



Board Human Rights &
Psychology



Fundamental Rights
Forum
connect.reflect.act

Towards a Human Rights based-and-oriented psychology

Polli Hagenaars,
Convenor EFPA Board Human Rights & Psychology

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FORUM,
Vienna
Wednesday, 22 June 2016



Working group 6

Empowering right holders: the contribution of professional groups in improving rights fulfilment



Board Human Rights &
Psychology



Fundamental Rights
Forum
connect.reflect.act

EFPA, the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, 36 countries, representing over 300.000 psychologists in Europe.

July 2013 the GA decided to form a Board on Human Rights; effectively started in April 2014.

‘Considering the ongoing threat to Human Rights in the world, EFPA should more strongly articulate psychologists’ responsibilities and develop a policy for counteracting human rights violations.’ ‘Human rights are of crucial importance to everyone in the world, psychologists included.’

(EFPA, GA, 2013)

Human rights: social relationships and power imbalances.

‘... psychologists by their knowledge and experience, have a special responsibility.’

(Policy paper: *‘Psychology matters in Human Rights - Human Rights matter in Psychology’*, EFPA, 2015)

Human Rights and Psychology, a ‘two-way traffic’:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms a normative frame for psychologists and their associations.
- Psychologists and their associations can and should contribute to Human Rights; an action-oriented approach is being asked for.

A social-behavioural science perspective on Human Rights

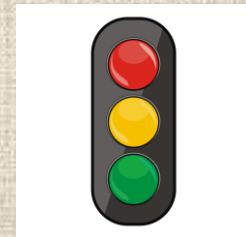
Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum



Human rights are:

- Entitlements of a person to the development and realization of his or her capabilities.
- Strong ethical pronouncements.
- Human rights are meaningless without actions.

(Sen, The idea of justice, 2009)



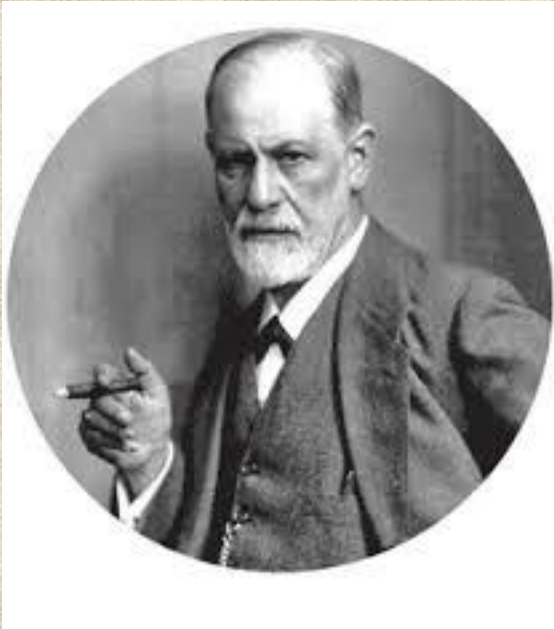
Psychology is a 'helping profession' and meant to promote the wellbeing of people.

Social responsibility is anchored in the ethical principles and codes of conduct of the associations.

Psychologists are quite familiar with

- Trauma alleviation
- Conflict management
- Assessments

BUT



In Freud's time the responsibility ended at the door of the practice room.

Psychologists today step outside.

Question 1:

How to get change done in professional associations to move towards Human Rights awareness?

On all levels:

- Institutional
- Cultural - Dignity, Freedom and Inclusion
- Social
- Individual

Question 2:

How can associations be multipliers for raising rights awareness?

- Cooperation with right holders
- Critical of Human Rights aspects in the own profession
- Not being involved in Human Rights violations
- **Bringing the Human Factor in the public debate.**



Awareness raising: actions, pitfalls and dilemmas; examples.

Anchoring

Education

Connecting

Support

Awareness raising: actions, pitfalls and dilemmas.

Resistance and denial

Marginalization

Pathologizing

‘Othering’

Freedom to your own identity



Awareness raising: actions, pitfalls and dilemmas

Helping clients or changing the system?



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 at promoting and protecting human rights. Essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of the profession. (adapted from Buitenweg, 2007)

Professional psychologists must act according to human rights standards and not remain stuck in a 'Human rights oratory'. (Sen, 1999)

Main action point: an expert meeting 'Human Rights Education for Psychologists'.

www.humanrightsforpsychologists.eu

Special cooperation:

Children's Rights are of great concern.

Photos taken by Carin Beijer, May 2016 on Lesbos



Asylum Children staying in Dutch shelter locations, risking to become a 'lost generation' (Dutch Ombudsman, February 2016)

In 22 countries affected by conflict, nearly 24 million children living in crisis zones are out of school, (UNICEF, 2016).

Child soldiers, tens of thousands of children under the age of 18 continue to serve in government forces or armed opposition groups. Some of those involved in armed conflict are under 10 years old (child-soldiers.org)



Board Human Rights &
Psychology



Fundamental Rights
Forum

connect.reflect.act



<http://human-rights.efpa.eu/>