections between business conduct and human rights in a globalized world for an audience, who are generally interested in globalization and human rights and for individuals who are working at such interfaces in companies, civil society, intergovernmental or government organizations.’ ²⁰⁶
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Table 3: Overview: Target groups of human rights MOOCs.

In line with the selection criteria, all MOOCs have learning outcomes, goals or objectives with a strong focus on human rights and therefore are clearly created for HRE purposes. The table below provides an excerpt of up to five learning outcomes from each course as reference.

GCPDHR	• Knowledge about key historical, philosophical and legal developments • Understanding of progress and obstacles (overtime and current) • Ability to identify multi-faceted aspects (pros and cons) • Understanding of international legal frameworks, mechanisms and challenges • Capacity to discuss specific areas and groups/cases of concern
AIHRD	• argue for the importance of defending human rights • assess your own context when defending human rights • describe how you can take action to defend your rights • outline the obligations of states for protecting human rights defenders • identify ways you can advocate for governments to increase their protection of human rights defenders
AIUDHR	• Explore how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relates to your daily life • Describe how the UDHR influenced the development of human rights law and standards • Explain the significance of the UDHR to promoting human dignity • Contribute to the promotion of equality and non-discrimination • Engage in taking action for a more inclusive and participatory society
SUWHHR	• Communicate your reasons for taking the course and grow your sense of excitement at learning the material • Highlight the importance of quality of education and learning (not just access to education) as keys to assuring women’s health and human rights • Identify and define a practice that may be considered “traditional” that greatly affects women’s health and human rights • Recognize human rights abuses that have health impacts, such as unequal access or denial of health care; in particular, those services providing for fertility control and safe and legal termination of pregnancy • Recognize violence against women as a paradigmatic issue through which those in power maintain and/or increase their power in society
ZUGBHR	• Understand, how business activities of companies in different industry sectors are linked to human rights issues in a globalized world

²⁰⁶ ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, 'Global Business and Human Rights', available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/global-business-and-human-rights>, [accessed 1 July 2021].

	• Reflect, which perspectives are relevant to understand the links between global business and human rights issues • Know, which organizations worldwide engage in addressing human rights issues in their connection to companies and business activities • Analyze, which concepts, approaches and tools business companies in different industry sectors may use to manage their impact on human rights issues
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Table 4: Overview: Learning outcomes, objectives and goals of human rights MOOCs.

The five MOOCs are available as self-paced online courses, whereas learners can choose to complete the course at their own pace. The time commitment for the various courses is 35 hours for GCHR, 16-20 hours for AIHRD, 3-5 hours for AIUDHR, 58 hours for SUWHHR and 36-38 hours ZUGBHR according to the course registration pages. The courses were created with the in-built authoring tools of Coursera, FutureLearn, edx and the open-source software OpenEdx that provides a variety of technological capabilities to cater towards all HRE design principles. All courses are available in English and are open for registration to a public, global audience.

5.3 Analytical framework: HRE design principles

To evaluate each MOOC according to the HRE design principles, the key performance indicators below will function as a reference system to analyse various design layers of each course. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are pre-dominantly derived from my own experience designing MOOCs for HRE but also draw inspiration from the previously mentioned UDL framework developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST).²⁰⁷

Design principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	
Learner-centered design	• The language used throughout the course is designed with the learner in mind. • The course utilizes relevant examples from and directly applicable to the daily life of learners e.g., by explaining human rights in tangible ways. • The course contains motivational elements aimed at inspiring and building the confidence of learners e.g., success stories and human rights victories. • The course clearly defines the learning outcomes, sets expectations, and provides sufficient orientation e.g., on navigating the course or discussion guidelines.	

²⁰⁷ Cf Center for Applied Special Technology.

	• The course uses a variety of methods to engage and activate learners by using a variety of activity types and media.	
Participatory design	• The course utilizes learning components that enable learners to actively participate in and contribute to the learning journey. • The course encourages learners to share their ideas, express opinions, and reflections in the discussion forum or via other means. • The course supports the autonomy and choices of learners with suitable learning components and activities. • The course facilitates a dialogue between learners and goes beyond student – teacher communication.	
Accessible design	• The course offers alternative means to access course content such as transcripts for visual and auditive contents, images have alt-descriptions. • The course uses plain English and achieves high readability scores. • The course is accessible for mobile learners. • The course materials are freely accessible without paywalls or other restrictions.	
Inclusive design	• The course features a wide array of speakers and voices from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. • The course uses inclusive and gender-sensitive language and explains difficult icons, symbols, terminology, e.g. in a glossary. • The course refrains from replicating negative stereotypes and biases e.g. by depicting specific ethnicities in dire conditions and other not.	
Action-oriented design	• The course offers opportunities for learners to improve confidence and practice key behaviours to take action. • The course equips learners with tools to assess their own risks when taking action. • The course inspires and encourages learners to take action with relevant examples.	

Table 5: Overview: Sample KPIs for HRE design principles.

The KPIs listed above are not exhaustive and rather aim to provide a representative sample of the extent to which the analysed MOOCs prioritize or deprioritize specific design principles. They can also be used by less experienced instructional design teams that aim to develop their MOOCs according to the principles outlined in this thesis.

The KPIs are formulated in a platform-agnostic way, meaning that they are applicable and useful for any course platform, as they do not relate to the technical realization through specific learning components but rather the underlying pedagogical function.

5.4 Case studies

The case studies will include a critical analysis of the chosen MOOCs alongside recommendations or opportunities for improvement regarding the HRE design principles. It is important to mention that MOOC design teams and the entities developing such MOOCs are bound by the contexts they operate in. They might have taken the conscious decision to prioritize or deprioritize design elements based on economic, time, personnel limitations or in hindsight of security-related issues, the analysis should therefore not be interpreted as a reflection on the capabilities of these entities but rather as a snapshot of the outputs they have delivered in the context they are working in with the resources available to them.

5.4.1 Human Rights Defenders (Amnesty International) via edX

Amnesty International's Human Rights Defenders MOOC was launched in 2017 on the MOOC provider platform edX in English, Spanish, Arabic and French. According to edX enrollment statistics, the English version of the course reached more than 20,000 learners by the end of 2019. The introductory, self-paced course takes four weeks to complete with a weekly commitment of 4-5 hours. The course consists of six modules.

Learner-centered design

The first module provides orientation and guidance to learners and contains an introductory welcome note, a pre-course survey, explanations how to navigate the course, discussion guidelines, tips about online security and descriptions for audit and paid tracks. The pre-course module does not include any information about the course authors and instructors, which may negatively impact the trust and confidence learners place in the course contents. The course design team put special emphasis on the discussion guidelines with screenshots, tutorial-like explanations and guidelines that go beyond edX's CoC. The course concludes with a module celebrating the success of learners, asking for feedback through a survey and describing means to stay in touch and continue learning. Overall, the course provides solid orientation for learners, who may not be as familiar with online learning, but it lacks transparency about the course authors.

The main course contents consist of four modules with three to five clearly defined learning outcomes. The modules are *Human Rights Defenders*, *Using Your Voice to Speak Up in Defence of Human Rights*, *Working With Others For Human Rights*, and *Systems*. The language throughout the course is centered around the learner. Modules, headlines, sub-headlines, video titles and contents often directly reference the learner using second person ('you') throughout the materials.

One noteworthy learning component is the self-assessment in 1.3.5 that aims to enable learners to assess their personal risk when defending human rights. Instead of providing solutions that may fail to be applicable in the diverse realities learners face globally, the design team provides a reference system of questions for learners to identify potential risks themselves. Another guided self-assessment later in the same module 1.4.4 encourages learners to identify skills, talents, and abilities they may have that could be used for the defense of human rights.

One significant downside of the self-assessments is that they are not designed for active engagement. They are a text-based set of questions with no means for learners to directly interact with the course interface. Learners either must make notes outside of the course environment or may skip the activity entirely. A way to make the contents accessible for learners directly in the course would have been interactive .pdf files that can be directly embedded in the course content.

The buildup of the course seems to be strongly centered around the learner as well. Starting with the self in the first module exploring personal skills, abilities and motivations (*Human Rights Defenders*), gradually expanding from individual (*Using your Voice to Speak Up in Defence of Human Rights*) to collective action (*Working With Others For Human Rights*), to finally move into the larger scope of human rights protection mechanisms and UPR recommendations (*Systems*).

The density of learner-centered and interactive activities declines in the last module, making it less engaging and learner-centered than the previous three modules. Since the module also includes content copied from UPR recommendations and reports, one way to improve the module would be to add a glossary with explanations of complicated terms and jargon.

Overall, the course makes use of a variety of learner-centered design components constituting a highly engaging and interactive learning experience. The language, examples, case studies are varied and relevant to a global audience and represent a diverse choice of human rights issues and types of individual and collective action.

Participatory design

In the first module of the course Amnesty International makes use of a variety of participatory learning components including discussion forums (1.1.5, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.2.5, 2.3.2, 3.1.3, 3.2.2, 3.3.3, 4.1, 4.2.3), peer-instructions (1.1.4, 2.3.3), and a world-cloud (1.4.2) that allow for learner-generated submissions, engagement, and participation. The first module of the course includes a call to action ('Become a human rights defender') and after learners watch a motivational video featuring five HRDs, who speak about what inspired them to become HRDs, course facilitators directly involve learners, asking them questions such as 'Were there common themes for how people became human rights defenders?' and 'Which aspects of their stories resonated with you the most? Please explain why. We also encourage you to read the responses of others and comment, as appropriate.' Learner-centered discussion questions that encourage collaboration between learners run like a red thread through the entire learning experience and are present in all modules.

Another learner-centered component that is used in the course are word clouds. Following a video asking the question 'Are you a human rights defender?', learners are encouraged to brainstorm terms that describe human rights defenders in 1.4.2. The word cloud received more than 1400 submissions with 'courage', 'empathy', 'leadership' and 'compassion' being among the most frequent submissions. Course authors later used the visual asset for an update sent out via email to encourage inactive learners to come back to the course and continue learning. The world cloud does not stand isolated but is used to inspire learners to identify their own strengths and skills that they could use for the defense of human rights with tangible case studies that demonstrate some of these skills beforehand. The course also encourages learners to write their own manifesto, defined by

course authors as ‘powerful statement of belief and action’ that learners can come back to at a later stage as they progress through the learning journey.

Accessible Design

Edx claims that its authoring tools ‘permit content providers to post course content that conforms with WCAG 2.1 AA’²⁰⁸ and that they ‘verify conformance’²⁰⁹ manually and through automated tools. All videos in the Human Rights Defenders course contain subtitles and transcripts that learners can download. Another standard feature of the video player is that learners can choose to speed up or slow down the video and click on the transcript to jump to a specific section of the video for revision. The design team also took steps to enhance accessibility by adding extensive alt-descriptions to all visual assets in the course, infographics display a high contrast and html tags are used in a consistent manner throughout the course. One shortfall with regards to accessibility is the action toolkit that is embedded on its own dedicated page and on specific pages throughout the learning experience. Visually impaired learners may have difficulty to read the small font size. Furthermore, not all course elements are available for free. Learners are required to pay a fee to obtain a verified certificate. The third-party tools used in the course, e.g., the world-maps and social walls, undoubtedly make the course more engaging and action-oriented, however, these tools also require ongoing maintenance. As the current course instance shows, a few years after launch not all these learning components are fully accessible anymore, e.g., the social wall subscription likely expired and does not anymore pull any tweets into the learning journey.

Inclusive Design

Amnesty International’s course features speakers from three continents, including former Amnesty Secretary General, Salil Shetty (India), disability rights activists, Emma Vogelmann (UK), transgender rights activist, Sakris Kupila (Finland), AWID Women Human Rights Defenders Advisor, Tracy Doig (South Africa), and executive director of

²⁰⁸ Cf Edx, ‘Website Accessibility Policy’, 11 August 2020, available at: <https://www.edx.org/accessibility>, [accessed 13 July 2021].

²⁰⁹ Cf *ibid*.

Imkaan, Marai Larasi (UK). Beyond that, a look at the case studies, scenarios, and testimonials in the course, provide examples suitable to a global audience. The stories of HRD achievements in 1.2.3 provide narratives from Myanmar, El Salvador, Hong Kong, Norway, and Gambia. The course does not include a glossary. However, difficult terms are explained directly in the course contents. One example is the definition of women human rights defenders in 1.1.3.

Action-oriented Design

Amnesty's Human Rights Defenders course provides a variety of opportunities for learners to improve confidence and practice key behaviours to take action. Most notably, the action toolkit that is included throughout the entire experience. The toolkit aims to motivate and encourage learners to engage in 'personal reflection' about 'how they can stand up for human rights' (1.1.6). The course authors explicitly mention that the 'toolkit is designed to ensure that you can carry the lessons learned in this course with you as you stand up for human rights.' The toolkit includes a variety of steps that follow the course progression and contains placeholders for learners to capture their responses. Learners can capture their personal course goals, describe human rights issues they want to tackle, assess their risk when taking action, reflect on skills they can use for the defense of human rights, outline the main points of their manifesto and identify steps they can take to protect themselves online, list steps for preparing for collective action and capture any additional notes. Another feature of the course is the social wall in module 4.5 that encourages learners of the course to share the results of their actions with a hashtag on twitter and Instagram. Although the social wall is not active anymore, the tweets and posts tagged with #rights3x are still available on social media and the design team used submissions to feature some of the learners in its HRE blog on the official website.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Amnesty International, 'Free online course on Human Rights Defenders - Register now!', available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2017/10/human-rights-defenders-online-course/>, [accessed 13 July 2021].

5.4.2 Promoting and Defending Human Rights (Global Campus of Human Rights)

Promoting and Defending Human Rights (GCPDHR) is a MOOC offered by Global Campus of Human Rights, which aims to educate new generations of human rights defenders. The course consists of two parts, International Framework (module 1, chapter 1-2) and Regional Perspectives (module 2, chapter 3-7). The course is estimated to take roughly 38 hours to complete and consists of video lectures, quizzes and uploaded materials.

Learner-centered design

The course provides solid orientation to learners in the pre-course contents, which contain guidance on course navigation, FAQs, a help forum, an overview of the diverse course instructors, a syllabus, a short Code of Conduct, and learning objectives. The MOOC consists of seven chapters, an *Introduction*, *International Protection of Human Rights*, *Human Rights in the World*, *Europe*, *Africa*, *The Americas*, *Asia*, and *the Arab World*. The first two chapters are recommended for all learners, all other modules are optional providing learners with additional choices how to progress through the course and enabling learners to choose based on their preferences and interests. The course directly addresses the learner for example by clearly stating one of its aims: ‘By looking at human rights through different disciplines, regions and focal lenses, this course aims to guide you through contexts and complexities and offer some paths for your own journey’ (1.1).

Furthermore, throughout the course additional reading materials, publications and resources are provided to all learners for free, turning the course into a useful repository of high-quality contents, where learners can choose how deep they want to engage with a particular subject. Another step the design team has taken to enhance the experience for diverse learner groups is to cut down lengthy videos into smaller parts. This enables learners to watch specifically the videos that are most interesting to them. The course also features quizzes mainly as means of assessment and hence does not provide any dynamic feedback on learner responses.

One opportunity for improvement would be to formulate the instructor-focused learning objectives additionally as learner-centered learning outcomes, that clearly define what the learner will be able to do after course completion. This is helpful to measure learner progress and evaluate the course: Concise, realistic, attainable, and measurable learning outcomes also set clear expectations, while some of the passive verbs used in the learning objectives, ‘understand’, ‘know’, cannot be measured easily e.g., through pre- and post-course surveys matrix questions.²¹¹ Learning outcomes also help the design team to develop learner-centered course contents and constantly assess the course material through the eyes of the learner.

Participatory Design

Three chapters of the course include a poll (1.3, 2.2, 8.1) that enable learners to actively contribute to the course materials. The polls ask about their opinions regarding the current state of human rights (1.3), how different regions are performing with regards to human rights (2.2), and how human rights ideals and realities converge (8.1). Although discussion forums are available for learners, there are no featured prompts that encourage learners to discuss, share or engage with each other. Forum discussion might however be more prominently utilized in future runs of the course as one of the statements of the course support team underlines in the discussion forum: ‘The current release of this MOOC does not foresee any discussions, only quizzes. We might offer them in future releases of the MOOC.’ Given the regional separation of the different course modules, there could be a variety of opportunities to create cohorts for engaging in discussions on regional human rights issues. The HRD videos that are seeded throughout the learning experience, provide inspiration and motivation for learners to share their own stories, thoughts and emotions.

Accessible Design

GCPDHR is the only MOOC within the examined courses that offers free certificates to its participants. All other course providers have content walls that require learners to pay

²¹¹ Cf M. Mahajan and M. Singh, 'Importance and Benefits of Learning Outcomes', *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, vol. 22, no. 3, p. 66-67.

to upgrade their experience. This quite essential contribution cannot be understated, especially under consideration that learners may not have access to the payment methods required by the other large MOOC providers, meaning that even if they are offered discounts, the contents remain inaccessible for them.

Another notable strength of the MOOC is that contact emails are publicly stated within the course, enabling learners to directly get in touch with the course support. This is unique among all analysed courses and a testimony of commitment to increase course accessibility and support all learners despite the workload that this might generate for course support teams.

Beyond this feature, the course also aims to make video contents accessible to learners by providing downloadable transcripts to all learners. The video player itself, provides the option for learners to increase or slow down the speed and an interactive transcript displayed next to the video enables learners to jump and review any video section multiple times at their own discretion.

Another advanced feature that none of the other MOOCs have, is the option for learners to switch to a high-contrast text mode, that increases the font-size and the contrast. This is especially useful for learners with visual impairment but will be beneficial as well to learners who access the course on small screen sizes or via mobile devices.

Inclusive Design

Without a doubt the course draws a lot of its strength from the diverse and reputable speakers featured throughout the learning experience. The course gathers experts and lecturers from a broad variety of backgrounds including Yousra Abourabi (Université Internationale de Rabat), Bencharat Chua (Mahidol University, Bangkok), Veronica Gomez (University of San Martin, Buenos Aires), Felipe Gomez Isa (University of Deusto, Bilbao), Asim Mujkić (University of Sarajevo), Manfred Nowak (GC Headquarters), Gerd Oberleitner (University of Graz), Sriprapha Petcharamesree (Mahidol University, Bangkok), Frans Viljoen (University of Pretoria) and George Ulrich (GC Headquarters). With this diverse line-up of renowned speakers in the realm of

protecting and defending human rights, GCPDHR gives voice to scholars, researchers, and professors from a global network ‘enabling participants to benefit from rich and varied competences.’²¹²

Action-oriented Design

The course curates a variety of videos aimed at inspiring participants to get active for human rights and features relevant text contents to motivate people to take action. One example is the usage of Eleanor Roosevelt’s quote asking the question: ‘Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person.’²¹³ Another video that emphasises the importance of civil society and grassroots organisations can be found in the regional chapter on protecting and defending human rights in Africa, where Frans Viljoen outlines the importance of civil society organisations to identify the right people who can bring issues to the attention of and put pressure on governments (4.1). Beyond that, the course also features inspiring activists from Global Campus events, such as Albie Sachs, who speaks about truth and reconciliation processes and Nora Cortiñas, who speaks about the importance of remembrance (5.1). The course, however, does not go beyond motivational and inspiring video elements and contents. In line with the learning objectives of the instructors, the course focuses on knowledge delivery. One opportunity for improvement could be to provide learners with opportunities to take action or practise key behaviours, e.g., through discussion forums, action plans, self-assessments or peer-assignments, and other exercise types that can facilitate action-oriented design.

5.4.3 International Women’s Health and Human Rights (Stanford University) via Coursera

Stanford University’s course on International Women’s Health and Human Rights consists of ten weeks’ worth of coursework. One of the more popular human rights

²¹² Global Campus of Human Rights, 'Promoting and Protecting Human Rights: a Global Overview', available at: <https://gchumanrights.org/education/e-learning/moocs/promoting-and-protecting-human-rights-a-global-overview/lecturers-and-experts.html>, [accessed 13 July 2021].

²¹³ Eleanor Roosevelt, 'Where Do Human Rights Begin?', in A. Black (ed.), *Courage in a Dangerous World*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 190.

courses on Coursera, more than 65,000 learners have enrolled in the MOOC. Course designers estimate that the learning experience takes approximately 58 hours to complete. The course features scholar-activist Anne Firth Murray, who teaches as a Consulting Professor in Human Biology at Stanford University, as primary instructor. Kevin Hsu is the Design Director of the course.²¹⁴

Learner-centered design

Stanford University's MOOC on women's health and human rights provides solid orientation to learners who sign up to the course. Each module clearly outlines the related learning outcomes. Most of the outcomes use measurable action verbs. Beyond the guidance on what learners will be able to do after completing the course, a section on frequently asked questions provides orientation on schedule, certificates, and specifically peer-graded activities. The entire course consists of ten weeks, *Introduction, Education, Childhood & Adolescence: Female Genital Mutilation, Childhood & Adolescence: HIV/AIDS, Reproductive Health, Violence Against Women in the Home and Community, Women in War and Refugee Settings, Women's Quest to Escape Poverty, and Women, Aging, and End of Life*. The build-up of the course follows the human life circle from infancy to old age. In an introductory video Anne Firth Murray also provides insights into how the course was developed based on contributions she received from the community at the Global Fund for Women: 'What were the issues that they thought were so important that they would create organizations to address them? I identified those issues, and I built my classes around them' (Week 1, Video 1).

Participatory design

In the introductory video (Week 1, Video 1) Murray explicitly states that her classes are designed for active participation. Murrays MOOC goes beyond reading assignments, quizzes, and passively watching video lecturers. Each week contains a participatory exercise, a peer-graded activity, whereas learners first submit their own reflection and then peer-review assignments from three other students. Peer-graded activities are only

²¹⁴ Cf Stanford University, 'International Women's Health and Human Rights', available at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/womens-health-human-rights> [accessed 13 July 2021].

one aspect how participatory design is put into practise in Murray's course. Discussion forums are prominently featured throughout the learning experience. The first discussion prompt encourages learners to read the UDHR and Chapter 1 of Murray's book *From Outrage to Courage*²¹⁵, which highlights key issues women are experiencing. Building on the tension between the ideals expressed in the UDHR and the harsh realities women are facing, the first discussion prompt simply asks learners 'What are my initial thoughts on these topics?' (Week 1). Other discussion activities are more complex. An activity related to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), encourages learners to first look up the status of CEDAW in their own country, identify if the country has made any reservations, and then share the findings in the discussion forum. Discussion prompts are strongly tied to and build on the realities learners are experiencing, examples of questions include: 'In general, women are held responsible for their pregnancies and for the children that result. Do you think this "stereotype" is changing in your country?' (Week 5), 'After reading these articles, what are your immediate thoughts on the issue of reproductive rights and its relationship to human rights?' (Week 5), 'After watching one or more of the films in the "Women, War, and Peace" series, what are your initial reactions? Do you have any thoughts on the role women can play in ending violent conflict?' (Week 7), and 'What are your current thoughts on women's quest to escape poverty and the gender gap between women and men globally?' (Week 8).

Beyond facilitating engaging discussions, the design team created a website called www.internationalwomenshealth.org, that provides learners with the opportunity to create and join local groups, share their outputs from the course, build their own portfolio, and to download toolkits.

Accessible design

Coursera's accessibility policy states that the platform aims to 'comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") 2.1 AA published by World Wide Web

²¹⁵ A. Murray, *From Outrage to Courage: Women Taking Action for Health and Justice*, Monroe, Common Courage Press, 2008.

Consortium'²¹⁶, which is the same standards edX is aiming for. All course videos contain closed captions and learners have the option to speed up or slow down the videos. In addition, Coursera states that an 'independent accessibility consultant periodically reviews' the platform and that 'remedial actions' are taken when necessary. In addition the platform has published accessibility guidelines that course designers 'comply with their independent obligations under applicable accessibility laws.' Although the course contains a few images without alt-descriptions for screen readers, these assets are primarily meant to make the course visually appealing, and they do not convey learning content, as in, for example, Amnesty International's infographics on individual and collective action. Similarly, to the course contents on edX and FutureLearn, participants must pay for a certificate. One opportunity for improvement could be to make the texts and book chapters available in HTML format. Screen readers might have difficulties to read out the copies of the .pdf files e.g. the key readings in Week 7. Other learners on low bandwidth might appreciate it if they do not need to download additional files.

Inclusive design

Although Murray is the main instructor of this MOOC, the course also features other speakers from a diverse variety of backgrounds. Examples include Lynn Murphy, 'a former teacher and expert on education and learning worldwide' in Week 2, Wu Qing, 'a former board member of the Global Fund for Women who hails from China' in Week 2, Isha Daramy, a midwife from Sierra Leone in Week 3, and Caitilin Gerdt, 'who works at the intersection of reproductive health and public health' from University of California in Week 5. With the concept of the course, following a life cycle from infancy to old age, especially topics that concern different age groups are well covered throughout the learning experience.

Action-oriented design

Throughout the course, Murray highlights positive interventions, creating a motivational and inspiring experience for learners. In addition, there are advanced assignments,

²¹⁶ Coursera, 'Coursera's accessibility policy', <https://learner.coursera.help/hc/en-us/articles/209818883-Coursera-s-accessibility-policy>, [accessed 15 July 2021].

labelled ‘Engage Your Community’ where learners engage in tasks outside of the course. The assignments include tasks such as interviewing a person working at a community organisation and writing a report about the experience (Week 5) or interviewing a 30 year older or younger person about their ideas concerning women’s health and human rights (Week 10). Learners are encouraged to write a short paragraph about the interview and share it with the community through the website or discussion forum.

5.4.4 Defending Dignity (Amnesty International UK) via FutureLearn

Amnesty International’s Course on *Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was launched on the MOOC provider FutureLearn in 2018. The shortest course in the analysed MOOCs, the entire journey takes roughly 3-5 hours to complete.

Learner-centered design

The course provides sufficient orientation to learners in the about section, which contains guidance on discussions, online security, learning outcomes, schedule, facilitation, and navigation. Like Amnesty’s Human Rights Defenders course, more background information on the video speakers should be provided.

The entire course takes a strongly learner-centered approach. It’s three modules or weeks are labelled (1) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and your daily life*, (2) *Promoting equality and non-discrimination in your community* and (3) *Shaping our societies through participation and inclusion*, hence, the course aims to present learning materials that are directly relatable and relevant to the realities of learners. Module titles, chapters, exercises, discussion prompts directly refer to the learner.

The course features a variety of motivational elements, examples are: A reading on ‘How does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights change our lives?’ (1.7) that outlines some of the key issues the UDHR is addressing in simple plain English and relates the rights enshrined in the document to tangible daily life examples. Another example are the diverse success stories of ‘people who took action against inequality and discrimination in their communities’ (2.13) in the second week. A third example are the interviews in the third week, whereas activists are asked ‘What inspires you to take action for a more

inclusive society?’ and learners are encouraged to respond with what inspires them to get active (3.7).

Participatory design

Amnesty’s MOOC on the UDHR differs from all other courses because of FutureLearn’s emphasis on social learning methodology.²¹⁷ Contrary to other platforms like edX, OpenedX and Coursera, discussion forums are inbuilt by default. Instructors have no control to switch off these discussions’ steps. This, and the fact that learner comments are prominently featured on every single page of the MOOC, changes the learning dynamic and hierarchy by providing learners with a much stronger voice throughout the course. It is hence not surprising that the first run of the course had significantly more comments in a shorter timeframe than Amnesty’s other MOOC on Human Rights Defenders. With the increased weight given to the voices of learners, they become an essential part of the learning journey and chapters without comments feel like they are missing something. Course moderators additionally have made use of the option to surface learner comments by pinning them to the top or signal endorsement by liking them. Based on this methodological approach, nearly every single step of the course contains a discussion prompt. Examples are ‘Why do you think it is important that we all recognise that every human being has dignity?’ (1.6), ‘How does the UDHR cover some of the issues that you care about?’ (1.7), ‘What happens when one human right is denied?’ (1.10), ‘Why should everyone enjoy human rights?’ (1.11) and ‘What other strategies can you think of that have been successful in communicating human rights in your context?’ (1.15).

Accessible design

FutureLearn’s Accessibility Policy states that the platform ‘aims to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) 2.1’²¹⁸. However, FutureLearn publicly discloses where the platform is not yet compliant with WCAG 2.1, which includes navigating some interactive elements with the keyboard, some forms that cannot be read by screen readers, and pdf and word documents that might not yet be ready for

²¹⁷ Cf FutureLearn, ‘The power of social learning: an effective way to learn’, available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/using-futurelearn/why-it-works>, [accessed 15 July 2021].

²¹⁸ FutureLearn, *Accessibility Policy*, available at: <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/terms/accessibility-policy>, [accessed 15 July 2021].

consumption via assistive technology. Beyond that, FutureLearn's platform might be more accessible to screenreaders than other providers, merely due to the fact that they strongly discourage design teams from using third party tools by restricting the authoring software. Since Amnesty's course consists almost entirely of video and text-based readings, paired with the shortfalls disclosed by FutureLearn a medium level of accessibility can be assumed. All videos in the course contain transcripts, can be downloaded, and also contain captions. Similarly, images contain alt-descriptions for screen readers.

Inclusive design

The course videos feature four activists including Hugh Sandeman, Zainab Asunramu, Alexis Hatto and Marie France Nguo, who share what the UDHR means to them, what it empowers them to do, and how they have taken action in a variety of ways. Although the course does not provide additional background information, the speakers represent different age groups, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

Action-oriented design

Each week of the course contains a dedicated section on taking action. In these elements the gradually expanding build-up from the self to the community-level, further towards the society-level becomes once more evident: 'Take Action: Communicating Human Rights to others' (1.16), 'Taking action for an equal community' (2.11) and 'Taking action for shaping our societies' (3.7). In the first action-component learners are encouraged to 'explore ideas on how you can communicate human rights more effectively to others' (1.16) in a multi-step activity. Learners first identify an issue that they want to draw attention too before choosing an action and crafting a positive message. The second action component conveys: 'We have explored how to speak up for human rights values and actions; now we are going to start thinking about what action you can take to promote equality and non-discrimination in your community.' (2.12). In a 3-step activity, learners first choose the issue they want to address, then identify allies who could help them achieve their goals, and finally pick an action after being presented with a few examples. The third action component (3.7) introduces success stories that highlight the

achievements people have experienced when getting active for human rights and provides learners with tools to assess their own risks when taking action on societal levels through a guided self-assessment.

5.4.5 Global Business and Human Rights (ZHAW) via edX

The MOOC on Global Business and Human Rights is offered by ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences and takes roughly 6 weeks to complete with a weekly commitment of 6-8 hours. The course is taught in English and contains eight modules.

Learner-centered design

The course provides solid orientation to new and experienced learners. The first module of the course highlights important dates, introduces the instructors, outlines the course syllabus as well as information about navigation, certification, and grading. The course consists of eight modules: *Course Overview and Instructions*, *Week 1 - Human Rights – a Matter for Enterprises in a Globalized World*, *Week 2 - Human Rights and the Story of Global Economic Development*, *Week 3 - Cultural Perspectives on Business and Human Rights*, *Week 4 - The Legal Framework of Business and Human Rights*, *Week 5 - Organizations and Stakeholders Concerned with Business and Human Rights*, *Week 6 - Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights*, *Course Summary and Conclusion*. The MOOC is enhanced with a variety of HTML5 components, such as the drag & drop activities in on the UDHR (Week 1) and ‘Global sourcing in the production of consumer products’ (Week 1), and the text-input activity on wage gaps (Week 2), and statistics about modern slavery (Week 2). While some of these activities increase engagement by actively involving learners in the experience, others, like the one on ‘Figures About Modern Slavery’, require learners to copy 16 numbers from the Global Index Slavery Report to the course, where the educational value is questionable. Another activity that could be improved is the drag and drop in week one. Learners are instructed to drag items onto placeholders, however, once the items are placed, the description of the placeholders is hidden by the item, making it unnecessarily difficult for learners to complete the

activity and making it impossible for learners to get an overview once the activity is completed.

Course instructors also used a screenshot from the edX learner analytics to display where learners are coming from, which is a simple and effective way to visualize the global community of participants. Furthermore, the course only states instructor-focused learning objectives, instead of learner-centred learning outcomes. Most learning objectives use state verbs such as ‘understand’ and ‘know’ which are difficult to measure as they are not observable.

Participatory design

Early in the first module, the course actively involves learners by encouraging them to introduce themselves and to share why they are taking the course. This participatory approach is clearly visible throughout the course and explicitly stated by the course authors in the welcome message. The lecturers recognise the value learners bring to the learning experience, and state ‘Because, whatever your background and reason for taking this course might be, you have something to share about our topic.’ (Welcome message). The course features a variety of participatory activities primarily in form of word-clouds (Week 1) and discussion forums. Discussion prompts encourage learners to actively engage and also to learn from each other. Beyond that, the course builds heavily on learner contributions. After learners have identified products that they purchase, and the countries these products originate from (Week 1), they use their submissions to research business-related human rights issues that affect these countries and share their results publicly in the discussion forums (Week 2), where they also comment on the entries of other learners (Week 2). Other examples of the effective use of discussion forums are an activity on human rights related risks in the supply chain (Week 3), problems with law enforcement (Week 4) and child labor (Week 5). The instruction prompts are directly addressing the learners and inviting critical reflection from their own perspective and context.

Accessible design

Images throughout the course do not have alt-descriptions making the visuals inaccessible for screen readers. Another downside for accessibility is the very small font size that is

used in most of the HTML5 components. It is difficult to read the draggable items on desktop resolution and might be impossible on mobile devices. Some of the activities display low contrast (Practical Relevance Learning Quiz, Week 2) which makes it more difficult to read especially for learners with visual impairments. Although using a variety of activity types makes the course more engaging, the course materials that are taken from the bachelor and master's program of the university could be better adapted to an online learning context by increasing the font size, contrast and reducing the amount of text packed into each activity. Sometimes the font-size of the course contents varies for no apparent reason, possibly because the contents were copied directly from a word document without cleaning the hidden HTML, which can lead to issues with screen-readers that read out these mark-ups. Although all videos do have transcripts attached below, some videos do not utilize edX inbuilt transcript system such as in the first video in Week 6.

Inclusive design

The course which is based on materials from the Bachelor and Master programs at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences is taught by Jörg Schmidt, Ina Walthert, Michael Erdin and Herbert Winistörfer who are the main instructors. It does, however, also feature speakers beyond the faculty such as Shahidur Rahman, Professor of Sociology in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Week 2). The course videos are accompanied by annotations that explain difficult terms and list the organizations and documents mentioned in the course providing helpful guidance especially to learners who might not be native speakers. Similarly, each week of the course includes a summary video that enables learners to reflect on what they have learnt. Unfortunately, the final video is missing and displays a demo video instead.

Action-oriented design

Each week of the course includes examples, an expert video, readings, and a quiz specifically focused on practical relevance. The last week of the course, however, is most strongly focused on action-oriented design as it puts emphasis on 'the tools business enterprises in different industrial sectors (can) use to manage their impact on human rights

issues’ (Course Syllabus). In the last week of the course learners analyse the policy documents and websites of the companies they buy from and relate to the knowledge they have gained throughout the course.

5.4.6 Comparative Analysis of all MOOCs

The analysis of five HRE MOOCs based on Coursera, edX, FutureLearn and OpenEdx clearly demonstrated the wide breadth of possibilities to realize MOOCs for HRE with the current technical and instructional capabilities. It has also become evident that the various MOOCs utilize a broad repertoire of methods and techniques to put the previously outlined HRE design principles into practise. Amnesty International’s and Stanford University’s courses focus on learner-centered, participatory and action-oriented design, putting the learners at the heart of the learning experience with engaging activities, a broad variety of exercise types and plenty of opportunities to practise key behaviours to take action. Unsurprisingly, Amnesty International puts most emphasis on action-oriented design. The use of engaging third party tools such as social walls and world maps, however, also make decrease the longevity of the course by becoming outdated or inaccessible. The MOOC offered by GCHR in comparison with other providers puts more emphasis on accessibility and inclusive design by being the only platform providing truly free access and certificates to everyone, by offering additional accessibility features such as a high-contrast mode and enabling individual learner-support via email. The course, however, is also displaying the least variety of activity types and includes only very few participatory elements. ZUGBHR is using a broad variety of HTML5 activity types making the course more engaging, however, at the expense of being accessible due to the very small font-sizes used in several of these components. Overall, every MOOC analysed could be improved in multiple ways, e.g., by implementing good practises that their counterparts demonstrate.

	Learner-centered	Participatory	Accessible	Inclusive	Action-oriented
GCPDHR	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium
AIHRD	High	High	Medium	High	High
SUWHHR	High	High	Medium	High	Medium

AIUDHR	High	High	Medium	Medium	High
ZUGBHR	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 6: Overview: Comparative analysis of human rights MOOCs.

6. Good practices designing MOOCs for HRE

The comparative analysis of five human rights MOOCs has demonstrated that they meet the KPIs and cater towards the HRE design principles in different ways. The purpose of this chapter is to first derive eight good practises for MOOC development based on the critical analysis and then provide design templates that can be used as a starting point to develop MOOCs for human rights.

6.1 Eight good practises for HRE MOOC design

This brief chapter outlines eight recommendations for HRE MOOC development and are developed under consideration of the UPR Info criteria ‘for writing precise and action-oriented recommendations.’²¹⁹

- Design teams should enhance course accessibility, be it by utilizing the tools available through the course provider platforms (e.g., adding transcripts, alt-tags), or by pro-actively providing alternative means and media for learners to access and engage with the contents.
- Design teams should employ a learner-centred approach to all design phases to ensure the contents are relevant and applicable to the context and realities of learners (e.g., by starting with a needs assessment or involving learners in the production through user-testing).

²¹⁹ Cf UPR Info, 'The Civil Society Compendium - A comprehensive guide for Civil Society Organisations engaging in the Universal Periodic Review', p. 54, available at: https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/general-document/pdf/upr_info_cso_compendium_en.pdf [accessed 15 July 2021].

- Design teams should make use of a variety of participatory and learner-centred methodologies and utilize tools, techniques and activities that allow for learners to actively engage and participate in the learning experience.
- Design teams should develop videos and assets, and choose, curate, and develop materials and contents, in the spirit of inclusion and global representation, highlighting the voices of diverse experts and activists from a variety background taking into account age, gender, ethnicity, country of origin and other factors of diversity.
- Design teams should include learning components offering opportunities to practise key behaviours for taking action for human rights, whilst taking security considerations into account, aimed at inspiring, motivating, and equipping learners to take action for human rights.
- Design teams should provide clear orientation to learners prior to starting the course including guidance on measurable learning outcomes, schedule, certification, security, discussion guidelines, instructors, syllabus and if applicable grading and accessible ways to get help.
- Design teams should pay special attention to security-related concerns and take measures to create safe learning environments, where everyone feels free to express themselves regardless of their opinions, e.g., providing and having learners agree to a code of conduct, and enabling features that allow for moderation at scale.
- Design teams who decide to use third party tools to make their MOOC more engaging, learner-centered and action-oriented should ensure resources are available for the maintenance of these components.

6.2 Design templates

Based on the previous analysis, the following chapters aim to outline first the thought process of developing design templates and then provide a practical, adaptable example of a design template. Since platforms evolve all the time, design templates are always a work in progress. Therefore, more important than the sample template in 6.9. is to equip educators with the skills to develop their own templates.

6.3 Purpose of design templates

The purpose of templates is to streamline and scale up production. They aim to consolidate two competing goals by (a) providing a design framework for HRE MOOC production and (b) allowing for enough freedom for instructional designers to develop an engaging learning experience. Both goals need to be balanced. If there is too much weight on (a) instructional designers may feel unnecessarily restricted and unable to develop a learning experience to high pedagogical standards. If too much weight is given to (b), the design template runs the risk of not providing a clear enough framework for scaling and speeding up the production.

Another purpose of design templates is to ensure that the final learning product lives up to high pedagogical standards. Hence, HRE design principles need to be built into the template by default, to support design teams during production. The third purpose of design templates is knowledge transfer between the design team members. As previously outlined in Chapter 4 of this thesis, the members of a design team have different priorities and good communication is required to transfer essential knowledge from one design team member to the other.

6.4 Challenges of design templates

MOOC design templates need to consolidate the needs and requirements of multiple stakeholders. They must be useful to instructional designers, subject matter experts, asset suppliers, visionaries, and potentially the wider production team including translators, policy advisors, visual designers, video speakers and more. Another necessary consideration is that instructional designers may often be the only online educational

experts in the team and hence the jargon used in the design templates needs to be kept to a minimum. The biggest challenge in designing templates is to strike the right balance between providing a detailed and clear framework while preserving enough freedom for instructional designers to develop engaging learning experiences. Design templates should not be used as static and unchangeable frameworks, instructional designers may have good reasons for deviating from the established framework e.g., to enhance the flow of the learning experience. Instead, they should be seen as starting points to speed up the production and underpin certain requirements as laid out by the HRE design principles.

6.5 Prerequisites of templates

First and foremost, design templates should reflect the organizational strategy. Grassroots organizations may want to prioritize participatory and action-oriented design elements, while universities may focus on knowledge and assessment. Regardless of the organizational goals, design templates for HRE MOOCs should be grounded in pedagogical HRE principles to ensure a high-quality learning experience.

Another prerequisite to develop templates is in depth knowledge of the technical capabilities of the platform and their pedagogical implications. Design templates need to be tailored to the authoring software and reflect the available learning components. If design templates are not tailored to the authoring software, instructional designers and subject matter experts will have to engage in multiple redrafts until technical requirements are met. One example of this is the word-count limits of exercise types. These limits are imposed by platform providers to ensure that activities work across multiple devices such as desktop, tablet and mobile. Instructional designers cannot change these limits and hence need to guide subject matter experts to deliver content accordingly. This is just one example, whilst instructional designers are aware that every single exercise type has good and bad practises and contains opportunities and limitations.

Another pre-requisite for developing effective design templates is to understand the requirements and needs of other stakeholders in the wider team. One example are translators who often use translation software to speed up their workflows. Design templates may therefore take markups of translation software into account. If video

production is outsourced, design templates can contain additional guidance for external stakeholders who develop the videos e.g., on video format, resolution, length, and other guiding notes.

6.6 Template development

At the beginning of developing design templates lies the decision about the scope of the final learning product. As the analysis in chapter 5 demonstrated, MOOCs can encompass varying lengths and require a commitment reaching from a few hours to several months. Hence, the first step is to estimate how long it should take learners to complete the experience. The estimated length will provide a rough indication of the total learning steps that are required to complete the journey and set the scope for the course. For the purpose of this thesis, we will envision a 3-hour learning journey consisting of 20 steps. Since an interactive exercise with a 50-word instruction may take longer to complete than reading a 1200-word text, these numbers are a starting point, and they will appear less arbitrary after reading the following chapters. Course designers will also adapt the word count based on their target audiences.

The next step in the process is to create an exercise typology (see 6.8) that is based on a) the pedagogical purpose they fulfil in the learning experience, b) HRE pedagogical design principles and c) is tailored to the technical capabilities of the authoring software. The first element is required as the ‘red thread’ that structures the templates, the second element enhances the design quality, and the third element ensures that the learning activities can be implemented on the platform.

There are multiple ways to describe the pedagogical function of learning steps. One example is the MOOC design mapping framework of University of Glasgow.²²⁰ The templates created for this thesis take inspiration from it and are firmly rooted in my experience working on design templates at Amnesty International.

²²⁰ Cf University of Glasgow, MOOC Design Mapping Framework (MDMF), available at: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/staff/learningandteaching/moocdesign/>, [accessed 14 July 2021].

Once the exercise typology is completed, it can be applied to the design templates as illustrated in 6.9.

6.7 About the templates

The following design template has been specifically created for this thesis from scratch. Design teams are encouraged to use, adjust, build on and amend it for their own purposes. The design template consists of eight columns: (1) The first column indicates the location in the learning journey. (2) The second column defines the pedagogical purpose or function as outlined in the previous exercise typology. By keeping an eye on the frequency of specific functions design teams can increase or decrease their focus on specific design principles. (3) The third column gives a brief directional note about the content that will be drafted in the fourth column. (4) The fourth column provides examples or meta-descriptions of the learning content. (5) The fifth column outlines how the learning step will be realized on the platform e.g., as video, self-assessment, or multiple-choice quiz. (6) The sixth column outlines wordcount limits that are especially relevant for SMEs or content writers. (7) The seventh column includes notes for SMEs or other stakeholders in the design team and (8) the eighth and final column ensures that each activity is rooted in the described learning outcomes. While adaption of the templates will be required in most cases, design teams are encouraged to preserve a suitable balance between participatory, learner-centred, and action-oriented learning components. As a benchmark at least one third of the learning components should go beyond simple and contextualized knowledge delivery in videos, texts, and visuals.

6.8 Templates: Example of exercise typology

#	Function	Design Principle	Example	edX	FutureLearn	Coursera
1	Orientation	learner-centred	Learning outcomes, Navigation, FAQs, Grading, Survey	text, video, surveys	text, video, surveys	text, video, surveys
2	Acquisition	inclusive	Subject matter focused: human rights principles, mechanisms, documents	text, video, audio, image	text, video, audio, image	text, video, audio, image
3	Reflection	learner-centred	Risk-assessment before taking action, reflection on behaviours	self-assessment, discussion forums, word-clouds	discussion forums	discussion forums
4	Investigation	learner-centred	Research treaty ratification status, investigate UPR recommendations	web-quests	web-quests	web-quests
5	Motivation	action-oriented	Testimonials, learner stories, success stories	text, video, audio, image	text, video, audio, image	text, video, audio, image
6	Participation	participatory	Brainstorm skills for human defence	discussion forums, polls, word-clouds, peer-instruction	discussion forums, polls	discussion forums
7	Collaboration	participatory	Collaborate with others to identify human rights issues in your country	wikis, peer-assessment, discussion forums, word-clouds	discussion forums	Peer-assignments
8	Application	learner-centred	Case studies, scenarios, match definitions	Multiple choice, single choice, drag & drop	Multiple choice, single choice	Multiple choice, single choice, text input
9	Learner Assessment	NA	Graded exercise	Multiple choice, single choice	Multiple choice, single choice	Multiple choice, single choice
10	Action	action-oriented	Petitions, action plans, online actions	Toolkits, action plans	Toolkits, action plans	Toolkits, action plans

6.9 Templates: Example of learning journey template (3 hours)

	Purpose	Content	Examples	Type	Wordcount Time	Notes	LOs
1	Orientation	Welcome Learning Outcomes Course Navigation FAQs Certification Grading	At the end of the learning experience, you will be able to: • Explain why human rights are important to you. (1) • Clearly define the scope of human rights. (2) • Describe the human rights protection mechanisms. (3) • Identify violations of human rights in case studies. (4) • Analyse how people stand up against human rights violations. (5) • Assess your own risk when taking action for human rights. (6) • Outline strategies how you can take action for human rights. (7) Other useful action verbs: analyse, formulate, examine, discuss, categorize, group, interpret, distinguish, illustrate, comment, write, build, develop.	Video, text	500 5 min.	Learning outcomes should be concise, measurable, and specific.	NA
2	Reflection	Question prompt	Learner introduction: Why are you taking part in this MOOC? What would you like to get out of this course?	Discussion	250 5 min.	Use 'you' to directly address the learner.	NA
3	Acquisition	Basics	Subject matter basics: What are human rights? Who has human rights? What are the sources of human rights?	Video, Text	800 10 min.		2

			What is the scope of human rights?				
4	Motivation	Testimonials	What difference do human rights make in people's lives?	Video, Visual	500-800 10 min.	Develop image quotes from video for promotion on social media.	1
5	Reflection	Question prompt	What testimonial resonates with you the most and why? What difference do human rights make in your life? How does it make you feel listening to the testimonials? What are your thoughts on the testimonials in relation to what you learnt already about human rights?	Discussion	150 10 min.		1
6	Acquisition	Basics II	How are human rights protected? Global Protection Mechanisms Regional Protection Mechanisms	Video	800 10 min.		3
7	Acquisition	Basics III	How are human rights violated?	Text	500-600 5 min.		4
8	Application	Cases	Case studies: Examples from different regions, encompassing a broad selection of violations., e.g. identify the rights that have been violated.	Multiple choice	300-450 15 min.		4
9	Investigation		Human rights violations in your context 1 Go to the website of a human rights organization working on your country. 2 Identify a violation they mention in relation to your country. 3 Verify the violation with at least two other sources.	Web-Quest	150 20 min.		4

10	Collaboration	Question Prompt	Summarize your findings from the previous activity and work with others to create of profile of human rights issues that should be addressed in your country.	Wiki	150 10 min.		4
11	Motivation	Success stories	When people stand up against human rights violations	Video, text	500-600 5 min.	Examples from courts, civil society, advocacy.	5
12	Reflection	Question Prompt	Which story resonated with you the most and why?	Discussion	100-150 10 min.		5
13	Collaboration	Question Prompt	What are other ways how you can stand up for human rights? The responses of you and your peers will display as a word-cloud upon submission.	Word-cloud	200 5 min.	Use the visual for sending an email to inactive learners	7
14	Acquisition	Human rights risks	Risks of standing up for human rights	Text	500-800 5 min.	Examples from all contents and representing a variety of risks	6
15	Reflection		Assessing your own risk before taking action for human rights	Self-assessment	600-800 15 min.	Contains rubrics for self-assessment applicable in a global context	6
16	Action	Action plan	Develop your own plan for taking action: Define your goals, map your supporters, analyse your risk, schedule the action, evaluate the action.	Action plan	250-500 30 min.	Includes disclaimer that taking action may incur risks.	7
17	Assessment	Assessment Questions	7 Questions: 1 for each learning outcome	Quiz	450 10 min.	Avoid terms 'only', 'all', 'some' in distractors.	1-7
18	Orientation	Celebration of success, Certificate, Survey	Congratulations on completing the course!	Video, text	500-650 5min.	Link to 'Get in touch' page on website	NA

7. Conclusion

Taking on an interdisciplinary approach between human rights and instructional design, this thesis explores MOOCs as tools for human rights education under special consideration of HRE design principles for MOOC development.

After a general introduction about the relevance, methods, and limitations of this thesis, the second chapter compares definitions of HRE and MOOCs, to clarify the fundamental terminology that is used throughout this paper. The brief synopsis has demonstrated that there is significant consensus about the definition of HRE, as education and training with the purpose to equip people with the knowledge, skills and values to promote a universal cultural of human rights. Additionally, two definitions from Amnesty International and CoE emphasis action-oriented elements. Contrary to HRE definitions, there is less consensus about the definition of MOOCs. However, the brief review demonstrated that the potential for reach, scalability and participation are defining elements of MOOCs, that distinguish them from more traditional online learning journeys.

The third chapter of this thesis explores the suitability of MOOC technology as tool for the realization of a variety of human rights, including the right to education, the right to equality, the right to non-discrimination, the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the right to human rights education. The analysis has demonstrated that MOOCs are a suitable tool for the realization of a variety of rights but not in the way originally expected. While MOOCs do indeed reach massive numbers of learners in all regions of the world, with the lack of IT infrastructure, bandwidth, and digital literacy, they have yet to fulfill their full potential for the right to education. With the introduction of paywalls on all large providers except for GCHR, MOOCs remain inaccessible for many. Beyond the economic barrier, US embargoes force MOOC providers to exclude certain countries from accessing their courses leading to further exclusion. With regards to the right to equality and non-discrimination MOOCs have proven to have potential, insofar that they help to enhance student equity and social inclusion according to 46 globally diverse MOOC studies. Furthermore, MOOCs have been found to be suitable

tools to support the right to freedom of expression, insofar that some learners feel safer to learn and engage online than in the physical classroom. Especially in the context of discussing controversial human rights topics, this less obvious quality of MOOCs might be one of their strengths. Beyond the potential of MOOCs to create safe spaces, the thesis has outlined that there is a risk that course moderators do not have the adequate means to address and uphold the right to freedom of expression in discussion forums. The thesis has further outlined that MOOCs bear certain risks with regards to the right to privacy, first, because MOOC platforms operate in countries that persecute human rights defenders and secondly, because instructors have access to learner data such as email addresses. MOOCs, however, seem to be suitable tools for equipping large numbers of learners with quality HRE content, as a brief review of some of the largest HRE MOOCs has demonstrated. Together three MOOCs from Harvard University, Amnesty International and Louvain University, reached more than 400,000 learners in the last course runs. Overall, the brief suitability check of MOOCs as tools for the realization of a variety of human rights is positive, while however, much more has to be done to realize its full potential.

The first and second part of the fourth chapter of this thesis build heavily on my experience designing MOOCs as instructional design lead at Amnesty International. It provides a basic overview of the MOOC design process and identifies factors that positively contribute to the realization of HRE design principles. First and foremost, the focus on the learner in the early stages of course development. Notably, through the use of a needs-assessment, learner-centered learning outcomes and through user-testing during the production process. The chapter has also outlined roles and responsibilities during the design process to provide initial guidance for organizations and entities, who have not yet developed HRE MOOCs, in their endeavors. The chapter also includes a variety of practical insights about the requirements of multiple stakeholders and argues for the importance of developing healthy relationships, especially between IDs and SMEs.

The second part of the fourth chapter focuses on HRE design principles for MOOCs. For this purpose, it analyzes action plans of the WPHRE, UNDHRET, EDC/HRE and the THRED framework to derive design principles that can practically be applied to HRE MOOC development. Five principles were identified in this process: (1) learner-centred design, (2) participatory design, (3) inclusive design, (4) accessible design and (5) action-oriented design.

- (1) Learner-centred design was defined as enabling learners to bring their own experiences, context, and ideas into the learning journey. Self-assessments, web-quests, learning paths, quizzes and manifests were described as suitable tools for the realization.
- (2) Participatory design empowers learners to actively participate in the learning experience and become active agents in shaping their own learning through engaging, sharing and collaborating with others. Discussion forums, wikis, polls, word clouds, and peer-activities were described as tools and techniques to enhance a participatory design approach.
- (3) Inclusive design was described as means to increase the sense of belongingness during the learning journey. It highlighted the importance establishing a more equitable, diverse, and supportive learning environment where everyone feels safe to express themselves and speak out, and identified representation in assets, gender-sensitive language, user-testing and highlighting learner responses as methods and tools to enhance an inclusive design approach.
- (4) The fourth principle, accessible design, was defined as reducing barriers for all learners to enjoy and engage with the course contents. Building on existing technology and quality assurance frameworks, the chapter provided examples of how to improve accessibility for learners with specific needs from visual impairment to dyslexia. It clearly outlined how design teams carry a responsibility to enhance the accessibility of their courses and practical ways to implement them such as the use of alt-descriptions for screen readers, transcripts and providing alternative means for learners to access the contents featured in the MOOC.

- (5) The fifth and last principle is action-oriented design, as an integral part of HRE, which aims to build up to taking action. Two main strategies were identified to strengthen action-oriented design: First, through featuring motivational elements such as HRD interviews, success stories and learner stories to inspire learners to take action and secondly, to provide opportunities for learners to practise key behaviours for taking action, online or offline, through petitions, online actions, action plans and other action-oriented tasks.

The fifth chapter of this thesis then applied the design principles to five MOOCs currently available on the three largest MOOC providers and GCHR by first outlining the selection criteria that make these MOOCs comparable and then defining KPIs that assess the performance related to the design principles. The five MOOCs that were reviewed are: Amnesty International: Human Rights Defenders (AIHRD) via edx, Global Campus of Human Rights: Promoting and Defending Human Rights (GCPDHR) via openedx, Amnesty International: Defending Dignity: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (AIUDHR) via FutureLearn, Stanford University: International Women's Health and Human Rights (SUWHHR) via Coursera and ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences: Global Business and Human Rights (ZUGBHR) via edx.

The analysis with the purpose to examine, how and to what extent human rights MOOCs meet the HRE design principles set forth by the UN Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training and HRE pedagogical frameworks, demonstrated that the MOOCs meet the HRE design principles to a varying degree utilizing a variety of means.

Amnesty International's and Stanford University's MOOCs demonstrated a high level of learner-centred and participatory design, where learners are not passively consuming the learning materials but actively engage and apply what they have learnt in a variety of engaging activities and tasks that go beyond multiple-choice quizzes. Unsurprisingly, Amnesty's MOOCs on HRDs further demonstrates a clear focus on action-oriented design with the introduction of an action plan that accompanies the entire learning experience. As the analysis has shown, the engaging design of Amnesty's MOOC also

has its downsides. The use of third-party tools decreases the accessibility levels of the course. Amnesty's MOOC on the UDHR is different from the other courses because it strongly builds on FutureLearn's social learning approach. Almost every step in the learning experience includes a discussion prompt and learner responses are prominently featured on every page of the course. This changes the dynamic and hierarchy by providing learners with a much stronger voice throughout the course, hence significantly increasing participation in the MOOC. The MOOC provided by GCHR is the only course that truly provides free access by issuing certificates to learners at no cost. Beyond this, the MOOC displays its commitment to accessible design by providing additional features to learners such as a high-contrast mode that benefits visually impaired learners, and by enabling learners to directly get in touch with course support via email. The MOOC further boasts an impressively diverse line-up of instructors, human rights defenders and experts that guide learners through the experience in engaging videos. Due to these efforts, the MOOC satisfies the inclusive and accessible design principles better than all other courses. However, the MOOC is also the least participatory course in this list. Restricted to videos, readings, quizzes and three polls, there are very limited opportunities for learners to actively participate, engage, collaborate, and shape their own learning experience or practise key behaviours. Stanford University's MOOC on women's health and human rights heavily builds on peer-assignments and discussion prompts to spark participation and engagement. Beyond, the participatory design, the course includes a variety of motivating success stories that aim to inspire learners to get active. Two assignments in the course encourage learners to fulfil action-oriented tasks outside of the course context and a specifically for the course designed website provides additional materials and opportunities for learners to join local groups. Although demonstrating strong features through participatory discussion prompts and learner-centered activities that go beyond the standard features on edx, ZHAW's MOOC on global business and human rights features a less diverse line-up of video speakers. Beyond that, several drag-and-drop activities are sometimes too small to read or could be better designed to ensure a smooth learning experience.

The last chapter of this thesis is focused on good practises for HRE MOOC development and formulates the learnings from the previous analyses into eight recommendations. Furthermore, the chapter describes the process of developing design templates that aim to incorporate the HRE design principles by default. The chapter demonstrates how partitioners can benefit from utilizing templates when aiming to develop MOOCs that cater towards the HRE design principles.

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Abstract in English

Located at the intersection between human rights and instructional design, the following thesis aims to contribute to the development of human rights education (HRE) design principles for online learning, more specifically in the context of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as a tool for human rights education.

For this purpose, the thesis will first explore how MOOCs as technology affect a variety of human rights and highlight shortfalls and potentials. Secondly, the thesis will outline the design process of human rights MOOCs to provide guidance to HRE practitioners on effective MOOC development in the environment of human rights organizations. Following the guidance on the production process, the thesis will analyse a variety of relevant documents and frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET), the Action Plans of the United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education and Transformative Human Rights Education (THRED) to establish HRE design principles applicable to MOOC development. A typology of exercises available on MOOC provider platforms will then outline how each of the established principles can be facilitated effectively online. Based on the established HRE design principles, the thesis defines key performance indicators that are used as framework to analyse five HRE MOOCs to answer the question, how and to what extent human rights MOOCs meet the HRE design principles set forth by the UN Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training and HRE pedagogical frameworks. The results of the analysis are then used to describe good practises for HRE MOOC development and the production of design templates that incorporate HRE design principles by default.

The thesis will be most useful to human rights educators, instructional designers, learning experience designers and practitioners with a focus on developing online learning experiences for global audiences.

Abstract in German

An der Schnittstelle zwischen Menschenrechten und Instruktionsdesign angesiedelt, zielt die folgende Arbeit darauf ab, einen Beitrag zur Entwicklung von Gestaltungsprinzipien der Menschenrechtsbildung (HRE) für das Online-Lernen zu leisten, insbesondere im Kontext von Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) als Instrument der Menschenrechtsbildung.

Zu diesem Zweck wird zunächst untersucht, wie sich MOOCs als Technologie auf eine Vielzahl von Menschenrechten auswirken, und es werden Defizite und Potenziale aufgezeigt. Zweitens wird der Gestaltungsprozess von Menschenrechts-MOOCs skizziert, um HRE-Praktikern eine Anleitung für die effektive Entwicklung von MOOCs im Umfeld von Menschenrechtsorganisationen zu geben. Im Anschluss an den Leitfaden für den Produktionsprozess werden in dieser Arbeit verschiedene relevante Dokumente und Rahmenwerke wie die Erklärung der Vereinten Nationen über Menschenrechtsbildung und -training (United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, UNDHRET), die Aktionspläne des Weltprogramms der Vereinten Nationen für Menschenrechtsbildung und die transformative Menschenrechtsbildung (Transformative Human Rights Education, THRED) analysiert, um HRE-Gestaltungsprinzipien für die Entwicklung von MOOCs aufzustellen. Anhand einer Typologie von Übungen, die auf Plattformen von MOOC-Anbietern verfügbar sind, wird anschließend dargelegt, wie jedes der festgelegten Prinzipien effektiv online vermittelt werden kann. Auf der Grundlage der etablierten HRE-Gestaltungsprinzipien werden in dieser Arbeit zentrale Leistungsindikatoren definiert, die als Rahmen für die Analyse von fünf HRE-MOOCs verwendet werden, um die Frage zu beantworten, wie und inwieweit MOOCs zum Thema Menschenrechte den HRE-Gestaltungsprinzipien entsprechen, die in der UN-Erklärung über Menschenrechtsbildung und -training und den pädagogischen HRE-Bezugsrahmen festgelegt wurden. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse werden dann verwendet, um gute Praktiken für die Entwicklung von Menschenrechts-MOOCs und die Erstellung von Designvorlagen zu beschreiben, die die HRE-Designprinzipien standardmäßig enthalten.

Die Arbeit ist vor allem für Menschenrechtspädagogen, Instruktionsdesigner, Designer von Lernerfahrungen und Praktiker nützlich, die sich auf die Entwicklung von Online-Lernerfahrungen für globale Zielgruppen konzentrieren.