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Editors' Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

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It gives us great pleasure to introduce the first issue of the *International Journal of Human Rights Education* (IJHRE) as its founding editors. Many of us involved with this journal—editors and editorial board

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members—have seen the field of human rights education evolve from a few individuals meeting and sharing photocopies of materials (before the advent of the internet era) to a global movement with numerous organizations, conferences, networks, publications, courses and degree programs, among other efforts. The University of San Francisco boasts the first Masters of Arts program and doctoral concentration in human rights education in the United States—advocated for, developed, and led by faculty members Susan Katz, Shabnam Koirala-Azad, Emma Fuentes, and Monisha Bajaj—and we felt it an opportune moment to advance knowledge production and dissemination in the field with the creation of the *International Journal of Human Rights Education*. This peer-reviewed, open-access scholarly journal emerges from many discussions over the years about the need for a publishing venue that—like the dynamic field of human rights education itself—transcends the binaries of scholars/practitioners and global North/South. We see IJHRE as a place where debates, ideas, and lessons from engaged scholarship and practice can be nurtured and shared freely across the globe without the usual steep paywalls of academic journals.

History of Human Rights Education

The roots of human rights education can be traced back centuries to efforts to educate for freedom, equity, and dignity in distinct global contexts. In its modern incarnation, human rights education (HRE) as a field utilizes teaching and learning processes to educate *about* basic rights and *for* the broadening of respect for the rights and freedoms of all people(s). Since the founding of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) after World War II, HRE has been held out as an ideal to ensure that formal, non-formal, and informal education settings can become sites of promise and equity rather than breeding grounds for hate and violence. Indeed, the drafters of the UDHR noted how schooling had been utilized to indoctrinate youth in the then-recently defeated Nazi regime and in other authoritarian states, thus insisting on part two of Article 26 of the UDHR that states that, “Education shall

be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Since the adoption of the UDHR in 1948, and with the corresponding decolonization of the majority of the nations of the global South in the ensuing decades, most nations have struggled to ensure basic access to education (part one of Article 26), much less achieve education for human rights (part two of Article 26). Community-based efforts have long led the way in human rights education often in opposition to authoritarian regimes, such as in Latin America, or as part of community empowerment efforts where consciousness-raising forms an important foundation for political organizing (Freire, 1970). The 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna—that immediately followed the end of the Cold War—was a watershed moment for HRE. The Vienna Declaration stated that “human rights education, training and public information is essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.” The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action resulting from the conference had an extensive subsection on human rights education and called for a UN Decade for Human Rights Education, which subsequently lasted from 1995 to 2004 and which brought policymakers, government officials, activists, and educators into more sustained conversation.¹

As the UN Decade for Human Rights Education came to a close, the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education was established in 2005, housed within the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET), further highlighting the importance of HRE at the level of national policy and reform. As defined by the United Nations:

¹ Parts of this piece draw from Bajaj, Monisha. (2016). Introduction. In M. Bajaj (Ed.) *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* (pp. 1-18). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Human rights education can be defined as education, training and information aiming at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and molding of attitudes directed to:

- (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 and democratic society governed by the rule of law;
- (e) The building and maintenance of peace;
- (f) The promotion of people-centered sustainable development and social justice.

For purposes of definition, human rights education can take a variety of forms. In formal schooling, human rights can be integrated into textbooks or other subjects such as civics or social studies. In some places, direct instruction in a “human rights” class is mandated or offered as an elective in public or private schools at the secondary level. In universities, undergraduate, and graduate programs in human rights, and increasingly in human rights education, are emerging and becoming institutionalized. More commonly, optional programs—either during the school day, after school through clubs or co-curricular programs, or through summer camps and other programs—offer students exposure to human rights. In professional settings across the globe, human rights training—either optional or required, ad hoc, or sustained—has been offered for judges, police officers, military personnel, health workers, and teachers, among others. Additionally, non-formal HRE is flourishing in community-based settings worldwide. Further, the types of rights brought into focus (civil, political, social, economic, cultural, or a cross-section of equality rights for a specific group) depends on the context and the approach. Thus, human

rights education varies in content, approach, scope, intensity, depth, and availability.

Drawing on the promise of grassroots-level efforts to impact awareness about human rights, Amnesty International defines human rights education as follows:

Human rights education is a deliberate, participatory practice aimed at empowering individuals, groups, and communities through fostering knowledge, skills, and attitudes consistent with internationally recognized principles. . . . Its goal is to build a culture of respect for and action in the defense and promotion of human rights for all. (Amnesty International 2015)

The Amnesty International definition places greater responsibility on human rights learners becoming activists for human rights through the process of HRE by sharing information with others and actively working to defend human rights. Both social change as an outcome, and learners becoming agents of this process of claiming their own rights and defending others' rights, are central to this definition. Whether in classrooms, after-school settings, community-based workshops, museums, or over a meal with family, human rights education can be a force for orienting learning towards global and cosmopolitan notions of global citizenship, solidarity across borders and differences, and a shared obligation to struggle against injustices whether near or far.

Regardless of definition, orientation, or approach, this journal offers a space for open discussion, debate, and sharing of ideas—old, new, and emerging—to push the field of human rights education forward.

Journal Overview and Content

The *International Journal of Human Rights Education* is an independent, double-blind, peer-reviewed, open-access, online journal dedicated to the examination of the theory, research, and practice central to the field of human rights education. The aim in launching this journal is to serve as a central location for critical thought in the field and to energize

new efforts in research and praxis. The journal is interdisciplinary and international in scope. We are committed to open-access and online diffusion of leading research in the field in order to democratize access to scholarship. We are also deeply committed to linking theory to praxis as well as the emergence of new theories from grounded engagements in the field. The core audience of the journal is comprised of: human rights educators; scholars, students, and practitioners of human rights education and related forms of education; human rights and social justice advocates; and policy makers.

Issues of IJHRE are comprised of original articles presenting empirical (rooted in any discipline and utilizing any methodologies), philosophical perspectives, or new insights from placing fields and literatures in conversation; reviews of new books, reports, or curricula; notes from the field from organizations, researchers, conferences, or events; and artwork considered for journal covers that fosters discussions on the themes of human rights education in diverse educational, sociopolitical, and cultural settings.²

The editors welcome well-conceived and well-written articles in English that advance our understanding and knowledge of human rights education and related issues. Topics of particular interest include, but are not limited to, human rights education in relation to issues of peace & conflict; global citizenship; social justice education; community-based empowerment efforts; solidarity with marginalized groups; decolonizing education; anti-oppressive education; critical pedagogy; and human rights activism.

In This Issue

For this inaugural journal issue, we invited five original articles from eminent scholars, and two “Notes from the Field” pieces featuring members of our esteemed editorial board as well as two book reviews. The articles cover topics ranging from updating the categorization of human rights edu-

² In our planning for the *International Journal of Human Rights Education*, we drew inspiration from the *Journal on Education in Emergencies* that similarly features articles, fieldnotes and book reviews in an open-access format.

cation practices, the application of HRE beyond a rhetorical understanding of rights, the navigation of potentially transformative pedagogies, understanding the place of Indigenous Rights Education (IRE) alongside HRE; and self-reflection in assessing the evolution of one's own work in the field through the question "Does HRE exist?"

The inaugural journal, appropriately, begins with a retrospective on the field. In her article, *Revisiting 'Emerging Models of Human Rights Education,'* Felisa Tibbitts looks back on the three models for categorizing human rights education practice she offered in 2002: Values and Awareness, Accountability, and Transformation. She suggests updates to these models based on the ensuing 14 years of scholarship, and offers stronger association of the categorizations with socialization, professional development, and activism.

In his paper on the range of pedagogical orientations present in human rights education, Michalinos Zembylas seeks to understand what the pedagogical demands on human rights educators and learners would be if they were to adopt what he calls "critical sentimentality." He encourages us imagine how HRE can lend itself to discouraging cheap or empty sentimentality and instead cultivates action-oriented empathy.

How might human rights education go beyond the symbolism and rhetoric of rights and, instead, be understood in a way that critically considers persistent inequality? This is the question that Carol Anne Spreen, Chrissie Monaghan, and Anna Hillary address in their article, "A Truly Transformative HRE: Facing our Current Challenges." They use five years of research learning that took place in an interdisciplinary, action-oriented high school class comprised of honors/Advanced Placement (AP), refugee/migrant and special education students to examine the limits of teaching human rights through "declarationism;" they further describe the strengths and possibilities for teaching rights through engaged critical praxis which enables learners to explore their rights and injustices through social action projects in their communities.

In the context of the Peruvian Andes, with a focus on Quechua peoples, Elizabeth Sumida Huaman explores the link between Indigenous knowledge systems and human rights education in her article entitled, "In-

digenous Rights Education (IRE): Indigenous knowledge systems and transformative human rights in the Peruvian Andes.” Exploring the relationship between Indigenous places, rights, and education, Sumida Huaman draws from discourses of Indigenous rights, place, rights, and transformative human rights education to propose *Indigenous rights education* (IRE).

Andree Keet offers auto-ethnographic insights and revisits his lengthy career in human rights work in South Africa and his later move into human rights education. Reflecting on possibilities for critical human rights education, Keet puts critiques of human rights, such as their relationship to capital in the age of neoliberalism, central to our understandings of HRE. He argues that “the critical pedagogy that should steer HRE, should, of necessity, be informed by radical decolonial critical theory in conversation with other critical theories” and pedagogies of resistance (Keet, 2017, this issue).

Susan Katz, Nancy Flowers, and Kristi Rudelius-Palmer offer Notes from the Field as they revisit their experience at the December 2016 seventh International Conference on Human Rights Education (ICHRE), held in Santiago Chile, where attendees deliberated on the theme of “Challenges in Civil Society.” We also include a special Notes from the Field in video form: a timely conversation held in October 2016 between Human Rights Education pioneers Norma Tarrow and Nancy Flowers as they look back on three decades of HRE and offer their visions for the future of the field.

The Book Review section introduces two books, Audrey Osler’s *Human Rights and Schooling: An Ethical Framework for Teaching Social Justice* (Teachers College Press, 2016) reviewed by Lina Lenberg, doctoral student in International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco, and Monisha Bajaj’s *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017) reviewed by Noah Romero, doctoral student in Organization and Leadership at the University of San Francisco.³

³ Professor Susan Katz of the University of San Francisco serves as the Reviews editor and reports, curricula, films, and books can be sent to her for consideration for review in future issues of the *IJHRE*.

The first issue of the *International Journal of Human Rights Education* is an exemplar of research, theory, and praxis that we seek to continue through future issues. We are delighted to begin this conversation through this journal and look forward to the many dynamic contributions we hope will follow. Human rights education has established its presence as a field; this journal is yet one more step towards the deepening and strengthening of research and practice that seek to advance justice and dignity for all.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the University of San Francisco's (USF) Gleeson Library and Geschke Resource Center, for their willingness to host and support this journal. The guidance and dedication of Charlotte Roh at Gleeson has been and continues to be invaluable to our first foray into academic open-access publishing. We would also like to thank Kirstie Haruta at bepress for her incredible attention to detail, responsiveness, and overall enthusiasm in the process of creating the journal's online infrastructure, and providing training to us on its use. A special "shout out" to Randy Souther, whose own online journal hosted through Gleeson Library at USF inspired the form and functions of ours.

This journal also relies heavily on the countless hours of work and dedication of many of our students at the University of San Francisco. Thus far, Ria DasGupta, Jane Pak, Noah Romero, and Nomsa Mabona have served as Managing and Assistant Managing Editors for the journal while balancing work on their doctorates, holding full time jobs, and raising families. We also thank the many colleagues from around the world who have agreed to join hands as the [journal's editorial board](#). We look forward to the future of the *International Journal of Human Rights Education* as a site for deeper dialogue and learning in HRE.

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