
Ans: A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.

Mere charity is not enough from a human rights perspective. Under a human rights-based approach, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law. This helps to promote the sustainability of development work, empowering people themselves — especially the most marginalized—to participate in policy formulation and hold accountable those who have a duty to act.

While there’s no universal recipe for a human rights-based approach, United Nations agencies have nonetheless agreed a number of essential attributes (see annex II):

As development policies and programmes are formulated, the main objective should be to fulfil human rights.

A human rights-based approach identifies rightsholders and their entitlements and corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations, and works towards strengthening the capacities of rightsholders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations. Principles and standards derived from international human rights treaties should guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.

Practical illustration of a human rights-based approach: rights-holder and duty-bearer capacity-building

A recent example from Malawi provides an excellent illustration of the rights-based approach, particularly because it linked village level rights education and activism with Government-level legal advocacy. In this way, the campaign worked with (a) duty-bearers, to ensure that the necessary rights were enshrined legally at national and local levels; and (b) rightsholders, to inform them of what rights they had, how those rights related to their food security and how they could go about claiming those rights. According to the 1998 Constitution of Malawi (art. 13), “The State shall actively promote the welfare and development of the people of Malawi by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at achieving the following goals:...(b) Nutrition: To achieve adequate nutrition for all in order to promote good health and self-sufficiency.” Malawi has also ratified international legal mechanisms necessary for ensuring the right to food, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The right-to-food campaign in Malawi began at the village level, educating villagers about their rights and learning more about the root causes of their food insecurity. The campaign linked the particular experiences of the villagers, the human rights that they could draw upon to address hunger and how such a campaign could be undertaken. Working groups at the village level built up their organizing efforts to reach regional and then national actors, maintaining representation from the village-level groups. These groups linked their daily hunger problems to policy proposals for national legislation and action, ensuring the people would be able to claim the necessary rights to respond to their needs.


Ans: Human security refers to the security of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states. It recognises that there are many different dimensions to feeling safe, ranging from freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity. A people-centred approach to security has implications for how we do and understand conflict assessment, programme planning, implementation and evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives. It addresses sustainable peace by recognising the social, economic and political grievances that are often at the root of violent conflict and societal violence. It challenges us to consider participative ways of doing and evaluating our work. The human security approach is not only centred on people as objects of interventions, but also as providers of security in their own right.

As a founding principle for GPPAC’s approach, our work on Human Security has served to strengthen our normative framework for policy engagements as well as bringing together the common threads and principles for the ‘doing’ of conflict prevention and peace building in practice. This has focused on two main pillars:

1) defining and promoting a human security approach to conflict prevention and peace building, and
2) demonstrating and developing how such a human security approach can be ‘operationalised’. The main principles we promote through human security are context-specificity; local ownership and inclusiveness; and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Peace building is an intervention that is designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict by creating a sustainable peace. Peace building activities address the root causes or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilize society politically and socioeconomically.

The activities included in peace building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace building. Successful peace building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace; reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues. Researchers and practitioners also increasingly find that peace building is most effective and durable when it relies upon local conceptions of peace and the underlying dynamics which foster or enable con

8. Explain the following in your own words:

Status of Human Security in India

Gender. Development and Human Security

Ans: (a) Status of Human Security in India are -