Human rights education programs in the spectrum of international standards

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explain the Human Rights Education (HRE) resources currently employed in educational system established around the world. As its starting point, this thesis examines the principles, methods and norms stated in the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (HRET) and the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE).

These manuals are equally divided into formal and non-formal education and were issued by the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe (CoE). The primary target group of these manuals are students of secondary school education, who are between 7 and 12 years old. There is also a secondary target group, which includes teachers and educators of HRE. Thus, the strategies and training of this target group is also analysed in the thesis.

The themes addressed in the HRET and the WPHRE contain a series of norms and principles that together provide the basis of HRE. These themes explain with detail concepts such as school/classroom environment, knowledge/information of HRE, HRE skills, discipline and evaluation of the human rights teaching, and activities.

The analysis of the four HRE manuals follows the different themes in the WPHRE and compares them to the way in which they were used when the four manuals were first created, asking whether the expectations of the HRE principles and the norms of the themes are fulfilled by these manuals and how they deal with the WPHRE themes in their application.
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<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations</th>
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<td>VDPA</td>
<td>Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action</td>
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<td>WPHRE</td>
<td>Word Programme for Human Rights Education</td>
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3. IDENTITY (MAKING CHOICES): THIS UNIT TRIES TO APPROACH STUDENTS’ MOST INTIMATE EXPERIENCES AND WISHES. THEREFORE, IT IS MOSTLY BASED ON MAKING THE STUDENTS CHOOSE BY PLACING THEM IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS/DECISIONS. ONCE THE STUDENTS REALIZE THEIR CHOICES, DEPENDING ON THE DECISIONS MADE BY EACH OF THEM, THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IS REFLECTED. THEN THE UNIT FOCUSES ON THE CHOICES WITH MAJOR INFLUENCE IN THEIR LIVES AND IDENTITIES. THE NEXT STEP IS BASED ON FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE OF THE STUDENTS BY CONSIDERING THREE QUESTIONS THAT SOMEHOW INFLUENCE EVERY INDIVIDUAL’S LIFE, SUCH AS THEIR JOB, WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE IN A RELATIONSHIP, MAKING A FAMILY, ETC.

4. RESPONSIBILITY (TAKING RESPONSIBILITY): SINCE LIBERTY INVOLVES RESPONSIBILITY, THE PURPOSE OF THIS UNIT IS TO HELP STUDENTS ACQUIRE SKILLS (E.G. DEFINE PRIORITIES, UNDERSTAND DILEMMAS, ETC.) AND TRAIN THEM TO MAKE INFORMED AND APPROPRIATE DECISIONS.

5. DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM (HOW DO WE AGREE ON THE COMMON GOOD?): SINCE IT IS NOT EASY TO IDENTIFY WHAT THE COMMON GOOD IS, THE NEED TO PUBLICALLY DISCUSS THIS TOPIC IS FUNDAMENTAL. PLURALISM IS GOOD, BUT IT IS AN ISSUE THAT NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH. THIS INCLUDES MAKING ONESELF HEARD IN ORDER TO SPREAD IDEAS OR INTERESTS, NEGOTIATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD AND ACCEPT THE BASIC VALUES OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION, NON-VIOLENCE, WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE AND THE RULE OF THE MAJORITY.

1. CONFLICT (THE FISHING CONFLICT): THE MAIN FOCUS IS THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMON RESOURCES. THE FISHING GAME IS THE KEY TASK OF THIS UNIT, WHICH PRESENTS THE STUDENTS WITH A PROBLEM TO WHICH THEY MUST FIND A SOLUTION. AFTERWARDS, THERE IS REFLECTION ON THE STUDENTS’ FAILURES AND SUCCESSES.
6. RULES AND LAW (WHAT RULES SERVE US BEST?): THIS UNIT IS BASED ON THE PREVIOUS ONE, WHICH IS WHY IT FOCUSES ON THE SAME MATTER AND EMPLOYS THE SAME TASK. THE PROBLEM PRESENTED IN THIS UNIT IS HOW FISHERMEN SHOULD SUSTAINABLY MANAGE THEIR COMMON RESOURCE. BY WHAT RULES CAN FISHERMEN BE ENCOURAGED OR CONTROLLED TO SUPPORT THE GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE FISHING?.......................................................................................................................... 10

7. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (THE POLICY CYCLE MODEL): IN THIS UNIT, STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO MAKE POLITICAL DECISIONS AND HOW TO TAKE PART IN DEMOCRACY, INCLUDING WHAT PROBLEMS SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM. THE POLICY CYCLE MODEL IS A MAP THAT GIVES CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY..............................10

8. EQUALITY (MAJORITY RULE-A FAIR RULE?): THIS UNIT DEALS WITH THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIETY AND THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY ISSUE. IT IS BASED ON STUDYING A CASE STORY TO MAKE STUDENTS HAVE A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF THESE ISSUES IN SOCIETY.......10

1. LIBERTY (DEBATING IN PUBLIC): PEOPLE EXERCISE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS TO FREE OPINION AND EXPRESSION, THUS, THIS UNIT FOCUSES ON SPEAKING IN PUBLIC. AS THIS IS ONE WAY OF PRACTISING THOSE RIGHTS, THE UNIT IS BASED ON TWO DEBATES MADE BY STUDENTS AND A CHAIRPERSON. THE STUDENTS THAT DO NOT TAKE PART IN THE DEBATE DECIDE AT THE END WHICH PARTY CONVINCED THEM MOST. AT THE END, ONE SIDE WINS WITH A MAJORITY OF SUPPORTERS.................................................................................................................. 10

2. MEDIA (TAKING PART IN DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE MEDIA): THE GOAL OF THIS UNIT IS TO ACQUIRE SKILLS IN MEDIA LITERACY. THE ACTIVITIES ARE AIMED AT PREPARING STUDENTS TO BE AWARE OF THEIR ROLE AS GATEKEEPERS, AND HOW TO RESPOND TO ISSUES BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE MEDIA.................................................................................................................. 10

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Human rights knowledge and skills are mainly born from education. Education is the fundamental foundation of human rights; therefore, it is a right that should be granted to everyone without distinction.\(^1\)

Human rights education (HRE) and training consists of awareness raising, learning

\(^1\) Art. 1 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. "Everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training".
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