

**Getting It Right:  
Exploring the Conception and Presentation of  
Human Rights in Education**

by

Matthew Allen Campbell

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\*Author's Note: Please note that this paper was written in 2001. Since then, much has transpired in the world of human rights education, from increasing amounts of texts and research on human rights education to structural changes within organizations. With specific regard to Amnesty International in Chapter Two, much of the dicotomy discussed therein has been greatly diminished. If you would like additional information on AIUSA's Human Rights Education Program, you can find descriptions, material, and contacts at their website:

[www.amnestyusa.org/education/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/education/)

Also, please note that this is presented without the appendices. If you have questions about their content or if you have other questions for me, you can email me directly at [mcampbell@igc.org](mailto:mcampbell@igc.org).

## **CONTENTS**

Contents	i
Tables	iv
Introduction	1
Methodology	7
Chapter One: Existing Current Texts	
Introduction	15
Human Rights and the Texts	16
Summary	27
Chapter Two: Amnesty International	
Introduction	29
Background	30
Educational Directions	32
The National Program	32
The Educator Activist	38

The 4 <sup>th</sup> R	43
Challenges	45
Summary	48
Chapter Three:            Global Source Education	
Introduction	50
Organization and Approach	51
In Action: WTO	53
In Action: Burma	61
Challenges	69
Summary	72
Chapter Four:            The Bosnia Project	
Introduction	74
The Teachers	76
Nationalism	83
Human Rights Lessons	86
Conclusion	89
Chapter Five:            Conclusion	
Lessons	92
Educational Environment	93
The Question of Content	94

Challenges	96
Implications	98
Conclusion	99
Selected Bibliography	100
Appendices	104

## ***List of Tables***

Number

1. Developmental Levels and Human Rights Education (Partial)

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## ***DEDICATION***

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Ken Saro Wiwa. Ken was a writer and non-violent activist in Nigeria. He fought peacefully to protect the environmental rights of his community, inspiring a movement against Shell Oil (who, even in 2000, reported 340 oil spills in Nigeria spilling 30,751 barrels of oil (about 1.3 million gallons)). As a result, the Nigerian government, then under the control of a military junta headed by General Abacha, arrested, jailed, and hung Ken Saro Wiwa and 8 other environmentalists in 1995.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

In 1995, the United Nations initiated what would be known as the Decade of Human Rights Education. Based on the mandates ratified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 — and supported by a convincing belief that in order to protect human rights, people need to know and understand what human rights are — the U.N. has called upon all nations around the globe to commit to the distribution, education, and implementation of the rights upheld in the UDHR through both formal and informal methods of education.

Now, more than five years into "the Decade", one can uneasily pose the questions: Has anyone taken this campaign seriously? What has been done (if anything)? And if so, how has it been done and what have we learned? Here in the Puget Sound region of Washington State, there are a number of organizations that are working to bring the concepts of human rights to both our schools and all sections of our communities. From Amnesty International to the Women's Commission, local organizations have recognized the value of human rights education and have seen it as a core concept in their mandates. This happens in a variety of ways. Amnesty International seeks to introduce speakers, projects, and events into schools and the community. Similarly, other

organizations seek to educate through the use of the media (e.g. editorials to the local newspapers), demonstrations (such as we saw at the World Trade Organization Meetings by environmental, human rights, and labor organizations and on campuses across the country by Students Against Sweatshops organizations), and even specific classes (presented on various campuses across the nation from the University of Washington to Colby College in Maine). But what is the content of this education? How does that content vary from case to case? Further, how do different organizations conceive of human rights education? And what are the strengths and challenges of those approaches?

Give a lack of research on human rights education, the present study seeks to address these questions through a multi-focused case study of current practices. This thesis provides a set of snapshots to reveal several different examples of human rights education. This is accomplished with a review of two texts that approach human rights education from two different perspectives and an examination of two organizations (one a human rights advocacy organization and one a professional education development organization) who have been engaging in human rights education. This is followed by a case study that reviews the experience of one human rights educator in the field (which will also provide an international perspective to how human rights education is approached and conducted).

In the United Nation's publication announcing the Decade for Human Rights Education, human rights education is defined as:

training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes, which are directed towards:

- (a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- (c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- (d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
- (e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. <sup>1</sup>

The sub definitions presented in (b) and (c) above speak directly to efforts of recent years to promote and achieve diversity, tolerance, and understanding within our educational institutions. The basis of human

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. (1995) Decade of Human Rights Education: 1995-2004

rights is, after all, that as humans we are all equal and have dignity. Building this concept of a global identity of humanity can thus create not only a sense of equality and dignity, but also an appreciation for diversity. The definition in (d) continues the frame of thought by striving to empower people to partake in the democratic system — and not only educating people to act within the democratic society, but actually, as Dewey puts it, "generate and cultivate capacities for people to live democratically".<sup>2</sup> If education is necessary for a functional democracy, and human rights education specifically is a part of this, then human rights education is an inseparable part of democratic education.

All of this goes so far without the exploration of the “art for art’s sake” argument. This is expressed perhaps most eloquently by Upendra Baxi in his paper “Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium.” This paper was presented at the launching ceremony of the UN’s Decade of Human Rights Education and is included as a chapter in one of the texts to be discussed in Chapter 2. Part of this paper includes a discussion of whether to pursue Human Rights Education for other ends (such as democracy, economic progress, etc), or as an end in itself. He concludes:

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<sup>2</sup> West, Cornel. (1994) "Race and Social Justice in America." *Liberal Education*. Summer.

I believe HRE [human rights education] is important because it is an end in itself...HRE as an end itself seeks to reinforce the processes of empowerment of every human being in everyday life to experience freedom and solidarity...The ability to perceive such freedom as not threatening all that is good, true and beautiful in human achievement is to my mind the summum bonum the HRE promises us. Mohandas Gandhi use to say that swaraj (independence, that is just self-rule) brings exercise of freedom in non-threatening ways to the Other. That, I think, is the spirit of human rights cultures too.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, we address the UN definitions offered in both (a) and (e). Further, Baxi is able to not only address the basic stance that human rights education will create a stronger human rights culture and understanding by human beings, but also speaks to the need for this to be “non-threatening.” This is, of course, open to criticism in that it depends on the context in which human rights education takes place, especially on the international level.

This discussion of the purpose and importance of human rights education is at the very heart of the literature that exists surrounding

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<sup>3</sup> Baxi, Upendra. (1997) "Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium." In *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. His chapter was originally presented at a UN ceremony launching the Decade for Human Rights Education.

human rights education. Unfortunately, the literature includes little in-depth analysis of different approaches to achieving these goals. What does exist is a collection of texts put together by educators developing social studies curricula, human rights activist hoping to further the "culture" of human rights, and transcripts from a few summits concerning these issues.

If human rights are to be a part of education, the question of how human rights should be implemented is of pressing concern. Janusz Symonides, speaking on human rights education during a three-day workshop ("Education for Human Rights and Democracy") sponsored by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study and UNESCO, concluded that

one of the principles that should be followed in the education for human rights is the holistic approach. All human rights are interdependent and interrelated. So we should speak not only about political and civil rights but also of economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>4</sup>

But with this holistic approach there is still also the question of how human rights is to become a part of the curriculum. Are there to be specific additions of human rights classes or is the responsibility for

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<sup>4</sup> Chatrath, K.J.S. (Ed.). (1998) Education for Human Rights and Democracy. Shimla, INDIA: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

presenting human rights education to be the responsibility of other academic (and non-academic) subjects? What kinds of methods should be used in teaching about human rights? Again, this study explores some of these questions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

In order to develop a well-rounded analysis that addresses the questions I have posed, this thesis is divided into several chapters. The first chapter is a review of two pieces of current literature that will create a foundation from which to work. Chapters Two, Three, and Four explore three cases of human rights education: one from the largest human right advocacy organization, one from an organization that conducts teacher training and professional development around human rights related topics, and a third that explores the experience of a human rights educator attempting to present a human rights education workshop to multiethnic teachers in post-war Bosnia. This will be followed by a brief chapter summarizing some of the main themes that arose during the study.

### **Process**

Each of the chapters employs different methods for collecting and analyzing data. The first chapter is an exploration of two primary texts.

This chapter relies on a review of the written resources. In the small amount of research I had done to date on the topic, I recognized that very little had been written about human rights education at all. The majority of the literature seemed to point to *why* human rights education should exist. It did not seem particularly productive at this stage to go back and re-explore that question. Instead, the next question concerned the *how* of human rights education. I conducted a review of the existing literature with the hope of isolating what some unanswered questions might be about how human rights education is conducted.<sup>5</sup> Two texts seemed to explore the two directions that I saw as developing the “how” of human rights education. The first text by Betty Reardon represents a conceptual understanding of human rights education. It is most concerned with how human rights information is presented. The second text is a collection of more than thirty perspectives about human rights education, edited by George Andreopoulos (Assistant Professor of Government, John Hay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York and Lecturer in International Human Rights, Yale University) and Richard Pierre Claude (Professor Emeritus of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park). It presents a more practice-centered exploration of how human rights should exist in

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<sup>5</sup> Because of the nature of the topic of human rights education, it is constantly evolving. I continued to explore various texts throughout the entire exercise of researching and writing; though these two texts seemed to be most relevant and complete.

education. This chapter will also include perspectives from other texts that help support or define these two primary texts.

### *The Second Chapter: Amnesty International*

Founded in 1961, Amnesty International is a Nobel Prize winning grassroots activist organization with over one million members worldwide. Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is the largest section of this international human rights movement. Amnesty International works to: free all prisoners of conscience detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, color or language -- who have not used or advocated violence; ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners; abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment of prisoners; and to end extrajudicial executions and "disappearances." Amnesty International also works to promote the rights expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the human rights standard ratified in 1948 by the United Nations. One of Amnesty International's objectives is to make all people of all ages aware of the basic rights and responsibilities that each individual possesses and, in the long term, to build a "culture of prevention" of human rights abuses.

I have been involved with AIUSA in several volunteer positions at various levels over the last six to seven years. I hope that my experiences and knowledge about the organization and its goals and methods will

provide me with a unique insight into the methods it is utilizing for human rights education.

I was aware of a few projects that AIUSA had employed around human rights education. Some of these included “canned” curricula and a newsletter provided to those who elect to be a part of the Human Rights Educators Network. I was curious whether AIUSA was using any of the same techniques that Global Source was using to communicate with educators strategies for including human rights in their student’s learning. To find out, I began by reviewing the information that was provided on their website, through their educator’s newsletter and other publications and printed resources, and through contacts that I had within the organization. These contacts also connected me with other “key players” in the AIUSA Educator’s Network, with whom I scheduled and conducted several interviews. I also attended meetings of the Western Region Steering Committee for Human Rights Education, a committee of which I am a part, with the hope of more fully understanding the methods and pedagogies that directed their efforts. The work here employs interviews, observations, and a review of written resources.

### *The Third Chapter: Global Source Education*

Global Source Education describes itself as:

a non-profit, independent, educational outreach organization whose mission is to provide professional development, curricular and educational support materials, and other services to make global studies more accessible and meaningful to K-12 educators and students. Through an approach to learning that examines a diversity of perspectives and cultivates critical thinking, we seek to foster a deeper awareness and encourage greater social responsibility around topics and issues that affect our changing global community.<sup>6</sup>

Their programs often present issues of globalization in the context of human rights and social responsibility. It provides training and direction in presenting these ideas in a "non-indoctrinating" manner using values of human rights and human dignity as constants.

My intent was to explore Global Source Education's methods for training educators (which included presenting a sort of human rights education, one that is focused primarily on issues of globalization and social/corporate responsibility). To do this, my strategy for researching this case study had three distinct components. The first component involved observation and interviews with participants in some of the workshops. I attended three of their training institutes for educators over a period of one year. The first took place over five days and the second, somewhat of a follow-up, took place on a Saturday morning. The

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<sup>6</sup> [www.globalsourcenetwork.org](http://www.globalsourcenetwork.org)

third such workshop was a daylong Saturday session. During these events I was primarily looking for the way in which the workshops were structured and their methods for conveying information. In the first two, I also observed and interviewed many of the participants. My intent in these interviews was twofold. First, I wanted to understand who the people were who were coming to these workshops. Second, I wanted to determine, to some degree, why they were coming. While these questions did not fully address my thesis question of "the how of human rights education," they did provide valuable information regarding audience with the idea that we can better develop how we present human rights education if we know who wants it and why.<sup>7</sup>

The second component was an interview of the designers of the program (who are also the co-directors of the Global Source Education). I was curious to see how human rights was conceived in their programs. Further, I explored their philosophies about how human rights is implemented and presented in their various workshops.

The third component was a review of the resources provided to the participants, both written and non-written (such as speakers, debates, etc.). An example of such sources would be that one of the courses provided several interactive sessions, a workbook/resource kit, and six

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<sup>7</sup> The reality of this seems to be more that it is not the "who is asking for this training" and "why do they want it" that are the largest directors of how human rights education is presented. Rather my conclusions will show that how it is (though more accurately, *should be*) presented is fairly consistent regardless of whether we are talking about second-graders or professional educators. Certainly the content may differ, but the overall pedagogy of how to present it is quite similar.

books. The work here employs interviews, observations, and a review of written resources.

*The Fourth Chapter: The Bosnia Project*

The third case study provides a quite a different perspective on the concept of human rights education. Specifically, I conducted several interviews over a year with a noted human rights activist, educator, and anthropologist, Angela Thieman Dino, about her experience attempting to provide a human rights education workshop to a group of multi-ethnic Bosnian teachers following the Serb and Croatian conflicts that tore apart Bosnia. Angela is currently a member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA and has served as a representative to the International Executive Committee (the chief policy making body for Amnesty International). She is currently completing her PhD. in Anthropology at the University of Colorado, Denver, looking at cultural issues affecting young men in Bosnia.

My data for this particular portion of the study are from extensive interviews conducted with Angela and some of her course outlines and objectives for the workshop. However, I should also note that the discovery of the importance of and the analysis of Angela's experience specifically, were in part a collaborative effort between Angela and myself.

Substantial arguments have been forwarded to support the purposes and benefits of human rights education. For this study, the primary purpose was to explore some different approaches to integrating human rights into the curriculum. There are obviously different ways of engaging human rights issues and ideas, whether as a stand-alone subject or as part of traditional subject areas such as Social Studies and English, or even Math and Science. How have human rights been presented within these different contexts? What are the arguments for including human rights in various ways? Are there strengths or weaknesses of some methods as compared to others? These are the main questions that are explored in this inquiry.

## ***chapter one***

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: EXAMINING CURRENT TEXTS***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

To say it plainly, the field of human rights education is one that has not been reported on extensively. Scarcity is perhaps the best way in which to describe the availability of resources about the subject. What is available comes in the form of collected articles and reports from conferences with some relevance to human rights education. There are also a few resources that have been put together that provide a variety of in-class activities for educators.

Perhaps the most remarkable written resource comes from the 1997 text *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*. The text brings together many of the leading academics in the field of human rights education and presents a comprehensive examination of theories and methodologies for presenting human rights education to students, teachers, professionals, and the broader community. Being the most complete and the most recent text, this review of research will focus most heavily on the information it presents. While I understand the

importance of breadth, given the lack of literature currently available and the collective nature of this text, it is of primary interest for this study.

*Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century* presents a very experiential approach to human rights education. By contrast, Betty Reardon's *Educating for Human Dignity* presents a conceptual curricular approach, focusing less on the academics of human rights education and more on classroom implementation. The text is divided into three main sections: a component introducing the rationale for human rights education, a component that is a collection of curricular examples for Primary and Secondary education, and a final component which provides further resources for those developing their own human rights education projects, or expanding the ones that are included in the second component.

This chapter explores these two texts and highlights the primary themes of each; looking at conceptualization of human rights in Reardon and experiential and involved learning in *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS CONCEPTUALIZATION AND THE TEXTS**

Presenting human rights in the classroom is not something that occurs daily in the majority of our classrooms. While we may certainly see discussions about the holocaust, current events, and even the civil

rights struggle, that is often where the dialogue ends. While these topics can be effective learning tools for the human experience, it has been difficult to bridge the gap to the underlying theme of human rights (which is consistent in each of these). Calls from governments and organizations around the world for more human rights education as well as increasing calls from educators for guidance in presenting this topic seem to indicate a need for formal consideration and exploration of human rights education at different levels.

Whether one is a kindergartener or a professional in the field, human rights education quite often starts at the same place: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Composed with the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt and ratified by the full General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, this document defines, as much as any document can, what human rights are. It seems to be an unspoken standard to begin any article or other text regarding human rights education with a reference to the UDHR; and with good reason. The UDHR is perhaps the single most important document in the creation of a foundation for human rights, and indeed, human rights education.

The UDHR sets out the standards for what should be acknowledged as basic human rights. From the right to freely assemble, freedom of speech, to the right to equal pay for equal work, the UDHR conceptualizes the requisites for ensuring equality and human dignity across differences and around the world. With specific regard to

education, it is in Article 26 that the UDHR proclaims education is a human right. Further, in the second portion of Article 26, it is stated, “education shall be directed toward...strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”<sup>8</sup> Also, in the introduction to the document, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that, “every individual and every organ of society keeping this document constantly in mind [the UDHR], shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.”

Betty A. Reardon takes a conceptual approach to human rights education in *Educating for Human Dignity*. It is clear that she maintains that we must be aware of what human rights are in order to apply them in our lives. In this text, she presents how learning what human rights are can be linked to the lessons at various levels of education, especially in the primary and secondary grades. The book was created as part of the Decade for Human Rights Education and was presented by the Peace Education Program at the Teachers College of Columbia University. Reardon is the Director of that Program.

In her introduction she identifies developmental sequences linked to grade levels, then attaches the relevant human rights documents and standards, the related issues, and of course, the underlying values to be expressed as associated with the developmental sequences. The first

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<sup>8</sup> [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) Also see Appendix for a full copy of the UDHR.

part of the table for how this might look for kindergarten through third grade looks as follows:

*Table 1 Developmental Levels and Human Rights Education (Partial)*

<i>Developmental Level</i>	<i>Core Concepts and Values</i>	<i>Human Rights Standards and Instruments</i>	<i>Issues and Problems</i>
Childhood Early Grades Ages 5-8 K-grade 3	Rules Order Respect Fairness Diversity Cooperation Personal Responsibility	Classroom rules Declaration of the Rights of the Child	Inequality Unfairness Harm

In this table, the “Human Rights Standards and Instruments” lists real documents that are available for making the concepts of human rights (in column two) relevant to the experiences of the child by including the Classroom rules and an international treaty that protects the rights of children.<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of her book, Reardon explains, “such learning objectives are most likely to be achieved in a learner-centered educational process which is sensitive to the concerns and capacities of

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to mention here that this particular declaration is actually now the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Unfortunately, the United States has not actually ratified this treaty. The US remains one of only two countries in the world not to have ratified the Rights of the Child. The other is Somalia which lacks a government to do so. Regardless, these rights are recognized around the world and some are similar to protections we have under domestic law in the US so it can be a relevant tool for the classroom.

the students”.<sup>10</sup> The idea here is to link human rights values and documents with problems commonly experienced by certain grade levels. Essentially it redefines common human rights concepts in terms that are understandable to particular grade levels. It also includes specific human rights documents that reflect the larger picture, such as the UDHR, the Convention on the Elimination of Racism, the Declaration of Independence, etc. And, as there are two primary ways that people position human rights (as a moral problem or a legal one), the inclusion of human rights documents can also represent the more legalistic understanding of human rights. Reardon states:

One of the most effective conceptual approaches to human rights education is through the international standards themselves, the principles, declarations, covenants, and conventions that are the foundations of international human rights law promulgated by the United Nations. Here, too, it is possible to apply the approach in a comprehensive and holistic manner, starting with the meaning of universality and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

While the world has changed considerably, the Declaration is still the most comprehensive conceptual statement of rights... It should be the centerpiece of any human rights curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Reardon, Betty A. *Educating for Human Dignity: Learning About Rights and Responsibilities*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. (13-15)

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* (9)

Thus, by examining both documents and behavior, students can learn about, and reflect with their own behavior, the human rights concepts and values. Reardon's book continues as a how-to curriculum guide for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Reardon's approach actually attempts to merge the moralistic and legalistic natures of human rights. By linking international human rights documents with student behavior, the lasting effect is not only that students learn and understand what human rights are, but that they actually may adjust their behavior to act in a way that is respectful of the dignity of all, or in other words, in a human rights way. In this approach, the legalistic side of human rights acts as both a definition for human rights, and an international standard for moral behavior.

Thus, by creating this link, the legalistic side of human rights is not, as it may sometimes seem to be, existing in a "vacuum." The documents that make up conceptual understanding of human rights have actions associated to them. Reardon's approach attempts to link these documents and actions so students have both a conceptual foundation and the beginnings of a moral foundation.

Human rights education teaches both *about* and *for* human rights. The goal is to help people understand human rights, value human rights, and to take responsibility for respecting, defending and promoting their

human rights as well as the rights of others. Garth Meintjes<sup>12</sup> recounts, on one hand, the UDHR information above. He also provides another side of human rights education that seeks to find a more personal relation, a more personal experience for students of human rights. “One could adopt a very specific and personal approach and focus upon concrete and practical experiences in which the relevance and value of human rights can easily be demonstrated.” In the text, Meintjes recounts a story from his past when he was researching in South Africa and witnessed outright abuse under apartheid. Other examples could be the experience of protestors in downtown Seattle during the WTO meetings or the experience of a displaced Serb visiting the town where s/he once lived. Each of these experiences have both human rights implications and personal relevance and provides the context to which Meintjes refers. For Meintjes, there must be a combination of knowledge (as represented by the understanding of documents such as the UDHR and other human rights documents and laws) and experience.

This raises the question of whether we must rely on the students’ individual experiences or if others’ experiences can serve this purpose. It seems that Meintjes feels that personal experience maintains a level of

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<sup>12</sup> Meintjes, Garth. (1997) “Human Rights Education as Empowerment: Reflections on Pedagogy.” In *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia. (64-67)

At the time of the printing, Meintjes was the Associate Director for the Center for Civil and Human Rights and Assistant Professor at the Notre Dame Law School.

“interaction” that may not be achieved through reading or seeing someone else’s experience.

Another pedagogy for human rights education that is a continuation of Meintjes', is a Freire-ian model which encourages critical consciousness. This is a structure for learning that challenges students (and often educators) to question the situations in which they find themselves. In another chapter in *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*, Rita Maran (in her chapter regarding "Teaching Human Rights in the Universities") quotes Freire:

Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion."<sup>13</sup>

Freire seems to be saying, "Question everything, especially those things you are comfortable with."

Meintjes identifies this same pedagogy as part of a circular relationship between process and student empowerment. "Students who

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<sup>13</sup> Maran, Rita. (1997) "Teaching Human Rights in the Universities." In *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia,. (203-4). This quote is taken from Paulo Freire's *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1969). The pedagogy of critical consciousness is presented by at least two additional authors in this text as well.

are empowered...become conscious of their own participation in the creation of knowledge and of their own critical ability to conceptualize and reconceptualize their experiences of reality. Accordingly, human rights education as empowerment requires enabling each target group to begin the process of acquiring the knowledge and critical awareness it needs to understand and question oppressive patterns of social, political, and economic organization."<sup>14</sup> He continues with a (postmodern) warning regarding empowerment and the future as understanding one's experience and the empowerment of that must be used to continue the process for others who lack power. Freire would maintain that empowerment is not necessarily the purpose of the exercise; instead, even when students achieve empowerment, they must continue to analyze their experience, their role, and the source of that empowerment in order to diminish oppression and improve the situation of human dignity and equality (which brings us back to human rights education).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Meintjes. (66)

<sup>15</sup> One method highlighted that educators can use to link experience and issues of respect, human dignity, and general human rights is expressed by George Andreopoulos during the commencing chapter of *Human Rights in the Twenty-First Century*. He states, "...to heal wounds on the aftermath of widespread civil strife, human rights education programs must reinforce the commonality of suffering among different ethnic/religious groups. In such a context, those features of the suffering which stress the multiplicity of human attachments may well be the ones with the greatest chance of success. In the Yugoslav conflict, for example, tales of Croatian suffering at the hands of Serbs and vice versa should stress the common features of the victims and their survivors: tales of fathers and mothers losing their offspring, rather than tales of Serb/Croat parents losing their sons and daughters; the importance here lies in the universally recognizable (and easily identifiable with) *parental* role rather than particularistic and diverse ethnic identity."(15). This particular idea will be explored in greater length below.

As an academic text, this book provides the reader with multiple perspectives into the experiences and understandings of many human rights educators around the world. It does not, however, provide the step-by-step guidance that Reardon's book offers. The strengths of this text, however, lie in conveying a better understanding of how educators might not only teach their students about human rights, but how they might involve their students in that education. Much like Reardon, this book attempts to link students' experiences with human rights. But while Reardon rely's most heavily on human rights documents, this text encourages educators and students to build their understanding of human rights from their own experience. If Reardon's approach in *Educating for Human Dignity* is considered a legalistic approach, then this could be considered more of a moralistic approach, relying on students and educators to reach their understandings of human rights through practice and experience in the area of dignity.

Beyond experience and conceptualization, these texts and others indicate that the process by which these aspects of human rights education are taught are almost, and possibly *as*, important as the content. This includes the atmosphere that is created for the discussion of human rights issues and for the conversation in general about whatever the topic of discussion is at the time. Nearly every text written regarding the content of human rights education includes some direction for process as well. Essentially, the point that is accentuated is the need

to have the process of human rights education reflective of the content. In one evaluation of methods for teaching about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), two approaches were examined. In the first, the teachers led students in a discussion about cases that could be related to the different Articles of the UDHR. The second method involved setting up work stations with one Article at each and a collection of news clippings/stories related to the Article. The students then discussed the information with each other and wrote their reactions. Then they moved onto another station. "A post-test evaluation of these students' knowledge of international law showed the second group to be superior."<sup>16</sup>

But what does this say about human rights education? Basically, it presents an argument for looking further when we define what we mean by human rights education, especially when we are looking at *how* this is done. This particular learning process somewhat redefines the more traditional model of lecturer and student. The process can reflect issues of respect and dignity by valuing the students contribution and opinions to the learning process. Further, some models encourage expanding the role of the students to include curriculum development, class leading, etc. in order to "establish classroom climates conducive to

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<sup>16</sup> Torney-Purta, Judith. "Socialization and Human Rights Research." In Margaret Stimmann Branson and Judith Torney-Purta (eds). *International Human Rights, Society, and Schools: NCSS Bulletin No. 68*. National Council for the Social Studies: Washington, D.C., 1982.(43-5)

equal participation by all students...and encourage expression of opinions about social and economic problems and government's actions to resolve them."<sup>17</sup>

## **SUMMARY**

The existing literature surrounding how human rights education should occur tends to present two possible directions. The first is concerned with the conceptualization of human rights. This approach considers the conceptualization of human rights to be the key element in human rights education. Reardon's approach is to ensure that students are exposed to human rights definitions and documents. These are then linked with activities in the classroom. Reardon also presents lessons that are level or age specific, placing certain human rights concepts and documents with what students experience (especially in the classroom) as they grow.

The second direction explores a more experiential approach to human rights education. It values, perhaps above the conceptualization of human rights, the interaction of students with themselves, their neighbors, and the surroundings, or, their experience. It then challenges them to bring these considerations to the table when discussing human rights (or anything, as human rights becomes a part of not only what

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<sup>17</sup> Sebaly, Kim. "Education About Human Rights: Teacher Preparation." In Norma Bernstein Tarrow, (ed) *Human Rights and Education*. Pergamon Press: New York, 1987. (210)

they are studying, but *how* they are studying). *Human Rights*

*Education for the Twenty-First Century* explores these ideas through the perspectives of thirty or so human rights educators and provides the reader with a diverse collection of human rights education articles with a central theme that emphasizes the role of experience and practice in education.

These two themes will be explored further in the following chapters which examine how specific entities have been approaching human rights education. A central question for this study is: Can a human rights educator rely solely on either the conceptualization of human rights or the experiential/environmental aspects of human rights education, or do both need to be present for human rights education to be truly successful?

## *chapter two*

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION APPROACHES: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter examined the different directions that two prominent human rights education texts have presented as methodologies or ideologies for content and presentation of human rights education. In this chapter, I will explore more specifically what drives Amnesty International USA's (AIUSA) education goals. As a grassroots human rights advocacy organization, AIUSA faces the challenge of providing resources to educators across the country while coordinating its own efforts to further understanding of human rights through education. To do this, they employ a network of educators (from which the more formal organization blossomed), a national newsletter, curricular resources, and their own education modules. Further, the organization must mediate tensions between preferred methodologies while developing their own pedagogy for how human rights education should occur.

## **BACKGROUND**

Amnesty International is known around the world as a leader in human rights. Founded in 1961, the organization was created in response to a report stating that Ecuadorian students had been arrested in a café after raising a toast to freedom. Outraged, Peter Brennenson wrote a letter to the *London Observer* calling on people to write the government of Ecuador demanding the release of the students, whom he titled “prisoners of conscience.” Prisoners of conscience have been defined as those individuals who have been imprisoned for expressing a political belief or for their identity, provided that they have neither used nor advocated violence. Forty years later, the organization is the largest grassroots human rights organization in the world. And while it still maintains working for the release of prisoners of conscience at the very heart of its mandate, the organization has expanded to work more broadly on human rights issues as they are defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).<sup>18</sup>

This second part of the mandate is considered promotional in its directive. While Amnesty International does not take specific action on all abuses of human rights, it also works to promote the existence of

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<sup>18</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essentially a treaty of all of the nations in the world. Primarily drafted by Eleanor Roosevelt, this document was presented and ratified by the full assembly of the United Nations in 1948. Since then, all nations that have entered the United Nations have been required to become party to the treaty. (While this document was initially intended to be nonbinding and instead a goal to attain, the document has since become customary international law). Further, most, if not all, nations must also ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and/or the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

these rights and an end to abuse of them around the world. To be clearer, AI does specific work on cases of prisoners of conscience. It also works on the global elimination of the use of torture, the death penalty, extrajudicial executions, and disappearances. It does not, however, work on specific cases of economic discrimination, failure to uphold the right to education, etc. However, these samples would fall under the promotional aspect of the mandate. That is, AI works to educate people about the rights encompassed in the UDHR. So while the organization does not act on specific cases of economic, social, or cultural rights, it does promote these rights as universal to human beings. A summary of the mandate states:

Amnesty works to promote all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards, through human rights education programs and campaigning for ratification of human rights treaties.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Human Rights Educators' Network, Amnesty International USA. (1998) Human Rights Here and Now: Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Minneapolis: Human Rights Resource Center. This information is based on AI's mandate as it currently exists. The mandate was last revised in 1995 to expand the realm of the UDHR which the promotional side of the mandate could address. As of this printing, AI is undergoing an international deliberation to review the mandate. There is a fair likelihood that the mandate could be expanded to call for more direct action on a larger variety of human rights violations. Thus, while AI does not currently work on issues such as economic sanctions or landmines, it may following this review.

## **EDUCATIONAL DIRECTIONS**

While Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) has maintained a commitment to the promotion of human rights, its Human Rights Education program is still fairly young. Initially, the program started as a network of educators who were looking for human rights curriculum and for support. The network continues today as the backbone to the Human Rights Education Program. While the program creates education modules and other resources, the network is still closely involved in the guidance of certain aspects of the program. In AIUSA's Western Region<sup>20</sup>, there is a Human Rights Educators Steering Committee which, in consultation with the national program, develops and defines the direction of education projects within the Region. The Western Region is the only region with such a committee. Thus, AIUSA has multiple directions in which it operates. The pedagogies of each region and the national program may also differ.

## **THE NATIONAL PROGRAM**

The national program has two directions from which it operates. First, it has served as a sort of clearinghouse for curriculum resources. Two examples of this are the publication *Human Rights Here and Now: Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the Education

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<sup>20</sup> AIUSA is currently divided into 5 major regions. The Western Region is the largest of these regions comprising the 13 (most) western states in the United States and nearly 1/3 of AIUSA's membership base.

Module for the Campaign Against Torture which are discussed below.

Secondly, the formation of the National Program meant that a national strategy for approaching human rights education needed to be developed. This is the second direction of the Program: to create and sustain a pedagogy for what human rights education means to AIUSA.

To credit the National Program with creating *Human Rights Here and Now* is not entirely accurate. The publication was actually designed by the Human Rights Educators Network, the Human Rights USA Resource Center, and the Stanley Foundation, prior to the existence of the National Program. It has, however, remained as one of the primary resources that is provided by the Program to interested educators.

*Human Rights Here and Now* was originally developed in 1998 as a contribution to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004. The 146 page document is a comprehensive introduction to human rights education and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The publication is broken into five distinct sections. The first covers the fundamentals of what human rights are and a brief history of the development of human rights from the concept of justice to the establishment of human rights law. The second section focuses on the concept of human rights education including methods of teaching. Section three is the largest section outlining fifteen activities that educators can present. The content and design of the activities will be explored below. The fourth section follows with more activities, though

these activities are specifically aimed at taking action. The final section includes further resources for educators including a list of organizations, a glossary (for which words are highlighted throughout the publication), and human rights documents such as the UDHR.

Each activity is presented fairly similarly. They start with an overview summarizing the purpose of the activity. The overview also includes the estimated time, necessary materials, the setting and age groups for which the activity is appropriate, and other activities to which the activity could be linked. This is followed by a step-by-step procedure. Included here is almost always a detailed progression of discussion questions to use both during the activity and after it was completed. Most activities also included a section entitled “Going Further” which explained how the activity may be taken to another level and/or a section of adaptations for presenting the activity to different audiences or settings.

The purpose of *Human Rights Here and Now* was to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to further human rights education, especially within the UN’s Decade for Human Rights Education. The majority of the activities could be completed within one hour.<sup>21</sup> The second resource I referenced above is the Campaign Against Torture Education Module. This particular

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<sup>21</sup> Some activities could take as little as 15 minutes and some of the action activities could take up to two hours.

resource is different in a couple of ways. First is its length. The education module is a series of activities that take place over eight separate meetings. Secondly, the education module is attached to a specific human rights campaign being conducted by Amnesty International (while *Human Rights Here and Now* offers activities which relate to a wide variety of human rights concerns). Thirdly, the Education Module is specifically action oriented, with a specific plan for action against torture in the final unit.

The Education Module comes as a small binder. It includes an Introduction to the module that also details how the module may be modified to be a five or three session program. Each unit is then defined similarly to those of *Human Rights Here and Now*.

There is an overview of the unit, a list of objectives, the necessary materials needed, and detailed guidance for presenting the unit. Each unit also includes a section titled “Extensions” which includes how the segment can be expanded. Specifically, the units are:

- Unit 1: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Unit 2: What is Torture and is it ever Justified?
- Unit 3: Nigeria: A Case Study
- Unit 4: Nigeria: Human Rights Issues Today
- Unit 5: A Survivor’s Story
- Unit 6: A Meeting with a Survivor
- Unit 7: What Would You Do?

## Unit 8: The 12-Point Program to Stop Torture

The back of the module also includes the necessary handouts for each unit that the educator can copy and distribute.

The most unique element to this module is its aim for expanded interactivity. While the activities in resources such as *Human Rights Here and Now* are interactive in that they require a discussion between the participants, a portion of the Education Module requires interaction beyond the classroom. A portion of the module is dedicated to human rights and torture in Nigeria. During Unit 5, students read and discuss an interview with a survivor of torture from Nigeria. During the sixth meeting, the students are actually introduced to the survivor whom they read about in Unit 5. In order to begin to truly *understand* the implications of torture, the methodology of this module embraces in-person interaction with a torture survivor as a practically imperative part of that education.

The method seeks to embody an idea that often arises in human rights education. Recalling Meintjes' account of the importance of personal experience in human rights education, this module attempts to go beyond the presentation of facts and articles to create an interactive experience for the students. While the students may not have their own experiences with torture, this event is intended to bring them closer to some understanding the human impact of torture.

The approach to human rights education in this example is quite different than the first, despite the similarities between them. The approach in the Education Module is indicative of the direction in which the programs director, Karen Robinson, is attempting to guide future human rights initiatives of AIUSA. Human rights education is the “vehicle through which we do our [Amnesty International’s] work and sustain our work. [And we are] moving to a more critical pedagogy where we are bringing in reflective practice and compelling action.” This is reflective of Robinson’s background in service learning education.<sup>22</sup> The long reaching goal of this is the development of a critical consciousness so that human rights education is “not just a one shot deal; instead it is how people will function in their lives.” This is a fairly new direction for the direction of AIUSA’s human rights education nationally. Prior to the creation of the formal program, the reality of the Educators’ Network was that they could lay a foundation of curricula and lesson resources that could be used when an educator wanted to present a class or two on human rights. The National Program is now working on ways that not only implement those curricula, but also expand the scope of human rights education so that it is integrated beyond the realm of one or two classes.

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<sup>22</sup> Karen Robinson has worked with AIUSA for over 7 years (with two years as Director of the Human Rights Education Program). Prior to that she directed a Center for Service Learning and Volunteerism in a prestigious university in Washington D.C. where she also earned her Master’s Degree in International Education.

The goal of AIUSA's Human Rights Education Program appears to be to move away from some the more "packagable" curricula that have been the history of human rights education in the organization prior to the formal program and direction. *Human Rights Here and Now* is perhaps the epitome of packaged curricula. The Campaign Against Torture Education Module represents the next step. It is still packagable, but is much more involved in that it takes places over several units and can include personal interaction with one of the people studied in the module. While *Human Rights Here and Now* can be obtained and implemented by just about any educator, the Module requires a greater amount of interaction with AIUSA to coordinate portions of the module. This interaction could be crucial to developing more in-depth relationships between educators and the National Program (though this has not been measured or studied). The module thus becomes a team effort of sorts that provides some guidance from the program regarding *how* it is best implemented.

### **THE EDUCATOR ACTIVIST PERSPECTIVE**

Sushanna Ellington, a teacher of Chicano-Latin American Studies, Political Literature, English courses, and variety of other course spanning the spectrum of academic topic and student ability in a high school in Northern California, is combining her work as a high school teacher with her work as a volunteer activist and educator for Amnesty

International. She is a member of the Educators Network both nationally and in AIUSA's Western Region. There she is promoting a greater implementation of the critical consciousness model, bringing her two worlds together.

I had scheduled a call with Sushanna on this particular evening. However, when several calls to the home phone I had listed failed, I had nearly lost hope. Then I tried her work number, now nearly 9 o'clock PM, and she answered. When I did finally reach her she was quite anxious to discuss the topic. Sushanna has had a very active role in the development of the concept of human rights education, especially within organizations such as Amnesty International (AI).

When I first imagined exploring the methods which AI develops for human rights education, I was reminded of packaged lesson plans that are presented to teachers to put into place on a specific day and then, but hopefully not, move onto another topic the next day. I was curious about the impact of these types of programs.

In the earliest stages of our discussion, Sushanna was not shy about debunking these methods without me even mentioning them. "The fact that it's easy to package, it's somewhat economical, it's manageable, it has boundaries and limits, it looks good on grant proposals, it satisfies state departments of education, for the UN and State Agencies that want to have training, that's one of the reasons why I think we get stuck on moving towards what's package-able." For her, education is about

critical consciousness. The “outside expert” model is designed to present information, and to her, information does not necessarily result in change.

The ideal of critical consciousness is at the very core of Sushanna’s educational pedagogy. For human rights education specifically, her experience is that this is not a discipline of its own. As will be discussed in greater detail later, she sees human rights education as something that is an integral part of the conversation regardless of the area of study. While she started with social justice issues in her curriculum, it has only been recently (within the last 10 or so years) that the language of human rights has become a defined part of her work. But more broadly, she relates human rights education to human dignity: creation of identity, sense of place, dominant cultures (vs. the Other), and how we construct meaning. This may be in part to her previous and current experience. For instance, she related an analogy of teaching in the valley and the perspective adopted by some of those she is educating. The “Valley” is an area that is rather closed in, in both physical and population geographical terms. There are specific borders; some borders so specific that redlining is in existence. Her hope is to create a different set of questions than those that have been traditionally asked.

One example of how she has gone about doing this considers Columbus. Students begin by reading Columbus’ diaries. But the questions being asked are not “traditional.” “Why would we mythologize

Columbus' discovery of America as opposed to framing it in a more realistic way?" She continues by asking, "Why would there be an investment in having a particular view of Columbus that you could build a holiday around? Or cultural pride around?" These different questions can create "panic and fear." By asking different questions, students open new doors, look through new lenses, and react differently. According to Sushanna, her students are often initially panicked and fearful. But with time and exposure, there is an increased comfort with asking new questions and wondering how they had missed seeing an issue in a particular way.

Sushanna also points out a concern about the fine line between "knowing nothing and believing nothing." Simply presenting information can be extremely daunting to the person receiving it, to the point of shutdown. Further, reviewing this information as history can often lead to cynicism and a breakdown in one's belief in a particular system or government. This cynicism can develop out of disgust for the systems failure to respond when the information is, or was, so available to react to. She presents the example of looking at reports and materials from Amnesty International about Rwanda as the turmoil unfolded. "You can have students read those materials and by the time you get the actual genocide, they are so horrified by the lack of democratic institutions to dismantle the genocide that clearly now in hindsight people can see: step one, step two, step three, etc." As part of the solution, she stresses the

need for a real comfort level in the class. “I want the students to be comfortable enough with an inquiry process that they take hold of the information and the lesson.” Prior to reaching this comfort level, the “climate of the classroom is still very hierarchical” and students do or may regard Sushanna as the holder of the information when her goal is to have them discover it.

Perhaps the most prominent underlying concept that informs Sushanna’s perspective would be the difference in types of human rights educators. Beyond those who teach human rights and those who do not, there are “two very different schools of thought.” There are those who are not the everyday human rights activist. For them, human rights education happens sporadically. It could be organized around a particular day (such as Human Rights Day (December 10<sup>th</sup>) or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), event, or lesson plan. Educators who would be defined as such, the packaged programs as mentioned above would be appealing for their immediate impact and convenience. There could be a problem in the way that our schools and teacher training are organized which encourages this type of unconnected activity. The other side of the spectrum is where Sushanna identifies herself. It is the activist educator. For the human rights activist educator, the concept of human rights education is ingrained in every action of the teacher. It is much more a way of life than a single thought about life. Further, it is based in a pedagogy of critical consciousness, as mentioned above. Sushanna

sees this as a vital part of making a “lasting impact on students” to build a “lasting relationship with the world.” This would be representative of an ideology of teaching by doing; or perhaps more accurately, teaching by teaching and doing. The impact is in the continued visibility. Human rights is not something that is “glazed over” and moved on from. There is a “problem with lessons that do not go deep enough.”

Finally, there is a lack of a current community or intense communication structures that support teachers who are attempting human rights education. While many of them may know each other, the on the ground relationships that serve as that daily support are missing from the equation. “It is a very isolating thing. I really don’t know anybody who’s literally in the trenches doing the work on a day to day basis who feels like they have a community of support in their school.”

### **THE 4TH R**

One of the common themes between the proposed directions of the National Program and the directions presented for the Western Region by educator activists such as Sushanna is the need to shift the program’s primary purpose from one of lesson provider to one that provides long-term solutions to curriculum design and implementation. Inherent in the educator activist model for human rights education, and indeed in pedagogies of critical consciousness, is the intent to bring human rights

as a component in any lesson. So curriculum planning does not become an exercise in plotting one- or two-class exercises, but to include human rights ideologies as a part of each lesson. Thus, human rights education develops beyond an activity that reviews the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and becomes a part of a literature lesson, part of a math lesson, or part of how students relate to each other in a physical education class. One example of how this concept is being applied within AIUSA's Human Rights Education Program is with its newsletter/magazine, the *4th R*.

The *4th R* is AIUSA's newsletter for the members of the Human Rights Educators Network. Started as a way to link the educators together and share curriculum ideas and solutions to problems, the *4th R* was often presented as a quarterly collection of lesson plans. However, with the first issue following the launch of the Campaign Against Torture in the Autumn of 2000, the *4th R* took a new shape. The focus of the newsletter was not a lesson plan about torture, it was a feature article. Sushanna recounts:

In the Campaign Against Torture issue, the feature article is by Claudia Bernardi who is a former POC [prisoner of conscience] who does forensic work in Latin America, she's a visual artist, and she works with disenfranchised kids in Oakland, California. So her role as a human rights activist and educator is really community based, it's multi-faceted. So we had her write the opening article

for the magazine. In the past...there would have been lesson plans on every page. [In contrast, the] feature story invites you to translate that information into something that works with your particular students.

The *4th R* has now become a dual-purpose publication. While it maintains its previous role providing new ideas for lessons, it also moves in a direction that provides the foundation for a variety of other lessons that can be developed on the articles and other information that is included. It appears that the *4th R* will maintain this particular role for a while as the dichotomy between the two approaches to human rights education continues within the network of those who utilize its tools.

## **CHALLENGES**

Since the creation of the National Program, AISUA's human rights education goals have been challenged in many ways. Obviously AIUSA faces organizational challenges (i.e. serving so many people with resources; developing those resources, developing a national direction; etc.). Through the leadership of the Director, however, these challenges take a back seat to the challenges that AIUSA faces due to the inherent differences in the two main approaches to human rights education.

The biggest challenge for the organization has been the difficulty of supporting both a content curriculum (the lesson plan approach) and an educator activist model (which seeks to effect teaching pedagogy as well).

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the two approaches is that they both would fit nicely within the definition of human rights education as provided by the United Nations (see page 3); they just do so in different ways. For instance, the first portion of the definition states that human rights education should be “training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes, which are directed towards...the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.” Both the Curriculum Development and the *4<sup>th</sup> R* are actively involved in providing information that are aimed at expanding both educators’ and students’ understanding of human rights. Linking the lessons to specific human rights documents is one way that this is achieved. These lessons are also generally structured so as to increase the level of respect both for other people and for the concept of human rights. Lessons that link events to which students already have a level of respect (either because it “hits close to home” or is simply too important to ignore) would seem to especially meet this goal. The connection between events for which a student already has respect and a specific human right or human rights doctrine could increase the respect for both.

Saying the same for the Educator Activist model is slightly more difficult. This is because there may not be an immediate or outright support for human rights doctrine. Instead, the focus of a pedagogy

such as this is to encourage the students to develop their own understandings and respect. Similarly, the action is not to distribute human rights information, but to distribute a wide variety of information and scenarios that the students must discuss together and determine for themselves. This is not to say that this approach does not satisfy this portion of the definition. It may in fact achieve it at a higher level. Again, human rights is not only something that is presented in documents and learned, it is also something that is experienced. Traditional models of information distribution can reinforce power structures that (in a postmodern analysis) both Foucault and Freire would challenge. Challenging these power structures and providing an atmosphere where all can gain empowerment through their contribution of perspective and understanding reinforces an element of freedom and respect for human rights, as the foundation of human rights is dignity.

This puts the National Program in an interesting and difficult position, as both approaches can be said to be valid human rights education. Faced with this conundrum and the real organizational limitation of resources, the response that links curricular exercises with experience seems to be a reasonable solution. To only provide lesson plans on demand would seriously undermine the deeper educational benefits of a more involved human rights education pedagogy. But certainly these services provide a valuable introduction to educators (and students) who may be beginning their exploration of human rights. It

seems that this may be a (logical first) step toward the larger goal of broader implementation of educator activist-type models for education.

Ultimately, the situation for AIUSA's Education Program reinforces the question of *how* human rights education should be conducted. Is one method better than another? Can they exist separately and still be effective? Or are both necessary in order to fully satisfy the goals of human rights education. This will be examined more closely in the closing chapter.

## **SUMMARY**

There are two views about human rights education that arise when exploring the directions that Amnesty International USA has taken in the past few years. First, there is a continuing belief, shared by some of the members of the educators network, that AIUSA's role in human rights education is one of lesson provider. Given the expertise of AI in the field of human rights, the organization is situated well to make use of the information it has to create usable lessons for those who do not share the human rights focus. This can be especially beneficial to educators who find themselves wanting to introduce students to human rights. Resources such as *Human Rights Here and Now* provide a comprehensive selection of activities that educators can present. And the resource has gained some respect on a level larger than the human rights committee: it has been approved as a textbook for social studies in the elementary

and secondary grades by the Board of Education for the state of California.

The second view could be considered a vision. It conceives human rights education as something more than a lesson; instead it is the way in which educators do their work. In this view, human rights education is something that is happening continuously in the classroom or whatever context in which it may be occurring.

The tension between the two raises questions that force us to re-examine exactly what human rights education is and what this means for how it should be presented.

## *chapter three*

### ***HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION APPROACHES: GLOBAL SOURCE EDUCATION***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Much the same way that we find human rights as a key issue across disciplines (there are human rights issues in political science, philosophy, law, nursing, even mathematics, etc.), we find that the content of an approach to human rights education can vary. Thus, human rights education can take many different forms. The previous chapter has shown a little of the progression and patterns of human rights education as it has been conceived by Amnesty International USA's education program. While we find the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the very core of the human rights issue and how human rights education is presented, human rights education has moved beyond the mere presentation of facts, details, and documents to include a more holistic approach which makes current events and critical pedagogy key elements in practice. Another organization that is approaching human rights education with these conditions in mind is Global Source Education.

In this chapter, I will explore another organization, Global Source Education, to see how they have implemented these elements into their educational framework. I will first describe the philosophy of the organization and how it intends to educate about human rights issues. Next I will provide a detailed example of how these philosophies are actualized by recounting the design and implementation of a training workshop presented to educators. This chapter will end with an analysis of some of the challenges and successes of this particular approach.

### **ORGANIZATION AND APPROACH**

While the previous chapter highlighted an organization that does human rights education as a part of their goal of human rights advocacy, this chapter focuses on an organization whose primary purpose is education. Global Source Education attempts to provide a broader perspective of social issues as they exist around the world. The goal is to express the existence of a global community, a community of which we are all members. This perspective forces the issue of nationalism that will be discussed in broader terms in Chapter Four. Essentially, there becomes a need to explore the value of boundaries that we have placed around ourselves in order to work toward the greater good of those who are within our "nation." The issues that Global Source Education is looking to bring into question are instances when the greater good of one nation becomes detrimental to the well-being of the members of another

nation. Community could be used in place of the word nation in this instance. Thus, the ideal of a global community exists where the members of the global community work for the greater good of all other members within that community. Global Source Education also attempts to bring a broader understanding of human rights and how they are integrated into these issues of globalization [must refer to this a sentence or so before here].

In order to accomplish these goals, Global Source Education provides workshops and training for educators whom feel they are often not equipped in a manner in which they can respond globalization issues. "They are frequently required or requested to do things [relating to these issues of globalization], and seldom asked, 'How can the rest of us help you accomplish what we just made a demand of you for?'" states Larry Dohrs, the Co-Director of Global Source Education. These demands include the social demands (such as teaching citizenship), character demands, the standards, and other curricular challenges. So while these demands are constantly placed upon educators, there is often a lack of attention paid to *how* the educators can go about satisfying them. The workshops and resources provided by Global Source Education are targeted at filling in some of these blanks.

As a framework, Global Source Education approaches this with a framework of "living issues and living voices." By initially determining what some of the key issues are that are facing a community (or,

optimally, the global community), Global Source Education can create themes for a workshop. They then move to find different people to cover those themes and put together a program that works the best holistically. The key to this approach is to "not shy away from controversial topics, but to explore them from multiple perspectives." These controversial topics have emotion around them. "The classroom needs emotion, otherwise it's dull!" Essentially, these programs are concerned with current events with implications for global understanding. But Global Source Education does not take a side in these issues. Instead, Global Source Education acts as a sort of mediator, or a facilitator, much the way a teacher might during a Socratic Seminar. This approach will have definite implication to how the information, which is being "presented" to educators in these workshops, is translated to the classroom.

### **IN ACTION: WTO**

In 1999, Seattle (and indeed the world) received a wake-up call about globalization. Globalization has been defined in various ways by different people. Generally however, when globalization is discussed, there is consensus that we are talking about increased "sharing" across national borders. Fans of globalization may refer to it as the process of the world sharing the best ideas and resources without restrictions. Opponents generally see globalization as an argument for exploitation of

one nation's resources by another, or as cultural and economic imperialism. Regardless of where one falls on the reaction continuum, the vast majority of people feel that globalization is inevitable. The concern is how globalization occurs. Is it imperialistic? Or can it occur in a more democratic manner?<sup>23</sup>

These questions are what brought tens of thousands of people to the streets of Seattle to confront the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in November and December 1999. The WTO is a body of trade "representatives"<sup>24</sup> from each member nation that comes together to discuss issues of international trade policy. Its decisions are binding "treaties" that often take precedent over the individual nations' laws. In response to this meeting, widespread protests, teach-ins, work walkouts, and other activities took place during the meetings. With the

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<sup>23</sup> Indeed, there are many complexities surrounding the concept of globalization. For instance, the ideology of democracy is something that many democrats (participants of a democracy, not the political party) would maintain as a goal for all of humanity. This in itself is a notion of globalization. Further, the concept that there are universal human rights, inherent in every human being around the world can also be defined as globalization. This can be approached from two directions. First, human rights are universal. They are not something that one country imposes on another. They are inalienable. They are not something that comes or goes such as investment capital. The second way to approach this is that human rights are guaranteed by international law. Every country in the world has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and most have signed either (or both) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. This is a different justification than the common exploitation of human and natural resources demonstrated by multinational corporations (especially in so-called third-world countries).

<sup>24</sup> The term "representative" is used as a title of the delegates. The representatives are not generally elected by the people however, and are usually designated by the executive body of the government whom they represent. "Trade ministers" is another term by which they are known.

streets packed with people, the inevitable happened: others wanted to know exactly what was going on, and why!

This curiosity essentially created the foundation for a program presented seven months later by Global Source Education. With the increased fervor around globalization, trade, social responsibility, and human rights, students and teachers alike were asking questions. What is globalization? Why is it good? Why is it bad? And perhaps most importantly, Why should I care? But this had not been an issue that most educators had much, if any, experience with. Inexperience, however, is not generally a valid answer to a student who has just posed these questions. Educators were recognizing their need for education, both for their own knowledge and that of their students.

In response, Global Source Education announced an institute for educators entitled, "Globalization and Social Responsibility: Bridging the Real World and the Classroom." It would take place during the July following the WTO meetings and was open to educators of all kinds. Further, educators who needed "continuing education credits" to maintain the certification had the opportunity to register for those as well.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> In order to receive continuing education credits, educators were required to "choose three curricular ideas presented at the Institute" and either implement them into their practice or share them with colleagues. A paper detailing this action was required in addition. (*Globalization and Social Responsibility: Bridging the Real World and the Classroom Course Handbook*, 1999.)

The purpose of this institute (and most workshops that are presented by Global Source Education) was to bring educators together to begin the process of understanding the perspectives and complexities surrounding the topic of globalization and social responsibility. As mentioned above, Global Source Education has a fairly consistent plan for how to introduce these topics and to create a learning environment. For this institute, there were 12 themes identified that would be explored over the six days. They were:

Understanding Globalization and Understanding Social  
Responsibility

Globalization, Social Responsibility, and the Media

The WTO, Free Trade, and Fair Trade: Looking Back, Looking  
Ahead

Who is Making Your Sneakers: Opportunity or Exploitation?

Child Labor: The Rights of the Child in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Globalization, Social Responsibility, and the Environment

Coffee: Connecting Local and Global Economies

Intellectual Property Rights and Human Rights

Interventionism: International Responsibility in a Global Society

Socially Responsible Investment to Selective Purchasing: Local  
responses to Global Issues

World Music as a Vehicle for Engaging in Global Issues: A Day at

## the WOMAD Festival

Student Participation: A New Civics in the Age of Globalization<sup>26</sup>

Much like the make-up of almost every workshop presented by Global Source Education, this weeklong institute provided three essential components that relate to the theme(s): presentations by experts/field workers, educator dialogue, and extensive resources. For this institute, two or three of the themes were explored each day by utilizing speakers/experts, articles, videos, activities, and of course, dialogue. The way that Global Source Education presents these themes is what they believe makes them truly educative. Looking at the third theme listed above (The WTO, Free Trade, and Fair Trade: Looking Back, Looking Ahead), two speakers had been invited to speak. The first was a woman who was the Director of Public Programs for the Washington Council on International Trade and who was key in inviting, organizing, and bringing the WTO meetings to Seattle. Immediately following was the Director of the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office. These two were on opposite sides of the spectrum regarding free or fair trade. The presentation of two opposing yet valid perspectives is precisely the atmosphere that Global Source Education was attempting to provide. Being the one educating does not necessarily mean that one has the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

answers. Indeed, it is often quite the opposite. Global Source Education believes that using this framework of multiple, often conflicting, perspectives increases the opportunity for students to discover their own views and how they understand circumstances and to develop their own sense of values.

This particular pattern of presentation was repeated for most of the themes. As a standard practice and when available Global Source Education utilizes presenters, especially those who are local and/or accessible. It is then encouraged or suggested that the presentation could be replicated as closely as possible in the classroom. This leads to the second element: educator dialogue.

Thursday afternoon of the week was set aside specifically for an informal discussion among the educators. While Monday through Thursday morning had been filled with panels, question and answer sessions, and other speakers for the majority of each day, Thursday afternoon became a time to synthesize what had been presented. It was also a time for each of the teachers participating in the institute to present some of their own curricular ideas. One of the other key intentions of this discussion was to attempt to develop other ways that each of the educators might use the information that they had been acquiring over the week. And while the first three days of the institute had been presented at a university in downtown Seattle, Thursday's activities took place in Global Source Education's modest office.

Surrounded by maps, books, shelves of videos, and piles of newspaper articles, the participants were exposed to the other resources that Global Source provides for educators.

Resources to replicate (and sustain) this model of education is something that Global Source Education takes great effort to provide. For this particular institute, each participant received the following:

A Course Handbook. This handbook provided scores of resource in itself. It contained several lesson plans and several case studies, articles, essays, pamphlets, and magazines that represented varying perspectives of each issue for that lesson. It also contained links to other resources that could be used in addition to those in the packet to enhance current lessons or develop new ones. This handbook also contained additional information on Global Source Education and the week's events.

A copy of each of these books:

*Levi's Children* by Karl Schoenberger

*Creating a World That Works for All* by Sharif Abdullah

*Taking Back Our Lives In the Age of Corporate Dominance* by

Ellen Schwartz and Suzanne Stoddard

*When Corporations Rule the World* by David C. Korten

*A Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of  
Globalization* by John Micklethwait and Adrian  
Wooldridge

The lessons and books are selected to echo what happens in the workshops that Global Source Education offers. Typically they provide a balanced (or a somewhat balanced) account from each side of the issue. One such lesson examines "Who is making your sneakers?" Included in the lesson are articles representing the sneaker industry and free trade perspectives as well as articles that criticize the industry for exploiting children and "developing" economies<sup>27</sup> and violating what the West and some international frameworks have presented as labor standards. It also includes how to receive a promotional/educational packet from Nike. Students can then explore the articles and other materials and begin to develop their own understanding about the issue of child labor, world economics, and globalization. Inherent in this lesson are ways that students begin to analyze media content, looking at who the authors are and factor in what their goals might be for producing the articles, promotional materials, etc...

One other important outline that is included in this packet is the "Think. Pair, Share" framework that Global Source Education promotes

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<sup>27</sup> Some would argue that these very practices actually prohibit these countries from developing their economies as it maintains their position at the bottom of the market. By paying workers extremely low salaries, they generally find it difficult to survive on their wages, let alone progress their economies to a competitive level.

to assist in presenting and understanding these different topics. This exercise has students read some introductory articles about globalization. Then the students are divided into two groups. Each group reads either supporting articles or opposing articles of whatever the topic at hand may be; here it is the WTO. Then students are paired, one from each of the larger groups, and each reports on what they read. Next, in small groups, the students come together to discuss questions that have created controversy around the issue. Finally, the students read some “Debriefing Readings” which are aimed at finding “common ground” on the issue (this may be followed with some sort of assignment).<sup>28</sup>

### **IN ACTION: BURMA**

A second example of this method of presenting human rights education can be conveyed through the most recent program. Presented on May 5, 2001, this program was entitled “The New World of Corporate Accountability with a Special Focus on the Case of UNOCAL in Burma.” This program was presented to create an educational dialogue around issues of trade, human rights, and corporate responsibility. It was an open program targeted at educators, activists, students, and other professionals. It was co-sponsored by the University of Washington Southeast Asian Center (part of the Henry L. Jackson School of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

International Studies), the University of Washington School of Law, University of Washington Department of Political Science, the Human Rights Education and Research Network, the University of Washington Center for Labor Studies, the Center for Human Rights and Justice (of the University of Washington and Seattle University Law Schools) and the Open Society Institute. The Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), which had originally pledged sponsorship, withdrew as a co-sponsor a few days before the event.

Much like the WTO, Burma<sup>29</sup> has captured the interest of many around the world due to its current political, environmental, and human rights situation. It has also been identified as (somewhat of) a case study for corporate responsibility<sup>30</sup> issues. To be brief, Burma underwent a military coup of its government in 1962. While their future was uncertain at the time, there was a belief that eventually the military would return the country to democratic rule. Following massive uprisings in 1988, elections were held in 1990. Aung San Suu Kyi, the

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<sup>29</sup> Note: The country of Burma is also known as Myanmar. Burma is the most common name attributed to the country in casual use. For more formal or official documentation (usually by the "government"), the name Myanmar is used.

<sup>30</sup> While both examples used here revolve around the issue of globalization and corporate responsibility, Global Source Education is involved in a variety of human rights education; globalization and Tibet have been two areas of focus recently however, partially due to educator demands and partially due to personal interests of its directors. Global Source Education also sees human rights education as the very core of what they are doing. "We just don't call it human rights education," states Jon Garfunkel, Co-Director of the organization. The organization holds that by presenting on issues like globalization/social responsibility and the situation in Tibet, they are able to create a context for discussion, and the values being discussed inevitably exist within a human rights arena.

leader of the democratic movement, and her party won the election and won over 80% of the seats in Burma's parliament. At the time, she was under house arrest by the military junta. Following the election, the military refused to concede power and imprisoned many associated with the democratic movement. The military continues in power as of writing. They have nationalized all business and closed all universities in the country. All trade must be conducted through the military regime. For her non-violent leadership, Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000. She remains under house arrest as of writing.<sup>31</sup>

Suu Kyi has requested that foreign investors not invest in Burma until democracy is restored. As a result of this request, activist and shareholder pressure, and other conditions<sup>32</sup>, most corporations have ceased to do business with the military regime in Burma. One corporation that has not is UNOCAL, a California based multinational oil company. UNOCAL continues its commitment to an investment in the Yadana Pipeline in southern Burma. The company maintains it is dedicated to change through investment and that its practices are actually improving the conditions within Burma. Opponents hold that

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<sup>31</sup> Suu Kyi was released from house arrest in 1995, though the military government continued to prohibit certain travels and monitored her movements. She was detained in house arrest again in September 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Other conditions include the use of forced labor and the abuses of the military and other security forces in the country (including rape, forced relocation, forced labor, and political killings).

any investment in Burma goes to support the military regime, and thus the continued situation in the country.

This particular program was presented in much the same way as example above. During registration, participants received a resource kit. This kit included a folder that included:

A program for the days events

A resource and information sheet about Burma, UNOCAL, and the Yadana Gas Pipeline Project (including a bibliography of Journals, newspaper articles, radio excerpts, and where to find all of these things online and other online resources)

A guide to reading and on-line links for information on Corporate Social Responsibility

An outline of the situation in Burma created by Global Source Education with a list of educational tools

A lesson plan entitled "Who is Accountable? A lesson plan for K-12 Classrooms"

Fifteen articles and excerpts from media sources such as *The Economist*, the *NY Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times* (London), and other domestic and

international media sources, including a statement from UNOCAL's website [the content of these articles represented the broad spectrum of opinion regarding corporate responsibility and UNOCAL's involvement in Burma]

Additional information about Global Source Education, including their newsletter.

The kit also contained a copy of *Progress & Prosperity Along the Pipeline Route: The Yadana Natural Gas Development Project*, a twenty page report published by UNOCAL's Corporate Responsibility Program. In contrast, the kit included *Total Denial Continues: Earth Rights Abuses Along the Yadana and Yetagun Pipelines In Burma*, a 180 page report by Earthrights International, an environmental rights organization co-founded by Ka Hsaw Wa, a Refugee from the Yadana Pipeline region.

The day was divided into four distinct sections:

1. Corporate Accountability, Corporate Social Responsibility, and the Intersection of International Business and Human Rights Concerns
2. UNOCAL in Burma: Where is the 'Truth'?
3. The Implications of the UNOCAL Case and Lawsuit for the International World of Corporate Accountability
4. Educator's Dialogue

The first section was presented as an introduction to corporate accountability issues in a "globalized world." The second section was presented with the multiple perspective design. There were two panels. The first included an academic researcher who had just completed a book detailing the situation inside Burma under military rule. She was accompanied by another expert on Burma (who was actually a last minute fill-in; originally, Ka Hswa Wa, a well known Burmese activist from the pipeline region and who had fled the country after being imprisoned and tortured was unable to attend due to a current legal suit also involving UNOCAL). Each was given a brief time to speak and then they entertained questions.

The second panel revealed the other side of the coin. One of the speakers was the business and economics journalist from the first example. He was chosen as he is a known supporter of free trade and is and promoter of the rights of corporations to trade without restrictions. But it was the other speaker who was uniquely qualified to speak with regard to UNOCAL's intentions and perspective. Michael Thacher, General Manger of Public Relations and Communications for UNOCAL Corporation,<sup>33</sup> addressed the attendees and responded to questions following the panelists' presentations. To have such a figure from

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<sup>33</sup> This was a rare and important event. As a major international oil producer, UNOCAL has been the target of many campaigns for human rights and environmental protection. Their presence at this event illustrated both their willingness to talk, as well as reinforcing the legitimacy of the work that Global Source Education is presenting.

UNOCAL was indicative of the importance that Global Source Education places on multiple perspectives as a requisite for education. “One voice is advocacy; many voices is education” is a popular saying at Global Source Education. This is a key concept in the way that they present human rights education. Similar to the new directions for AIUSA’s educative curricula, there is an emphasis placed on critical thinking. It is a belief that we may not have all of the answers. Further, it propounds a sense of respect for the students. As will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, human rights education is certainly not solely concerned with content; method and approach are also key considerations. If we are to teach respect, we must educate with respect. This concept (or its opposite) may be most clearly illustrated by this brief old anecdote: a teacher who announces that the class will be learning about the guarantee of free speech included in the First Amendment then publicly reprimands a student for something that he says. This also raises the question of democratic education and the role of democracy in the classroom when expecting students to fully understand what democracy is.

This presentation was followed by a brief discussion with a University of Washington Law Professor regarding the implications of a pending lawsuit against UNOCAL on the future of corporate accountability around the world. As human rights maintains a double life of moral and legal consequences, this particular presentation helped

to place the situation in terms of domestic and international human rights law.

The final segment of the day was the Educator's Dialogue. The goal of this session was to further advance the dialogue among educators who were interested in bringing this issue (and a discourse) into the classroom.<sup>34</sup> During this discussion, educators were able to suggest ways in which they might use the information and resources they had received. Global Source Education is hoping to see or develop ways to replicate, or at least simulate, the framework of the dialogue. As discussed above, Global Source Education attempts to bring in local and/or accessible panelists to provide differing first-hand perspectives. Obviously the head of Public Relations for UNOCAL will not always be present to represent their investments, but in this particular setting, teachers were able to witness this and can use this experience to support a project they do as an educator. One example would be comparing the two reports that were contained in the packet that the participants received. And again, the Think, Share, Pair design outlined above could be used with the articles and reports that were included.

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<sup>34</sup> While the "classroom" was the terminology used in this particular session, the participants represented a variety of education fora and while "classroom" in its traditional sense was the focus, the discussion was not limited to this definition.

## **CHALLENGES**

As an organization providing education on global social issues, Global Source Education has encountered a variety of challenges to realizing its goals. The first challenge that Dohrs identifies is one of categorization. "Most people aren't sure exactly what box to put us into". This has been a common problem for educators who wish to conduct human rights education. For Global Source Education, the problem also includes an economic one. Focusing on global issues makes it difficult to find funding for their workshops. Domestic funders often see them as an organization focusing on international issues while funders that advocate international programs see their efforts working with local and domestic schools and educators as too limited. This concern is heightened with a belief that "someone else is already doing that." Global Source Education themselves find defending what they are doing and how they do it again and again because other organizations (such as the World Affairs Council for example) focus on similar issues. Or, within the university setting, Dohrs has noticed an emphasis on using the resources that already exists within the university and less use of community resources such as those Global Source Education offers. Part of the response to this so far has been to challenge those assumptions.

Another challenge is the interdisciplinary nature of human rights. Because human rights is not exclusive to any field, Global Source Education needs/wants to appeal to a larger group of educators than

simply social science teachers — the group most often attracted to these types of workshops. This is one area where Global Source Education may be able to succeed in *because* of the interdisciplinary nature of human rights topics. Issues of cultural relevance, global economics, labor, and national sovereignty can appeal to economists, nurses, political scientists, social workers, artists, and so on. This has been seen in a number of workshops presented with regard to Tibet. As part of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival: Tibetan Culture Beyond the Land of Snows, Global Source Education presented a teacher's institute on the "Study of Tibet in K-12 Education at the Year 2000". The variety of people attracted to the festival provided the diverse background of those who were also interested in the global education issues.

As an independent education and professional development organization, Global Source Education will undoubtedly continue to face complexity in bringing human rights education to a varied audience. However, as it does more, it also increases its own visibility. The increase in the number of programs the organization has been able to offer each year is evidence of this; and ultimately this translates into an increase in the amount of human rights education that is taking place.

This gets to the heart of one particular question: Is human rights advocacy a necessary part of human rights education. The answer depends on one's politics and perspective concerning how one defines "advocacy." Global Source Education would not consider themselves a

human rights advocacy organization. The design of their programs is not aimed at saying "These are what human rights are, you should respect them." Instead, human rights must often stand on their own as their own perspective argument or part there of. This can actually have a positive effect. The fact that this model includes a human rights perspective could be said to strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Many education models fail to include a human rights perspective at all, and by providing one, whether it is advocating it or not, would in no small way confer that human rights was an important and relevant perspective to explore. In addition, similar to the Educator Activist, practicing models of education that promote the respect of different perspectives is a step beyond information models that may not reflect the content in the method. Global source attempts to do both, providing a wide spectrum of positions and encourages dialogue across difference.

The question of whether either content or practice can be absent and still provide effective human rights education is somewhat irrelevant here as Global Source Education does provide information and practice. They simply take an extra step to provide information from a variety of perspectives and do not openly advocate one position over another.

## **SUMMARY**

Human rights education is not always quite so obvious. It is often presented in a far less direct manner. For Global Source Education, human rights is the basis of the work they present. Educators' institutes on issue of social responsibility and cultural survival, for example, have solid foundations in human rights. Therefore, these issues can be examined in ways that introduce more perspectives than simply the human rights one because the human rights perspective is inherent in the issues. It seems virtually impossible to study the WTO or anything in Burma without considering the human rights implications. Thus, Global Source Education is able to explore the role of business in these areas as well. The result is that the human rights discussion is advanced to a new level. If these issues were simply discussed from the human rights perspective, students only receive one side of the story.<sup>35</sup> It may also fail to explore the complexities that exploring other perspectives can offer. If these issues are discussed from a position that examines the role of business (as in these examples), students are challenged to consider the varying and competing roles and responsibilities of business in these settings. Do corporations have a responsibility to labor? Should human rights violations that are supported by business practices be a

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<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that the other perspectives are anti-human rights, only that they may not include human rights as part of the discussion.

consideration for corporations or does the "bottom line" outweigh all other considerations?

To be sure, finding concrete answers to these questions is not the goal of Global Source Education's approach. The debatable nature of these questions is intended to challenge the minds of both the educator and the student. To be sure, the multiple-perspective approach embraces human rights in two ways. First, it promotes human rights as a topic worthy of public discussion. By bringing human rights both to public forums and to professional development for educators, human rights become an issue of importance in the fields of each of the participants.

Secondly, it brings issues of international concern to the table in a manner that is utterly respectful of the dignity of all sides. In many ways, it is quite similar to deliberative education models, with the exception that there may not be, or be a goal of reaching, some final decision. Instead, each participant is presented with an opportunity to gain a greater insight into the perspective of the others. It creates a place from which to move forward.

## *chapter four*

### **THE BOSNIA PROJECT**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Up until this point, this study has focused on human rights education within the United States. With this section, however, I hope to explore some of the unique aspects that surround human rights education and its presentation/techniques, purpose, and outcomes in an area outside the U.S. (though the program was presented by a U.S. citizen).

While there is certainly a notion of what human rights (and thus, human rights education) encompasses for the Western world (and especially in the U.S. where they are in many cases duplicated in constitutional law), a question remains about how these concepts, which are arguably “universal,” are translated in areas where, beyond not being taught, in many cases have been violated to extremes? What might be the results of presenting human rights education in a particular manner? To explore these questions, I will relate a story that takes place in Bosnia. It is the experience of an anthropologist who was asked to provide a one-day workshop on how to present human rights education

for a group of Muslim and Serb schoolteachers. Notably, these teachers once lived in the same town, though as a consequence of ethnic violence, and ultimately the war, they many were displaced and strong tensions remained. Hopefully, through the story, we will be able to gain some new insights into the very nature of human rights and human rights education.

In order to continue, it is important to lay out a few pieces of information and general assumptions regarding human rights. To understand how human rights might apply in a setting on the other side of the globe, I must present a basic definition for human rights and human rights education. Human rights are generally defined as those rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is generally taken on faith and belief that these rights are both universal and inalienable. While this definition can tend to arouse bit of controversy from differing cultural perspectives, two pieces of information should be noted. First, every country in the world has acknowledged the Declaration as defining human rights and has subsequently noted their intention to move toward recognition and implementation of these rights. Secondly, regardless of any individual or cooperative distaste for any particular article, the very notion of the Declaration, indeed every article, points to the recognition of human dignity and equality at the most basic

level. Thus, human rights are often seen as those rights that seek to protect human dignity.

Human rights education is of course education which seeks to promote human rights, but this is perhaps much too broad of a definition to suit many. Thus, for the purpose of understanding and analysis, the definition offered by United Nations from its publication announcing the Decade for Human Rights Education (presented in Chapter 1) will apply here. Essentially, human rights education is defined as education that seeks to build a global culture of human rights through "the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes" that respect human rights and promote understanding, equality, and dignity, enabling "all persons to participate effectively in a free society."<sup>36</sup>

## **THE TEACHERS**

The following is the story of Angela Thieman-Dino, an anthropologist and human rights activist, who was called to present a workshop on human rights education in a small town in Bosnia. All of the information regarding this story was obtained through numerous telephone and in-person interviews and various writings of Thieman-Dino.

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<sup>36</sup> United Nations. (1995) Decade of Human Rights Education: 1995-2004.

In May of 1997, an anthropologist friend of mine, Angela, was requested by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to conduct a class about human rights education. But this class was to be quite different than the scores of classes she had led before. This class was not only to take place outside of the U.S., the location of so many classes before, but it was to take place in Bosnia, a place where egregious acts of human rights abuse had occurred a short time before.

To call Bosnia a war-torn country may seem a bit trite. However, it is exactly that. The country was torn into pieces, the landscape was scarred, buildings were devastated, and neighbors were torn apart (not to mention the loss of life and dignity). This particular workshop would be one of the first efforts to bring members of the two opposing nations, Serbian and Muslim, together to discuss a topic that had seen so little recognition in the recent past.

Feeling herself half frantic and half terrified, the workshop leader boarded her plane headed for Gorazde, a small town (15,000) just Southeast of Sarajevo. Prior to the war, Gorazde had been about 50% Muslim and 50% Serbian. Now, it was probably less than 0.01% Serbian. She would be attempting to “teach human rights” in Gorazde to a multi-ethnic class of teachers from Gorazde and Foca, another small town just South down the Drina River, which was primarily Serbian.

On the morning that the one-day class was to take place, Angela was shocked to find a media circus outside the location of the class. The

newspapers, radio, and television had come out to report on this monumental event that would witness Muslims and Serbs working together for the first time in Gorazde since before the conflict. It was not long before the first challenge arose. It was reported that political officials from Foca had forbidden the Serbian teachers from attending the workshop. However, within an hour, five scared teachers arrived on a bus from Foca. This was both a surprise and a relief to Angela, the organizers of the workshop, and the other teachers (from Gorazde) who had expressed their hopefulness for some form of reconciliation with their old neighbors.

Now the task was to somehow “teach” the educators about human rights education. Angela was admittedly intimidated by the task. She felt perhaps as cynical as her students did. Further, this was an entirely different scenario than any she had attempted to teach in before. Before arriving in Gorazde, Angela had created an outline for how she envisioned the day would proceed.<sup>37</sup> She then spoke with educational leaders from the area where she was going to teach. Angela contacted a principal from the local school, the Minister of Education for Foca, some of the interpreters who would translate the workshop, the group that had invited her to come present, and other locals of the area. As she spoke

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<sup>37</sup> A copy of this outline can be found in the Appendix. It also includes the notes taken as she spoke with others involved and further considered how she wanted to present the workshop.

with these people, she was able to refine her plan for presentation and consider alternatives to the outline she had completed.

The outline explored both the conceptual side of human rights (beginning with a “what and why” for human rights and human rights education) then continued with an exploration of how these teachers might present human rights to their students. The outline itself indicates how she had hoped to make the workshop as interactive as possible. Her initial idea was to make it clear that she was a facilitator, not a teacher per se. This would hopefully open the floor to discussion. Further, she intended to create an atmosphere that would foster critical thinking on the part of the students.

One example was a “stereotyping activity” she had planned for the morning. During this exercise, the students were handed either a blue or pink Post-It notepaper. Then those who had received a pink piece of paper were to write their stereotypes of women and those who had received blue paper indicated their stereotypes of men. The papers were then posted on the wall to show how consistent everyone was in those. Angela recounts, “The idea behind this was to explore the concept of stereotypes. This was an opening to discussing genocide without outright discussing it; as one of the first steps in the processes of genocide is labeling and a pigeon-holing of people. One of the next steps is assigning value to those identities.” The discussion following the exercise would then focus on how easy it is to “get ideas” about categories of identity in

which certain people would fit; and human rights, then, is something that, regardless of these categories, everyone is entitled to, then transcend the categories of identity.

This was all part of her intention to include a level of critical thinking into the workshop and was the first example she would use to explore the universality of human rights. This however, would not happen, at least in its intended form. To the gathered teachers, they were now students, and the students in Bosnia were not really participatory agents. There was a respect for the teacher (Angela) and what she was saying. This created a sort of tension in itself since there were so many questions concerning the topic of human rights education. Their notions were: "Why were they learning about human rights? Human rights had not been powerful enough to protect them. Further, we do not have books and we meet in parking lots. How will this help us?" Added to this were the tensions of two nations that had so recently been at war with one another and who were now, officially, attempting to separate themselves from one another. One example of this was the presence of an interpreter to translate the language into the Balkan dialect of the Serbs, a dialect which most Serbs did not use or understand but which was apparently brought upon them by their political leaders as a way to separate themselves. (It should be pointed out that the translator was generally not used to any great extent). And finally, human rights was seen as something that the West *used* and

*marketed*. It provided jobs for Europeans and it did not make sense within their context to have, celebrate, and organize around something like a “Human Rights Month.” Again, it was merely a political tactic to appeal to the West by their government. Human rights had little meaning at the grassroots level.

The stereotyping exercise had not produced quite the interaction that Angela had hoped would occur. Instead, she found herself in a situation where all she could do at this point was present the information that she had and so she began to do the only thing that she could: she lectured. She recounts that she certainly did not want to, but she had little other option and so she hoped that something would come out of it.

At some point during the morning, there was a cigarette break; an important part of the Bosnian culture. Angela recounted that it is tradition in Bosnian cultures that the first person who takes out a cigarette tosses their pack onto a table for the rest of the people in the break to share. With the situation still as tense as it was, no one was certain what would happen during this break. The first cigarette was taken out and the pack hit the table. Angela believes that this was truly one of the turning points of the day. Despite the directives of separating nationalities, despite the recent atrocities, the cigarette pack was tossed on the table for all to share.

When they returned to the workshop, there was something different about the class. Angela recalls there was a more comfortable

feeling amongst all of the participants. Further, though Angela continued with her lecture, the teachers acted less with less trepidation. During the second part of the day, one by one, the participants would stand up to say something, regardless of how related or unrelated to the subject it was. But it was this, the sharing of ones thoughts, which seemed to break into new territory. One such piece involved an older man who stood up to say, “Look, the Drina [River] connects us and our children. The war has brutalized the Drina. Together we can work to save the Drina.” Another shared, “We cannot teach our students about human rights until we respect the students.” This comment had many levels including respecting the rights of students, and even more simply, providing them with books and materials. Finally, one comment that was shared just before the end of the day was “When are we going to Foca?” The Muslims nodded in agreement that they would go to Foca to continue the discussion.

I will now shift from the story to begin analyzing certain aspects of the interaction through different elements and their roles. To do this I will first look at nationalism, as the ideology of nationalism plays an interesting part in this story, and secondly, I will attempt to express the lessons that surfaced (whether explicitly or implicitly) with regard to human rights.

## NATIONALISM

Edward Said wrote in his article “Nationalism, Human Rights, and Interpretation:”

...nationalist thought, or thought that is cast in national and essentialist terms, always produces loyalty, patriotism, and the tendency to fabricate excuses and conditions for suddenly turning general liberal principles into a species of irrelevant and jejune footnote...[Further] every scheme of education known to me, whether that of victim or victimizer in the imperial contests I have been referring to, purifies the national culture in the process of indoctrinating the young.<sup>38</sup>

This presents a stark notion of nationalism. Regardless of how stark however, there is great merit in these words. Essentially, Said presents an argument that locks us, as members of any nation, into a situation where nationalism becomes the most important social and educational element in our lives. These words appear hopeless, as if there is no opportunity to transcend nationalism for a wider, more understanding perspective of the world we are a part of because it is inevitably reproduced in the education that is passed from generation to generation.

If this is true, or even if we wish to explore this concept, we are forced to ask where this nationalism is born. As Gourevitch expresses in *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, nationalism is often not conceived within

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<sup>38</sup> Said, Edward (1993). “Nationalism, Human Rights, and Interpretation.” In Barbara Johnson, ed. *Freedom and Interpretation*. Amnesty/Oxford, Lecture Series 1992, Basic Books, NY. pp. 175-206.

the people, the masses of the nation, but instead is the work of political leaders, or even that of third parties. In Rwanda, we saw an instance similar to that in India. As imperial forces pulled out of direct control of the government, they warned certain groups, often minority, within the countries to be aware that they will most likely be taken for granted or used by the other groups. These notions, furthered to the extreme by political leaders and the media, served to create vast distrust between ethnic groups that had lived beside each other in general harmony for centuries. It should be further noted that these tensions are then linked to a (sometimes) fabricated history that supports the “ancient tensions” and thus “legitimizes” actions taken against one another.

In Bosnia, we again see similar forces at work. The war between ethnic groups in Bosnia was one primarily antagonized by the elites, political leaders with control of communications and other resources. Peter Lippman, a journalist from the U.S., traveled to (and with) a commemorative ceremony in Srebrenica, Bosnia. The purpose of the ceremony was to remember and pay tribute to the Srebrenican Muslims that were killed during a massacre in the town. The ceremony was surrounded by extreme concern by the political parties of both groups.

Serb politicians in the Republika Srpska said that the commemoration was ‘politicized’ and organized with ‘dishonest intentions.’ Opposition politicians in the Federation accused Zene Srebrenica [Women of Srebrenica] and similar groups of being SDA (Muslim nationalist party of President Alija Izetbegovic)

organizations, and lashed out at the SDA for cynically manipulating the victims.<sup>39</sup>

Lippman, however, describes those organizing the event as simply “mother’s in pain” who had no interest in political parties, only in remembrance and “humane solutions.”<sup>40</sup>

We can draw a similar link to the situation of the teachers from Foca and their difficulties getting to Gorazde. Both the Muslim and Serbian teachers wanted to participate in the event, to relinquish the bonds of nationalism that dictated their distaste for one another. This is not to say that there was not distrust between the two groups, for we must recognize the atrocities that took place between them and the “truths” that each group understood.<sup>41</sup> The teachers, however, seemed to have accepted that there were going to be different versions of that truth, or had simply decided that it was time to move on, regardless of the past, or of the present state of distrust. It is difficult to say whether the reports of the “forbidding” of the teachers to come to Gorazde by Foca politicians was authentic or if it was the fabrication of either Muslim or Serbs still skeptical of the event and its intentions. Wherever the reports came from however, the actions of the teachers to meet together

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<sup>39</sup> Lippman, Peter (2000) “Series Introduction: Srebrenica – Five Years After.” <[www.advocacynet.org](http://www.advocacynet.org)>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> More about the ideas of truth, nationalism, and reconciliation can be found in: Ignatieff, Michael (1996) “Articles of Faith.” Index on Censorship. 5/96, pp. 110-122.

represent a sort of movement of transcending nationalism that sought to rebuild understanding between two groups of people.

This seems to almost be a case of failed nationalism. Said affirms that “to discuss human freedom today...is to speak about the freedom of persons of a particular nationality or ethnic or religious identity whose life is subsumed within a national territory ruled by a sovereign power.”<sup>42</sup> But the opposite appears to be happening here. It is, of course, difficult to theorize on the exact motives of any group to act against the prescribed nationalism, but regardless, there is a shift in power at the point when that step, the step which goes against what the politicians have announced and toward what the people have decided for themselves (whether that is reconciliation, understanding, equality, etc...). That in itself appears to be a lesson about human rights; and certainly a lesson that explored the elements of critical consciousness.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS LESSONS**

When the teachers took the step that transcended the nationalities prescribed to them, there was a human rights event happening. What made this move possible? In evaluating the case, it seems to be a combination of the context of the human rights education workshop together with the element of critical consciousness that empowered the

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<sup>42</sup> Said. Also, another argument would involve understanding who defines/prescribes nationalism, the politicians or the people? This could be the subject of another paper.

teachers to move beyond Serb and Muslim to talk as fathers, mothers, and common people with concerns about a polluted river.

Angela's stereotyping lesson attempted to explore some of these manipulations that occur through those with power and the media. The intent of exploring the value that one assigns to a stereotype creates a critical analysis in which the student is forced to comprehend what role stereotypes have played in community interaction and politics and the differences and dangers, especially if there is not an opportunity to analyze that understanding. And while there may not have been a feeling that the exercise had been as successful as it could have been at the time, it did present a model for how interaction could occur in the classroom. This model may have encouraged the discussions that were to happen later in the workshop.

It is difficult to say whether these moves regarding nationalism would have occurred in Gorazde had the human rights workshop not taken place. I asked Angela if she thought that the class would have occurred if the topic was not human rights. She was, understandably, unsure, but the topic of human rights education seemed to provide just the right "muzak" to encourage attendance and participation. It seems less likely that this event would have occurred if the subject matter were chemistry. There was a similar event happening in Sarajevo at about the same time around the somewhat related topic of civics. There is however, quite a different understanding of between peoples in Sarajevo,

a much larger urban location, than in Gorazde. It did seem clear to her, however, that the workshop could not have been conceived and presented by Bosnians. The distrust was still too great. Thus, there was a necessity for an international organization to promote the event.

Finally, there are several lessons to be learned about the approaches to human rights education. This particular case is somewhat of a merging of many of the ideas presented in the previous two chapters. As an introductory workshop on human rights education, the conceptual understandings of human rights were necessary as the teachers may or may not have had previous exposure to it and it was an element the coordinators of the workshop had asked Angela to include. Angela presented the "who, what, and why" of human rights and human rights education in the beginning of the workshop. But human rights must also be incorporated in the design of the education, in the "how."

What is most fascinating about his example is that, while Angela had planned for interaction and it did not happen as she had intended, the workshop eventually built its own sense of interaction, primarily because of the atmosphere that Angela had encouraged and, certainly in part due to the comfort level that occurred after the morning break. Following the break, the participants began to draw on their experiences to better understand the interactive nature of human rights education. "How can we educate about human rights if we do not respect the students; if we teach in parking lots?" asked one teacher. This reinforces

the notion that human rights education is much more than teaching about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Instead of becoming bogged down in the debates about the nature of definitions and human rights, this particular example quickly became an exercise in human dignity. It was necessary to include human rights and dignity in the design of the class. That is, to respect the rights of the students to develop and express their own views and opinions about whatever the topic at hand may be, especially if it is human rights.

## **CONCLUSION**

As illustrated by this example, human rights education can take at least three distinct paths. First, the obvious path is the one that teaches basic human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Internationally (and perhaps even domestically) however, there are concerns about the ethical nature of this approach as it attempts to define human rights for cultures that may not be willing or “suited” to accept “our” definitions. That is, it can appear as another opportunity for one group to “force” its understanding of human rights on another, without allowing the opportunity for defining human rights on their own terms.

The second path is to take a more interactive approach that builds on the experience of the participants. That is, through a process of interaction, students develop a plan of action that promotes greater

recognition and mutual respect for human rights. Once these two nations, for example, were able to recognize their shared links, they could move together toward understanding the value of human rights and what human rights means for dignity. In the case of the Muslim and Serb teachers, they were able to create a sense of their shared human dignity and responsibility though the Drina River. The river was something that tied them together and affected both groups of people. They also both had a vested interest in improving the river so that the lives of both of their children might be improved. For members of two nationalist movements to come to these realizations is an amazing step.

The third path is, of course, to include both. While this workshop may have started out down the first path, the realization of the value of the second became a means to convey the most basic concept of human rights. It fostered a situation where the two groups could come together and move forward not for the benefit of their nations, but for the benefit of their children and for human dignity.

As a human rights activist and educator, I believe in the universality of human rights. This is not to say, however, that I believe that my understanding of human rights, and the ways in which I came to that understanding, are universal. I do see, however, a need to do everything in my power to expand global understandings of human dignity and equality. My hope is that with these lessons I will be able to continue that movement in a way that not only promotes the content of

human rights, but also includes methods that respect the very nature of human rights.

## ***chapter five***

### **CONCLUSION**

The field of human rights education is one that is changing every day. During the year that I conducted the studies in this work I constantly found myself needing to reevaluate the different methods that have been presented. Every time that I opened my email I had received a new lesson, a new perspective, or a new debate about what was taking place around the world with human rights education. Still, the ideas presented here are an attempt to synthesize some of the techniques, methodologies, pedagogies, and other perspectives surrounding how human rights has been conceived and presented in formal education; and especially how it is presented to educators.

By exploring some of the texts that are currently available and exploring in depth three very different conceptualizations of human rights education, I have been able to come to some conclusions regarding the “how” of human rights education. Specifically, there are certain similarities that “show up” in each of the case studies, thus creating some sense of what has is perhaps most necessary in the process of conducting human rights education.

## **Education Environment**

The most obvious similarity between the examples is the need to create an environment in which the ideals and goals of human rights are emulated. That is, to create classroom situations which are built on respect, dignity, understanding, and equality. This theory is most apparent in the examples that seek to employ the practice of critical consciousness. Built on or around Frierean pedagogies, the intent must be to encourage and support students (and educators) in exploring topics from multiple perspectives. Further, the inclusion of critical consciousness pedagogy forces the development of the student in a direction that they have (at least some) control over. It does not, or should not, impose beliefs on the students. Instead, it presents an atmosphere in which a student can develop her/his own consciousness and understanding. This can increase the level at which students experience the occurrence of freedom and equality, thus leading to an increased sense of dignity. The main question that remains concerns how often this fails. Certainly there is some level of guidance in this process and finding the balance of guidance and free discussion and development is crucial to the development of world citizens. Again we can turn to models of democratic education to help answer this question, but there remains a lack of research to determine the real impacts if this balance is off. This must be the subject of future research.

## **The Question of Content**

One of the main questions for human rights education concerns the extent to which the conceptual content of human rights can or must play in human rights education. One concern is that you cannot present human rights information in a setting that does not reflect the information that is being presented; that this can essentially distract students and ultimately create cynicism toward their understanding of human rights. This has been one criticism of packaged curricula which may often neglect the process in which the material is presented. The question, then, becomes whether or not a methodology that creates a setting that is consistent with human rights ideology can be considered human rights education if it lacks the human rights content? The answer, of course, is “it depends.”

It depends on the particular setting and knowledge base of those who are participating. For instance, in the work that Global Source is conducting, there is not always a portion of the workshop that presents the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Instead, human rights is used either as supportive evidence to show that violations are occurring, or it is the sole basis for a certain perspective, or the concepts of human rights are perceived to be “understood” (i.e. torture is wrong, slavery is wrong, respect for dignity is right, equality is right). In these instances, there is no outright presentation or study of what human rights are or where they came from, only that they exist or that the underlying

concepts exist. But it is seemingly important at some level to ensure that students do know and understand where these concepts have come from and to include that there are international standards for human rights. Thus, it seems essential that the principles of human rights must be presented at some level but it is also apparent that not all human rights education must focus primarily on human rights content.

Further, as shown in the Bosnia case study, when including a content module, there must be a consideration for different cultural contexts (especially regarding education and human rights). This recognition of context does not undermine the universality of human rights ideals, however. The ideals remain the same, but their significance may vary under different social conditions. In the Bosnia example, the context played the most important role in achieving what happened. But certainly the human rights component of that context was crucial. However, as mentioned above, in this situation the human rights focus of the workshop created a situation in which issues such as the dignity of the students could be discussed. The content was not the most important thing that these teachers took away from the workshop. Instead, it was a catalyst for the beginnings of reconciliation and an understanding of dignity of each other, learned through shared experiences and links such as the Drina River, that achieved this end. Similar to the case mentioned in Chapter 2, this was an opportunity for these two groups to look at each other as humans, as neighbors, as

parents, as teachers, not as nationalities of Muslim or Serb. The question remains, unanswerable, of whether the Bosnian situation could have been avoided if human rights education (of both content and form) had occurred as a standard part of their education.

### **Challenges**

While the rate at which human rights education is happening, or at least being discussed, is increasing, and while similarities are appearing across these various methods of human rights education, challenges remain. Perhaps the most common challenges are those that are tests of support. In Amnesty International USA, there are tensions regarding the different directions the National Program is or could be heading. There still is still a need for a refined system of support for teachers who wish to present human rights education, especially if through a critical consciousness lens (particularly at the local level). While there is a network and a program, these two elements find it difficult to address the mounting needs of educators across the country. Global Source Education faces similar challenges in easily finding support for many of the programs that they do, with potential supporter or “investors” feeling that if at least one other organization is presenting similar programs then there is no need for a second, a third, a fourth, etc.

Further, as was brought up in Bosnia (as well as in many of our schools here in the United States), providing an environment that respects the dignity of students and provides them with the resources they need to develop as “world” citizens remains a challenge. Can human rights education take place if students do not have proper texts? If they are not challenged to develop their own opinions? If they do not have access to a free media? And these are certainly not challenges unique to Bosnia alone; we face them here in the United States and they appear in any country that has a poorer or repressed group of people. These elements cut to the very heart of human rights ideals: dignity and equality.

Finally, human rights education faces the challenge of where it is to be situated, if at all. While it is most often couched in Social Science, Law, and Civics education, it certainly has relevance in many, if not all, other disciplines. And, as Bruce Kochis, Director of the University of Washington’s Human Rights Education and Research Network, points out, “It would be the death of human rights education if it were nailed to one academic structure, or if it became its own discipline.”<sup>43</sup> As its own discipline, human rights education would often be ejected from other disciplines citing the “human rights discipline” as the area to discuss human rights. Similarly, if it were only a part of, say, Political Science, it may never, or rarely, be explored from various other perspectives that are

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<sup>43</sup> (B. Kochis. Various personal interviews. 2001.)

seriously implicated in the human rights discussion. And if the hope is that human rights education is something that each member of society is presented with, it must be an overreaching, interdisciplinary component of education.

### **Implications**

This paper has attempted to provide a brief survey of a variety of conceptualizations and presentations of human rights education. With the lack of current literature regarding human rights education the survey can hopefully be used as a guide to those interested in exploring or presenting human rights education. Educators can use this to examine how different organizations have presented human rights in a variety of settings and the roles that environment and content have played in those presentations. Further, it is intended to present the challenges that educators are currently facing in their attempts to present human rights education.

This work also creates a foundation from which future research can be developed. While seeking to explore questions about concepts and presentations of human rights education, this work raises new questions about how successful each of these can be, what their limits are, and how they can be practically expanded.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the interesting and compelling nature of these three case studies and the current literature, the topic of human rights education remains largely unexplored. These three cases give some insight into how different organizations, with different goals, conceive of and implement human rights into their educative purposes. Yet, to say the least, we have barely scratched the surface of the issue of human rights education. This paper specifically falls short exploring the aspect of media literacy, the role of human rights education in standards testing, and the myth of human rights and human rights education as a Western ideology.

There is something that can be learned here, however. Primarily, this concerns the issue of content and experiential elements of human rights education. If we rely too heavily on the content of human rights education we (may) fail to engage in dialogue that questions how and/or why we approach or care about human rights. This can result in both disinterest and cynicism. The critical consciousness model opens even the human rights subject to analysis so that students may not only learn *about* human rights, but they have a human rights *experience*, engaging in a conversation that encourages and supports understanding, equality, and dignity. That is truly human rights education.

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