

HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

~ Global Progress Depends on Local Education & Action By Kay Meyer

Eleanor Roosevelt reminds us of something she clearly understood over 60 years ago... *"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; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Human rights treaties - those noblest agreements protecting the dignity of human beings...irrefutable, right? Well, yes.

But, crafting them and making them work requires what one diplomat, Elise Boulding, termed 'waging peace'. Unless you are a diplomat or a human rights worker, you may not know much about these prime examples of collaboration. So, here it is in a nutshell: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, is the trunk of the 'family tree' of human rights treaties. Eight primary branches (treaties) have grown out of this core understanding. All have similar implementation strategies, yet each is unique to the needs of particular populations.



Treaty	Year Adopted	Year In Force	Year U.S. Ratified
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1948	N/A	N/A
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	1965	1969	1994
International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (CCPR)	1966	1976	1977
International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights (CESCR)	1966	1976	1977
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1979	1981	not yet ratified
Convention Against Torture, & Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	1984	1987	1994
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1989	1990	1995
Int'l Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers & Members of Their Families (CPMW)	1990	2003	not yet ratified
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2008	not yet in force	not yet ratified