

World **Youth** Alliance

Annual Report 2025

wya.net

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Letter From the Founder

2025 was a year to remember for the World Youth Alliance.

Over the past year, we raised our voices many times to defend human dignity. It was hard work—sometimes uncomfortable. But it's always been worth it, especially because sometimes, WYA is the only one willing to say what needs to be said.

Fortunately, our courageous and articulate WYA members have the training to engage the local and international community on issues relating to the dignity of the person, human rights, and integral development. And, as you'll read in this report, our participation in policy debates makes a real difference.

If there's anything this past year has shown, it's that no matter the time or place, there is always a need for brave voices to speak truth to power and defend human dignity. That's what WYA is proud to do.

Whether advocating at the United Nations, gathering for our annual bioethics conference in Croatia, or teaching the Human Dignity Curriculum to students, WYA members never lose sight of their core mission: to place the human person at the center of every conversation.

Thank you for all your support this year and for joining us to build a world that respects the human person and supports true human flourishing.

Anna Halpine
Founder

2025 ISF Spotlights Gender Ideology

The 22nd International Solidarity Forum brought together voices from twenty different countries, including doctors, researchers, social workers, educators and students, to share perspectives on the topic of gender ideology.

Speaker Susanne Kummer, the Director of the Institute for Medical Anthropology and Bioethics, proposed that language is used by ideologies as an instrument of power. She stated that gender identity today offers a new take on the Cartesian proposal: "I feel. Therefore I am." Panelist Birgit Kelle, described how Germany's censorship laws regulate publications that question any aspect of gender ideology, while the government funds "trusted flaggers" in order to report social media posts on the issue.

The founder of LGBT Courage Coalition and whistleblower Jamie Reed, who worked at a pediatric gender clinic in St. Louis, explained how groups like the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the American Academy of Psychiatry are not being transparent in how they are treating transgender cases. Despite lawsuits, reports, and calls for clarification on medical interventions for children and adolescents, Reed spoke about how she was dismayed by the life-altering medical treatments being given to children, without real informed consent; a direct violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

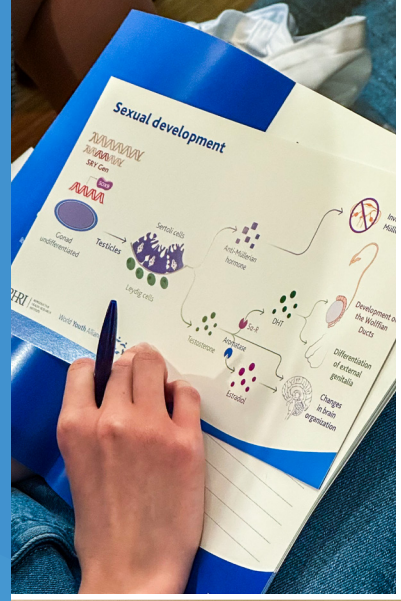
During the ISF week, Dr. Pilar Vigil, Research Director of the Reproductive Health Research Institute (RHRI) and Dr. Juan Pablo Del Rio, specialist in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Chile, led in-depth workshops, in order to provide attendees with a strong grounding in the history and development of the science on sexual differentiation.

WYA members hotly debated and participated in UN-style policy negotiation to draft a **Declaration on Gender and Human Dignity**, which affirms WYA's commitment to the authentic development of individuals and opposes any policy or initiative to impose gender ideology on children.

> "We reject the claim that gender can contradict biological sex. While cultural expressions of masculinity and femininity may vary, the human person remains an integrated whole — body and mind — whose biological sex cannot be changed. Any ideology that seeks to erase or deny the significance of biological sex threatens the physical and mental development of individuals and undermines the common good. Children in particular deserve to be raised in accordance with the truth about themselves and to receive guidance that respects and safeguards their natural development…Encouraging children to question or deny their biological sex, particularly during adolescence, when physical and psychological maturation takes place, violates the rights of the child. Medical interventions that impact or delay a child's development, must be grounded in reliable, evidence-based scientific research. We condemn medical experimentation on children, particularly the use of irreversible interventions, such as puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and so-called gender reassignment surgeries."
>
> **—WYA Declaration on Gender and Human Dignity**

Find the entire Declaration at https://wya.net/declarations/

The World Youth Alliance commends all of the courageous medical professionals, researchers, whistleblowers and advocates who continue to take a stand in the protection of children and minors.









Forum Proves Prescient

This year's International Solidarity Forum on Gender Ideology proved prescient, as just two months later, the United States Department of Health and Human Services published its Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria, reviewing the practices and guidelines put forth by WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health).

The Foreword states:

"The natural history of pediatric gender dysphoria is poorly understood, though existing research suggests it will remit without intervention in most cases… Nevertheless, **the 'gender-affirming' model of care includes irreversible endocrine and surgical interventions on minors with no physical pathology."**

According to a Reuters investigation entitled, A Dearth of Science, "[p]uberty blockers and sex hormones do not have U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for children's gender care. No clinical trials have established their safety for such off-label use… And in 2016, the FDA ordered makers of puberty blockers to add a warning about psychiatric problems to the drugs' label after the agency received several reports of suicidal thoughts in children who were taking them."

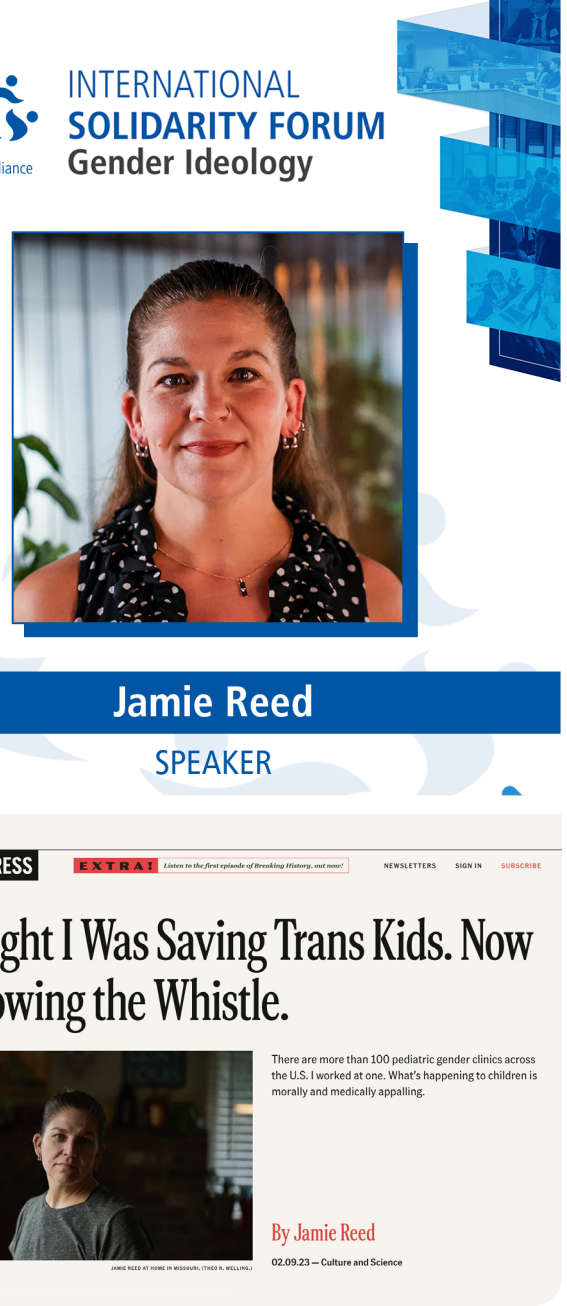
US Reviews Pediatric Gender Dysphoria Guidelines

The current approach to treating pediatric gender dysphoria follows the "gender-affirming" model of care recommended by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). This model is also endorsed by the Endocrine Society. It is of note that all but one of the authors of the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines published in 2017 were either board members of WPATH (one researcher was the former President of WPATH) while others were committee members.

The WPATH's treatment for gender dysphoria follows the pattern of social transition (changing name and pronouns, dressing like the preferred gender), puberty blockers starting as young as 10, followed by cross-sex hormones during adolescence and finally, if desired, surgery. These "gender affirming" interventions are not only framed as safe — but reversible. **Neither claim is true**, as puberty is a rapid time of growth and development of the brain and every system of the body, and cannot be "redone" once missed. Giving children and adolescents puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones pose irreparable risks and harms, including: infertility/sterility, sexual dysfunction, impaired bone density accrual, adverse cognitive impacts, cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders, psychiatric disorders, surgical complications, and more.

While many firmly believe that medical decisions for minors are made in consultation with parents or guardians and only after rigorous and thorough multidisciplinary assessments, statistics and the lived experiences of many do not back up this belief. In the HHS Report, pediatric endocrinologist, Daniel Shumer, of the Comprehensive Gender Services Program (CGSP) at University of Michigan Health, confirms that medicalization is the norm rather than the exception, as the greater majority of pediatric patients referred to his clinic end up receiving cross-sex hormones. Gender dysphoria statistics are alarming, considering the diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria in children ages 6–17 in the US surged, with a reported 70% increase from 2017–2021.

It is well established in the research that the majority of children and adolescents struggling with gender dysphoria have co-occurring psychiatric or neurodevelopmental conditions that make them especially vulnerable. However, according to the WPATH **Standards of Care 8th Version,** "Medically necessary gender-affirming interventions" include but are not limited to, the following: "hysterectomy +/- bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy; bilateral mastectomy, chest reconstruction or feminizing mammoplasty, nipple resizing or placement of breast prostheses; genital reconstruction, for example, phalloplasty and metoidioplasty, scrotoplasty, and penile and testicular prostheses, penectomy, orchiectomy, vaginoplasty, and vulvoplasty; hair removal from the face, body, and genital areas for gender affirmation or as part of a preoperative preparation process; gender-affirming facial surgery and body contouring; voice therapy and/or surgery; as well as puberty blocking medication and gender-affirming hormones…" and last but not least is mentioned: "counseling or psychotherapeutic treatment as appropriate for the patient and based on a review of the patient's individual circumstances and needs."



THE FREEPRESS

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NEWSLETTERS SIGN IN SUBSCRIBE

I Thought I Was Saving Trans Kids. Now I'm Blowing the Whistle.

There are more than 100 pediatric gender clinics across the U.S. I worked at one. What's happening to children is morally and medically appalling.

By Jamie Reed

02.09.23 — Culture and Science

US Guidelines Today

As the US Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria Report states, the purported benefits of medical interventions are fraught with controversy and the "reviews of the evidence have revealed deep uncertainty about the purported benefits of these interventions." In a recent systematic review of international guideline quality, neither the WPATH nor the Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guidelines are recommended for clinical use as they "lack developmental rigour and transparency."

Furthermore, the Report exposes the fact that WPATH suppressed systematic reviews as well as "eliminated nearly all recommended age minimums for medical and surgical interventions in response to political pressures."

Whistleblower, **Jamie Reed**, who spoke at the WYA International Solidarity Forum on Gender Ideology, and Dr. Eithan Haim, who spoke at the 2024 International Solidarity Forum on **Human Dignity and Totalitarian Ideologies,** were both featured in the Report, sharing firsthand experiences from their work in gender clinics and with patients. They affirm that the outcome of social transitioning, administering puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones is abundantly clear: there is little quality evidence to corroborate the idea that any of these interventions improve mental health outcomes.

The author of the 2024 UK Cass Review (a comprehensive, independent review commissioned by NHS England), **Dr. Hilary Cass, stated in an interview:**

"I certainly wouldn't want to embark on a treatment where somebody couldn't tell me with any accuracy what percentage chance there was of it being successful, and what the possibilities were of harms or side effects."

As the US Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria Report concludes: "there was a rapid expansion and implementation of a clinical protocol that lacked sufficient scientific and ethical justification." As we look back on the 2025 International Solidarity Forum on Gender Ideology, we stand by our declaration that "Encouraging children to question or deny their biological sex, particularly during adolescence, when physical and psychological maturation takes place, violates the rights of the child."



2025 Mary R. Smith Award

WYA Honors Dr. Pilar Vigil, PhD

WYA's Birthday Gala wrapped up the International Solidarity Forum week. This year, we presented the Mary R. Smith Award to Dr. Pilar Vigil, Research Director of the Reproductive Health Research Institute (RHRI). We were honored to have Dr. Vigil lead workshops on the science of sexual differentiation for our delegates at the 2025 ISF. With an extensive background in obstetrics and gynecology, along with a PhD in Biological Sciences, Dr. Vigil's passion for the subject and her energetic personality made the experience even more inspiring.





Viktor Frankl Awardees

WYA warmly congratulates these members for their stellar contributions.



WYA Africa
Pierrette Sukisa-Makasi

Pierrette Sukisa-Makasi became involved with WYA at just 13 and has been making vital contributions to WYA ever since. Pierette serves as WYA Chapter Coordinator for her country of South Africa. Pierrette is the driving force behind the Freedom Day Campaign and has launched WYA projects both at home and abroad, including the annual South African Youth Day Hike held each year in June.



WYA Asia Pacific
John Santeo Tamayo

John Santeo Tamayo has been a WYA member since 2012 and has made significant contributions in Filipino advocacy and policy. He has worn many hats at WYA, from intern and facilitator to legislative deliberator and WYA Asia Pacific Project Management Fellow. John has served on the Philippines National Committee since 2018.



WYA Europe
Florio Scifo

Florio Scifo has served as the National Coordinator for WYA Italy since 2020. Since becoming a WYA member, Florio received certification as a Chapter Trainer, inspiring and encouraging members in Italy to establish their own local WYA chapters. Florio is working on bringing the Human Dignity Curriculum to Italy.



WYA Latin America
Sofía Sierra Luna

Sofía Sierra Luna is the National President of WYA Mexico. Sofia completed the Certified Training Program and Advocacy Academy, and now recruits new WYA members, launches collaborative projects, attends national and international events and creates new partnerships. She believes that young people are the future of the world, bringing hope to society and building solidarity.



WYA Middle East and North Africa
Mohamad Radwan Al Omar

Mohamad Radwan Al Omar is a lawyer, public speaker, and active member of WYA. After completing the Certified Training Program and Advocacy Academy, Radwan went on to complete an internship in Brussels with WYA Europe. He serves on the WYA Lebanese National Committee and has represented the WYA MENA region as s delegate to the International Solidarity Forum in New York City.



WYA North America
Amanda Mercado

Amanda Mercado completed the Certified Training Program and became the WYA club co-eader by the end of her first year in college. She has participated in a range of international events as a WYA representative, such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women. She enjoys mentoring students on how to promote human dignity using what she learned with WYA.

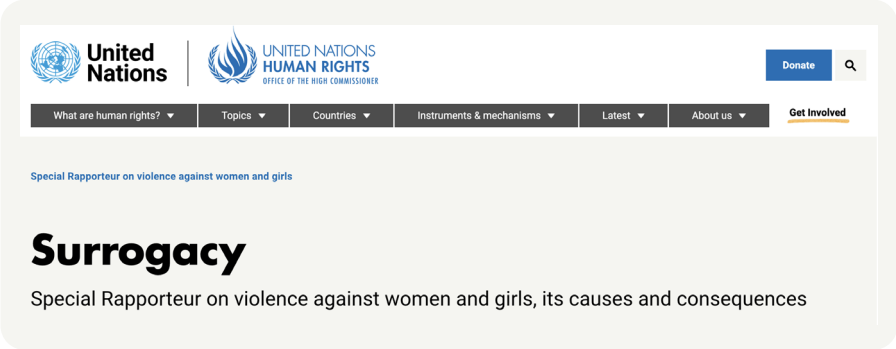
A Big Year for **Advocacy**

WYA Submits Report on Surrogacy to UN Special Rapporteur

Last spring, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls issued a public call for facts, perspectives, and analyses on the effects of surrogacy. WYA submitted a detailed report to the Special Rapporteur, urging recognition of surrogacy as an emerging form of exploitation that commodifies women and violates the rights of children. WYA's submission highlighted how surrogacy, both commercial and so-called "altruistic," imposes serious health risks on women, coerces vulnerable populations, and deprives children of their right to identity and parental care.

Following the written submission, WYA's Director of Policy and Research, Mislav Barišić, was invited to participate in a lengthy, in-depth expert online consultation with the Special Rapporteur. In that meeting, Mislav had the chance to personally explain WYA's concrete policy proposals, including the need for international recognition of the harms and human rights violations surrogacy entails, particularly for women and children.

A few months later, WYA welcomed the Special Rapporteur's Report, "The different manifestations of violence against women and girls in the context of surrogacy." The Special Rapporteur's report strongly affirms the points raised by WYA, detailing the many harmful aspects of surrogacy and warning that this practice undermines women's dignity and violates children's rights.



> Children born through surrogacy typically experience immediate separation from the woman who carried them during pregnancy – a process that can be emotionally and developmentally significant, given the importance of early bonding. They may face long-term identity struggles, which are intensified if they are conceived through gamete donation. -UN Special Rapporteur

We commend the Special Rapporteur's call for urgent action, including global abolition and stronger prohibitions on the national level, international accountability, and protection measures for vulnerable women. This report is a welcome step in the right direction.

Fighting Assisted Suicide

In June of 2025, New York became the twelfth state in the USA to legalize assisted suicide. Across the Atlantic, the UK followed suit, passing a bill that gives terminally ill patients the "right" to end their own lives.

During New York's legislative process, WYA contacted the New York State Senate to express concern over the lack of safeguards in the Senate bill. Although proponents of the New York Bill tried to frame it as a matter of "empowering personal choice", as the WYA White Paper on Euthanasia points out: "making physicians the arbiters of assisted suicide and euthanasia is a return to one of the most severe forms of paternalism, not a victory for patient autonomy."

Not only that, but legalizing assisted suicide is a political move that is prone to abuse. We've seen that in the Netherlands, where, after decades of legal assisted suicide, the country now permits euthanasia for children from the time they are a mere one year old. Legislation that permits any form of taking of innocent life can become so eroded over the years that the most innocent in our society may have no chance at life at all.

As the trend of assisted suicide and euthanasia grows, WYA continues to monitor bills, encouraging lawmakers to speak up about the dangers of this kind of legislation, and alerting citizens to the reality that assisted suicide laws violate the intrinsic and inalienable value of each person.

Performative Inclusion at the Organization of American States

WYA members Darion Cupid and Teddy-Ann Quamina were selected to represent WYA at the 55th General Assembly of the Organization of American States from June 25–27, 2025, in Antigua and Barbuda. The theme was "Building resilient, inclusive economies in the Americas."

Unfortunately, most civil society organizations present, including WYA, were confined to observing the plenary sessions. And even in these, civil society voices were permitted to speak only once, and only through pre-organized coalitions. As Darion noted, "Civil society was given a more performative role than a functional role… we were just meant to be observers."

In spite of limitations, we are proud of our trained advocacy fellows who persisted in their efforts towards open dialogue at the OAS and made valuable connections with several key stakeholders who voiced similar concerns regarding the issue of transparency and exclusion.

Brussels Advocacy Academy

Over the summer, a cohort of dedicated WYA members attended the Advocacy Academy in Brussels, Belgium.

Trainees learned the extensive ins and outs of a slate of major international policy debates through a person-centered lens. WYA's white papers paved the way for intensive discussion and dialogue on how international law and human rights are created, and how to refute claims about so-called "rights."

Examining case studies like the 1970s mass sterilizations in India, WYA members learned why it is important to consider principles like solidarity and justice in readdressing development aid. Ending the Advocacy Academy with a visit to the European Parliament, trainees saw the place where policies are proposed, shaped, and funded.

One attendee remarked, "Because of the WYA Advocacy Academy, I now understand the context of why policies have gotten the way they are today. It brings background and history to global issues, and I feel confident to defend human dignity back in my school and to my students."

Advocacy Fellows in Action

This year's Advocacy Fellows were on the frontlines at the UN Headquarters in New York City for the 58th Commission on Population and Development.

WYA Advocacy Fellows brought knowledge and expertise to each Commission by advocating for person-centered solutions and healthcare approaches. They spoke up for authentic human development that allows persons to reach their full physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional potential. Global Advocacy Fellow David Gallegos Rubio delivered WYA's official statement.

Beyond advocating for human dignity at the United Nations, each WYA Global Advocacy Fellow develops a project in their home country that directly supports WYA's mission.

We're proud to have such dedicated young men and women boldly communicating the needs of the human person to world leaders.

Cheers (Živjeli) to International Summer School 2025!

The 2025 International Summer School of Bioethics and Human Rights held in Šibenik, Croatia, was a huge success! Through lectures, debates, and communications training, participants tackled pressing bioethical issues, including assisted suicide and reproductive health, building the skills needed to speak clearly and act courageously in defense of human dignity. Presentations from Dr. Michael Bauwens, Dr. Dan Đaković, and Luka Poslon examined the history of ideas and the philosophy of gender ideology. Additional speakers offered insights from the fields of law, policy, and ethics.





WYA Fights Ideological Coercion in the EU

In November 2025, World Youth Alliance Europe received three project review letters from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) concerning Erasmus+ grants awarded to World Youth Alliance Europe and World Youth Alliance South-East Europe for projects that had been executed starting in January 2024.

The projects concerned are called Women's Health Goes Digital (WHGD), Youth Act 2024 (YA2024), and WYA Europe Operating Grant 2024 (OG2024).

The letters noted that WYA's grants did not fail in any technical or implementation capacities. The entire grant process review, as indicated by the Commission, is related to the question of whether WYA failed to promote "EU values."

The Soros-funded media platform, openDemocracy, has taken credit for initiating the review that froze World Youth Alliance grant funds by the European Commission.

In an article published on November 18, 2025, openDemocracy claimed that the World Youth Alliance was set to lose its European Union funding after openDemocracy revealed it won a reproductive health grant despite "abortion disinformation."

Last October, openDemocracy published an article: "EU criticised for 'mind-boggling' decision to give the World Youth Alliance funding" writing that they asked the European Commission to look into funding to WYA and the Commission had agreed to "...carry out an analysis to assess whether there has been a breach of the grant agreement for non-compliance with EU values or grave professional misconduct."

It was **Neil Datta, Executive Director of the European Parliamentary Forum of Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF)**, who provided the 'mind-boggling' quote to openDemocracy and, in the same article, criticized the Commission, urging them to withdraw the WYA grants:

"That the European Commission is providing €400,000 to WYA for a reproductive health programme raises serious questions about the Commission's professional capacity to understand what reproductive health is, which in turn calls into question all EU funding reported as reproductive health or sexual and reproductive health and rights… If the Commission is serious in its political support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, it urgently needs to step up its capacity in this area so that it doesn't make similar blunders in the future."

Not one of WYA's projects was linked to the issue of abortion. Further, no European Treaties enshrine abortion in European law or human rights. On the contrary, European treaties and documentation specifically recognize that abortion is a matter for member States and that the European Union as an institution has no jurisdiction over this issue.

It also should be noted that the "concerned MEPs" named in openDemocracy's December 2024 article, "MEPs demand answers over EU funding of anti-abortion charity" – Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus, Krzysztof Śmiszek, Maria Noichl, Lucia Yar, and Hanna Gedin – and who wrote to the Commission about the "risks of the WYA misleading young people" due to its history of "allegedly disseminating information on sexual and reproductive rights that is fundamentally at odds with EU values" are all members of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights working group, as pictured on the EPF website.

EPF, despite its neutered acronym, is not a neutral NGO. EPF is an initiative of the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN). Neil Datta, the Executive Director of EPF, was the former Parliamentary Programme Officer for International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF-EN).

openDemocracy and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights have a history of collaboration. **Neil Datta himself writes for openDemocracy and the openDemocracy writer who most closely follows the work of World Youth Alliance, Sian Norris, has been a guest panelist at multiple EPF events.**

This June, the EPF published its own report, The Next Wave, which is said to expose the 1.8 billion dollars in funding from 2019-2023 for "anti-gender" NGOs, political parties, and public institutions.

By comparison, IPPF European Network, as part of an organized consortium of 15 organizations, welcomed 2.8 billion euros in EU funding in 2022 alone, with the ungrateful caption: "Funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR): are we doing enough?"







The EPF Next Wave report names World Youth Alliance ninety-one times and breathlessly claims World Youth Alliance spent over 2 million dollars, over the course of four years (2019-2023), which amounts to roughly six hundred thousand a year. The EPF, a Brussels-based "network of Members of Parliament throughout Europe…both at home and overseas," boasts a $2.3 million annual budget funded by International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Gates Foundation, Countdown 2030, and gives thanks to its pharmaceutical sponsors Merck & Co. (MSD), Organon, and Ferring.

While openDemocracy claims victory for triggering the current European Commission investigation of WYA, IPPF EN brags about influencing the European Commission to allocate more funding for abortion and contraception:

"Throughout the year, we continued to call on the EU to prioritize SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights) and gender equality in its funding for external action, actively engaging in the mid-term review of the principal financing instrument for development and international cooperation, the NDICI, and publishing key analysis of EU bilateral aid going to SRHR." The principal financing instrument, NDICI-Global Europe, earmarked €79.46 billion for 2021-2027.

Meanwhile, the EPF MEPs for SRR (sexual and reproductive rights) group lobbied for mechanisms to "protect citizens from anti-gender pushback" and against "anti-choice networks" while continuing to push for the enforcement of "binding EU ODA targets and binding EU ODA targets for gender equality." Read: even more money.

Thankfully, fifteen Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have raised serious concerns over the European Commission's reviews of WYA Europe's grants.

In a letter addressed to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioners Roxana Mînzatu and Michael McGrath, the MEPs—led by Italian MEP Paolo Inselvini—call for institutional clarification regarding "the methodology, criteria, and respect for political neutrality that the Commission and its executive agencies are obliged to uphold."

The letter from the MEPs also challenges the idea that the EU values enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, are the same "EU values" pushed by current policy preferences. EU values include human dignity, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, pluralism and democracy.

A group of MEPs then submitted a written parliamentary question to the European Commission concerning the EACEA's recent reviews of WYA's grants.

The threat at the heart of the European Institutions is not the World Youth Alliance. The threat is organizations funded by billionaires and pharma giants lobbying the European Institutions on the inside, seemingly with the power to influence who receives grants and who doesn't.

Democracy, they say, dies in darkness. openDemocracy and EPF have manipulated the European Commission and related processes for too long. This is the true threat to democracy in Europe, and the true exposé of those who do not share EU values. In their glee to harm one small grassroots NGO, they have unwittingly exposed their own nefarious network of corporate funding, access, privilege, and insider power.

Human Dignity **Curriculum Milestones**

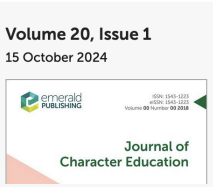
We are grateful to all the educators, researchers, advocates, and WYA supporters who've helped us bring HDC to students around the world.

HDC in the Philippines

2025 was another incredible year for HDC in the Philippines. In February, the province of Antique in the Philippines decided to use the Human Dignity Curriculum as part of their province-wide Human Dignity Education Program (HDEP) starting in the 2025-2026 academic year. Over 500 schools and over a hundred thousand students across the Province now have the chance to learn about human dignity, freedom, solidarity, and human rights.

In even more exciting news, the Province of Masbate has officially announced the institutionalization of the HDC for the 2025–26 school year. Masbate is the second province to adopt the HDC ordinance in the country, and the first in Luzon. The HDC will now be able to reach upwards of over 800 public and private schools and 200,000 students in Masbate Province.





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EDITORIAL | OCTOBER 15 2024

Dignity And Discourses: Student Perspectives From The Human Dignity Curriculum FREE

Mark B. Pacheco; Jared C. McKee; Yi Lai

+ Author & Article Information

Journal of Character Education (2024) 20 (1): 19–32.
https://doi.org/10.1108/JCE-10-2024-0003

New HDC Research Published in Major Journal

This year, a long-awaited article on the Human Dignity Curriculum was published in the Journal of Character Education. Written by Mark B. Pacheco, Jared C. McKee, and Yi Lai of the University of Florida, the paper examines how elementary and middle school students perceived human dignity after participating in the HDC.

Researchers conducted an analysis of 55 interviews with upper elementary and middle grade students (grades 5-8, ages 11-14) in two schools in the US and Canada who participated in the Human Dignity Curriculum. The researchers found that at the end of the course,"[Students] were able to articulate nuanced ideas about human dignity and were able to describe ways in which this concept informed their everyday lives."

Researchers chose students in grades 5-8 for this study because very little research has been done on how children in this age group view human dignity. And yet, the elementary and middle school years are crucial formative years for forming a worldview and a set of values. The research highlights the importance of incorporating the Human Dignity Curriculum education in schools.

Students at both schools participated in the Human Dignity Curriculum for approximately 1-2 hours per week over 12 weeks. They learned about topics such as the intrinsic value of each person; identifying what it means to treat a person as a subject rather than an object; understanding human abilities to think and choose, and the role of friendship in relation to human excellence.

Then, participants were interviewed by researchers. In these interviews, students were asked to (1) describe aspects of their learning from the HDC, (2) reflect on applications from this learning to their everyday experiences, and (3) describe understandings of human dignity through human dignity education in schools.

The researchers were interested in two big questions:

1. From the perspective of students, what is human dignity?
2. How do their perspectives on human dignity shape their experiences, if at all?

As the authors put it, "We emphasize that our study is not meant to measure what they learned, but how they articulated their perspectives on and experiences with human dignity."

What Is Human Dignity?

The interviews found that by the end of the course, HDC students had a shared vocabulary that they could use to articulate what human dignity is. The most common terms participants used to describe talking about human dignity were: universal; inherent, and irrevocable; differentiating and valuable.

"Universal" was the quality mentioned most by students, at 64%. The authors note: "Students illustrated this universal quality through describing (1) dignity as something shared equally by all people, and that (2) dignity is universally shared regardless of a person's actions or moral status.

For instance, a seventh-grade student named Thomas declared that human dignity is "equal with every other person," and that "no matter how people look, they still have dignity."

Another student said, "everyone has feelings and everyone has dignity," so she is careful not to "hurt other people's feelings."

29% of participants also described human dignity as something an individual is born with that cannot be given or revoked—in other words, irrevocable.

One 8th grade student described how she used this concept to talk to her sister, who was being bullied in school: "She used to have a rough time at school with people bullying, so, it's nice to let her know no one can take away who she is, no matter what people say, you're still going to be you."

Finally, 16% of students mentioned human dignity as a valuable asset unique to human beings

Nico, an 8th grader, elaborated on this point, saying, "Animals don't have the same dignity that we have. They can't have thinking and stuff like that, but we can." A student named Lily described how her human dignity is connected to her power to think and choose, and that this power makes humans different from animals.

How Does the Concept of Human Dignity Shape Students' Lives?

Learning about human dignity was much more than a theoretical exercise. The course changed students' attitudes about themselves and others, as well as their actions at school and at home as a result of human dignity education in schools.

Learning about human dignity helped boost kids' self-confidence and encouraged them to self-regulate their behaviors and emotions.

David, a fifth-grade student, told interviewers: "My sister or anyone would call me a mean name, I'd probably just call them back. Yeah, instead I just stay calm and usually just keep my mouth shut and don't get mad at them."

Benjamin said: "If they say something they like doing, I always listen and do it. I always am interested in what they're talking about. If I don't like it, I just don't say anything. I just keep my mouth shut. And then I just feel I'm respectful to them and I respect what they enjoy."

The HDC inspired participants to look outside of themselves and recognize that each person is unique and unrepeatable, with a value that does not depend on achievements or abilities.



Takeaways

In conclusion, the researchers noted that thanks to the HDC, "[Students] were able to articulate nuanced ideas about human dignity and were able to describe ways in which this concept informed their everyday lives."

Not only did students understand what human dignity meant, but they were empowered to make positive changes in their own lives. They gained new levels of confidence and became more aware of the needs of others. They were equipped to choose the good, act with intentionality, and live in solidarity.

Personal identity means understanding who we are, reflecting on the purpose of our lives, and the qualities that shape our character. Yet in many places, this formation is neglected, leaving young people unsure of their worth and purpose.

That's why the implications of this study are so important—and the results so hopeful.

As the authors put it:

"With the challenges that students face in the 21st century—from navigating peer culture to navigating social media— understanding human dignity can be a powerful resource for mediating students' sense of identity, as well as their understanding of the communities in which they interact." Thus, human dignity education in schools plays a vital role.

HDC Seminar 2025

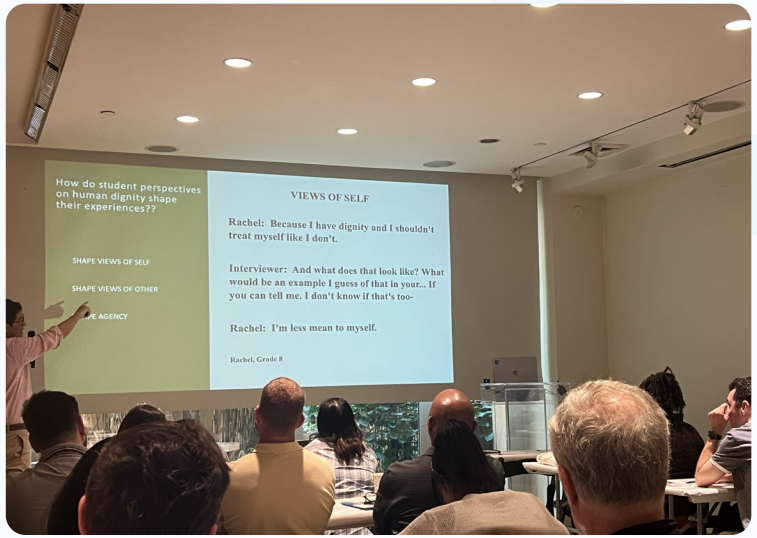
Transforming Lives Through Human Dignity Education

In June, researchers, educators, and advocates from around the world came together for the first-ever Human Dignity Curriculum Seminar in New York City. The seminar featured powerful testimonials about how the curriculum is transorming lives around the world.

Representatives from the Philippines shared about the HDC's remarkable growth in their country. Seminar attendees also heard from public high school principal, Dr. LaTisha Williams and high school teacher, Kerra Downing, on the impact of the Human Dignity Curriculum in schools in Kansas. School counselors from Orange County, California, shared how they are using the HDC in their work with students in and out of the classroom. Tamrat Belachew, a representative from Ethiopia, gave a presentation on the growing implementation of the curriculum across schools in Addis Ababa.

Researchers from the University of Florida also joined the seminar, presenting their findings on the HDC.









“They are That Much Happier”: Stories from an HDC Classroom

Coming from a background in mental health counseling, Mercedes Flores-Nava knew that she wanted to help foster positive development in children. In learning about the Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC), she was struck by how different the HDC lessons were, in contrast to other curricula with a focus on anti-bullying or kindness. The HDC lessons include topics such as treating persons as subjects and not objects, valuing human beings for their intrinsic worth, and using the powers to think and to choose what is excellent.

After Mercedes and her team brought the HDC to their community in California, they immediately started seeing positive results in the students. “It really changes the way they view themselves and others,” she says.

Mercedes witnessed the students becoming more confident in expressing themselves and participating in the different activities in the lesson plans, particularly through the skits and scenarios in the lessons on friendship and solidarity. Mercedes even noticed the drawings of her students in counseling began to change—from more solitary and somber scenes to images depicting friends having fun together, reflecting the ideas in the curriculum about how true friends act.

Mercedes shared that a striking outcome of implementing the HDC is noticing how much more the students like to communicate their emotions now, thanks to the role-playing scenarios provided in the curriculum lessons. Her fifth-grade students routinely ask, “Can we act it out?”

Five different schools in Mercede’s community ended up adopting the HDC, from pre-K through grade eight.

For Mercedes, the biggest accomplishment and the most rewarding aspect of bringing the HDC to her community is seeing the impact on the students. When students learn through the curriculum that they have intrinsic and inalienable value, no matter their circumstances, and that they have the power to choose what is excellent, “they are that much happier,” Mercedes said. “Students behave differently when they are able to recognize their worth.”



In Memoriam

WYA Remembers Courageous Former Premier

Daniel Suidani

The World Youth Alliance mourns the passing of Daniel Suidani, former Premier of Malaita Province in the Solomon Islands, who passed away on October 21, 2025, in Honiara at age 55.

We were honored to personally get to know Daniel in 2023, when he and his adviser Celsus Talifilu met with WYA founder, Anna Halpine, in New York. In that meeting, Daniel shared his vision for the Solomon Islands grounded in integrity, faith, and human dignity.

As Premier of Malaita from 2019 to 2023, Daniel became known across the Pacific for his principled defense of democratic values and sovereignty. When the Solomon Islands government shifted diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China, Suidani stood firm in opposition, warning of the risks that foreign interference posed to democracy and to the interests of his nation.

Because of his stance, Suidani was removed from office via a no-confidence motion. But even after being ousted from office, Daniel continued to advocate peacefully for justice, democracy, and human rights. The High Court later declared his ousting unlawful in 2025, and he successfully secured re-election to his provincial seat.

Daniel inspired a generation of Solomon Islanders and young people around the world to believe that true leadership grows from moral conviction.



2025 at a Glance

Global

New Members	8,990

ENGAGED MEMBERS

Event Attendees	9,427
Certified Members	500
Certified Trainers	146
Advocacy Trainers	15
New Chapters	7
Retained Chapters	64

Audited Financials (in US Dollars)

Year Ended December 31, 2025

Statement Of Activities

SUPPORT AND REVENUE WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2025	2024
Contributions and grants	$ 893,895	$ 718,128
Program revenue	18,247	24,469
Donated rent	12,000	12,000
Other income	-	8,887
Total support and revenue without donor restrictione.	**1,024,142**	**763,484**
EXPENSES		
Program services	918,821	645,540
Supporting activites:		
General and administrative	88,703	55.142
Fundraising	13,753	6.634
Total expenses	**1,019,077**	**708,318**
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	**3,103**	**55,162**
Net assets, without donor restrictions, beginning of year	323,774	267,606
Net assets, without donor restrictions, end of year	$ 328,639	$ 323,774

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