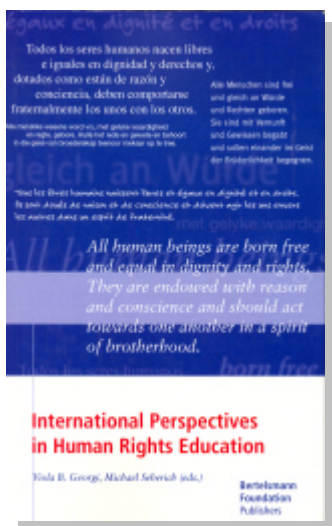


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# Preface

*Marga Pröhl*

"Only the educated are free."

*Epictetus (55-135)*

What has been true in ancient times is still a fact today. Understanding gravity, being able to count the trees on the side of the road, researching the history of a city or reading an exciting novel are skills that open up new worlds to individuals. Knowing about Physics, Mathematics, History, Literature and other subjects is therefore one way to secure freedom via education.

In that sense, learning about human rights is an especially important task. It is crucial in times when, on the one hand, many people do not pay attention to public affairs anymore and engage only in self-interested pursuits and, on the other hand, people all around the world are confronted with political extremism, religious fundamentalism and poverty.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. It defines a basic set of rights that applies to every human being. Educating people about its content is essential to enforce these rights. Therefore, human rights education has grown in importance for the educational sector over the years. In the 1990s the United Nations recognized this by proclaiming a United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). This initiative has just been extended for another decade.

The Bertelsmann - Foundation has initiated several projects in the field of Democracy and Tolerance Education on the national level.

Each time these projects reached out to international partners, Human Rights were identified as a common denominator for collaboration. This especially became evident in the International Network Education for Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance. This collection of essays on human rights education is the result of a two-year cooperation by the members of the Network. Founded in 1998 by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Center for Applied Policy Research at the Ludwig-MaximiliansUniversity, Munich, the Network has developed intensive working ties. It consists of ten non-governmental organizations, various research institutions and individuals committed to democracy, human rights and tolerance education.

This reader presents an opportunity to learn from each other. The Bertelsmann Foundation has always pursued this approach in its projects. It allows an insight into the state of human rights education in several countries and some of the issues that are discussed within the human rights education community. I hope that this publication will also be a guide for the reader to identify interesting best practices. It should also be food for thought concerning the roads human rights education could take in the next decade.

My special thanks go to Viola Georgi and Michael Seberich as editors of this volume of essays, who tirelessly dedicated their energy and dedication to both the network and its publication. I also want thank all the authors of this publication-your contribution is highly appreciated as part of an international learning experience. This book is another result of over five years of cooperation within the International Network Education for Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance. My thanks go to all the Network members that have been involved in this project. Their experience, knowledge and enthusiasm have always been the founding pillars of this work. Overall, it is my hope that both researchers and practitioners alike find this publication helpful to their work.

# Introduction

*Viola B. Georgi, Michael Seberich*

This compendium of articles on human rights education is the result of the work of the network "Education for Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance." Before we introduce you to the theme of this survey, we would like to briefly outline the network initiative, which provided the framework for this publication.

## **The network initiative**

The International Network "Education for Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance" was founded in 1998 by the Bertelsmann Foundation and is conducted in cooperation with the Center for Applied Policy Research (C.A.P) at the University of Munich. The C.A.P is one of the most experienced institutes in tolerance education in Germany. Since the late 1980s, it has been working as an official consultation center for the Ministry of Youth of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Bertelsmann Foundation has cooperated with the CA.P in this field for more than eight years now. This work is conducted on a national and international level.

The network consists of ten NGOs, academics and practitioners from various countries in Western and Eastern Europe, Israel, the Philippines, South Africa and the U.S. The aim of the network is to bring together an international expert group and provide it with an infrastructure for working together. The main focus of the network is the exchange of ideas and experience, the development of projects and research on issues of tolerance education.

The network shows that in many countries around the globe, organizations or initiatives (mostly NGOs) exist, who have developed interesting and original approaches towards fostering tolerance, democracy and human rights. In addition, these organizations have created successful training programs that are often rooted in their specific cultural backgrounds. They do not only raise our awareness for certain target groups (i. e., groups in conflict) but also reflect the specific history and philosophy of their societal genesis. Many of these initiatives are not known outside of the region where they implement their educational programs. Therefore the network initiative encourages its members to exchange their concepts, programs, approaches and methods. Participants gain new and valuable perspectives and ideas.

The partner NGOs of the network are:

- Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace, Israel
- Anti-Defamation League (ADL), USA
- Benigno Aquino Foundation, Philippines
- Center for Applied Policy Research (CA.P), Germany
- Center for the Study of Conflict, Northern Ireland
- Education for Democracy Foundation, Poland
- International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), Netherlands
- Novamerica, Brazil
- Participa, Chile
- U Managing Conflict (UMAC), South Africa

Besides these members (core-participants), the network cooperates with external experts and associated institutions such as: Center for Conflict Resolution, Capetown, South Africa; Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France; Human Rights Education Associates, Boston, USA; Human Rights Resource Center, Minnesota, USA; Ludwig Boltzmann Institut for Human Rights, Vienna, Austria; Asian Resource Center for Human Rights, Bangkok, Thailand; European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria and several UNESCO-Chairs for Human Rights Education.

## **Objectives**

The International Network "Education for Democracy, Human Rights, and Tolerance" aims at identifying the best educational practices, programs, concepts and models available. These ideas and materials should not only be exchanged within the network but also become known to a greater public. Some of the main goals of the network initiative are:

- Gathering and bringing together world-wide experience and ideas
- Searching for the best educational practices
- Developing new and creative solutions in tolerance education
- Communicating and distributing new developments
- Implementing network results into the work of participating organizations and their educational systems
- Providing a platform for intercultural learning

### **How does the network operate?**

The network consists of different working groups that meet several times a year to pursue joint projects. The character of the meetings is determined by workshops that are each hosted and organized by a different member, based on the respective individual, professional and institutional competencies. Besides the workshops, there are intercultural panels, field trips and expert inputs for formal and informal exchange on issues relevant to tolerance, democracy and human rights education. The meetings are held in different countries and are hosted by NGOs participating in the network. Thus the representatives of the NGOs get to know each other within their regional contexts. Cooperation and commitment to the Sisyphus task of "cultivating humanity" through education help to overcome cultural and linguistic borders without losing the sensitivity for diversity within the microcosm of the network.

The alternating roles of host or guest and the exposure to different cultures provide the ground for intercultural learning and even more important for successful cooperation-helps to build trustful relationships between the participants.



### **The topic of human rights education in the network and beyond**

Human rights education is one of the central concerns of the network. Most network partners pursue strategies of implementing human rights as core values in their educational programs and curricula. Several workshops aiming at the exchange of "best practice" and an expert conference on human rights education in 2002 and 2003 laid the basis for this publication, which gathers some of the main contributions from different country perspectives.

When discussing the history, the evolution and the present situation of human rights and human rights education, we deal in many respects with visions and visionaries. After all, human rights education is about human development, social change and social transformation. The visions of international human rights advocates and human rights educators-many of them non-governmental organizations-without a doubt have had a very profound impact across the globe as this publication illustrates. Visionaries in different times and places have continued to pursue the dream of a world in which all people enjoy certain basic and inherent rights simply by virtue of being human. Last but not least these actors share the conviction that education in Human Rights can contribute to the reduction of human rights violations and prevent human rights abuses. Education plays a key role in the promotion of human rights. There are three main dimensions addressed by human rights education:

- Knowledge: provision of information about human rights and mechanisms for their protection
- Values, beliefs and attitudes: promotion of a human rights culture through the development of values, beliefs and attitudes which uphold human rights
- Action: encouragement to take action to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses (see Guidelines 1997)

Human rights education in fact is a very recent phenomenon that has only gained significance within the last decade, even though the theme was first brought up in 1974 by the UNO. However, it seems that the current situation to develop and implement human rights education is in many ways a unique one—at least if we follow the argument in Paul G. Lauren's book "The Evolution of International Human Rights." He points out:

"Never before in history has there been what is now described as such a 'universal culture of human rights' in which the rights of so many men, women, and children are given so much attention in so many diverse places under the watchful eyes of the world and in which the international community refers to human rights as the common language of humanity." (Lauren 1998: 4) Understanding and defining human rights as the common language of humanity is however a complex, sometimes problematic and often long process, which starts with the simple recognition of human rights and ends with implementing a definition of Human Rights through institutions. All around the globe countries have pursued this common ideal of establishing a culture of human rights in their own way and at their own pace, unfortunately not always with success and often with severe backlashes.

The great diversity of national histories, political systems and cultural backgrounds shows that the idea of human rights has developed more quickly in some countries than in others and that it has thrived on many different grounds. And yet, in spite of different starting points and strategies, the routes taken all lead to similar destinations as this publication with examples from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas shows.

We would also like to bring attention to one of the major documents human rights education is based on. In 1995, the United Nations announced the Decade for Human Rights Education.

In doing so, they defined human rights education 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 at five aspects:

- Strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity
- Promotion of understanding, tolerance, respect, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups
- Enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society
- Furthering of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

It seemed to be about time for us-the International Network "Education for Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance"-to look back and examine how these principles on paper were translated into educational practice. Because even though these objectives seem quite self-evident and clear, how they are being addressed educationally by the various actors in different countries and regions varies to a great extent. This publication therefore intends to give a survey on different approaches to human rights education as different needs in different parts of the world have to be met.

### **The articles of this publication**

The first set of articles consists of case studies that examine theory and practice of human rights education in specific regions and countries. In her article "Selected Models of Human Rights Education in Asia," Zenaida Reyes not only gives a solid overview of NGOs and government initiatives in Asia (Cambodia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, Korea, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh) that concentrate on human rights and human rights education, but also critically describes the state of the art of human rights education in the formal school sector of these countries. It becomes clear that "good practice" is based on a cooperation of governmental on non-governmental actors in the field of human rights.

The contribution of Michelle Parlevliet focuses on human rights education in South Africa with particular reference to conflict resolution. She sketches the historical context and current background of conflict resolution that has become a major approach and instrument to deal with the experience of Apartheid and the problems that derive from the massive transformation process that the South African society has undergone. Parlevliet looks at the intersections and interdependences of conflict resolution and human rights education, underlining how fruitful it is to integrate the methodology of conflict resolution into the didactics of human rights education. Her analysis builds on lessons learned from the various projects carried out by the Center for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town.

Vera Maria Candau from Brazil reminds us of the "Challenges of Human Rights Education in South America." She outlines the social, political and often ideological context in which human rights education has emerged on the South American continent. She identifies central actors, initiatives and NGOs in the field of human rights education. At the same time, she critically reviews the effects of neo-liberal thinking and neo-liberal economic structures on human rights education and education in general. Candau pinpoints major challenges that stem from this new situation in which human rights education appears to be losing the potential of becoming a tool für social transformation in Latin America as was prevalent in the 1980s.

The last case study does not cover a whole continent but a country, namely Germany. The article by Nils Rosemann analyses the state of human rights education in Germany. Looking at the civil service, the judiciary, the education system and NGOs, he shows a variety of approaches with regard to human rights education.

The study does not leave out the white spots that exist in this educational field in Germany. Overall, the paper shows the interdependence of human rights education in Germany with issues of civic education such as tolerance and democracy education.

Part two of the publication looks at the more general and theoretical aspects of human rights education. Nancy Flowers asks the question of how to define human rights education. She illustrates the problem of conflicting definitions on the basis of three main actors within the field of human rights education: the governmental bodies, the non-governmental organizations and the academics. Flowers shows the difficulty educators have in working with such a variety of approaches and pleads for a constructive dialogue between the different sectors concerned with human rights and human rights education. For Flowers, this is the only way to acknowledge the ever changing and creative potential of human rights education.

Felisa Tibbitts und Frank Elbers help us to understand the opportunities and limits of "Using Information Technologies for Human Rights Education." The authors give an overview of technologies that are widely used within the human rights community, which could be of interest to anyone concerned with the dissemination and exchange of information on human rights education. The article shows how information technology can enhance not only the capacity of human rights organizations, but also the quality and implementation of human rights education itself.

Susanne Ulrich and Florian Wenzel address one of the most prevalent issues in human rights education: evaluation. Their concept of "Participative Evaluation" suggests a lasting cooperation between all the different parties, including evaluators, in human rights education projects. The authors promote an idea of evaluation that is very much rooted in the basic values of human rights education. Respect, equality and participation can change the whole meaning of evaluation for everybody involved. Deriving from their experience in tolerance education, the authors' model wants to turn evaluation into an effective, democratic and enriching learning opportunity.

This collection of essays ends with "What Human Rights Education Is All About-15 Theses" by Karl-Peter Fritzsche. The list begins with his observation that human rights education itself must be a human right, and ends with his belief that human rights education must always be critical. The statements can be understood as a summary of the current situation of human rights education. At the same time, they are comments on what needs to be done to enhance human rights education in the future.

The contributions by the diverse authors stress that global perspectives on Human Rights have to be linked to the diversity of local traditions and cultures as well as individual and community commitment, which represent the pillars on which a universal culture of human rights can be built. The former director of the Danish Center for Human Rights Anette Fay Jacobson states:

"[...] the most effective Human Rights Education Material must be rooted in local conditions and history. It should be based on local traditions, common knowledge and culture, including minority cultures. It should preferably be built upon positive as well as conflictual examples from national and local communities, and draw upon cultural heritage, including literature and art, and historical and/social conflicts of the given country."

(Jacobson 1999: 2)

The quote underlines how deeply rooted Human Rights are in politics, personal relationships, arts and culture and must therefore not simply be regarded as a legal issue, but also as a matter of relations in everyday life.

In that very sense we hope that this contribution with examples of "best practices" and experiences from diverse countries will encourage practitioners and activists all over the globe to turn as many "small places" as possible into places where Human Rights are being cultivated and experienced daily.