

The State of Human Rights Education in Tanzania Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Realizing the critical role played by human rights education (HRE) in creating a world of sustainable development and social justice, this paper examines the practices of HRE in Tanzania and delineates areas that require government intervention. Although efforts have been made by the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide HRE, the level of human rights awareness is low; there is no specific policy and programme on HRE. NGOs that are offering HRE are operating in isolation and most of their activities are confined to urban areas. There is a need to develop a comprehensive programme on HRE to improve human rights awareness among children, youth and adults. There is also the need to establish an agency that will coordinate HRE activities to avoid unnecessary duplication and to promote networking among the stakeholders.

Introduction

This paper provides the status of HRE in Tanzania. The paper is divided into seven sections. In section one the concept of human rights education is explored, while in sections two and three the context of HRE, HRE models and contents are examined. In section four, HRE practices in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings are analysed and discussed while the deficiencies are presented in section five. This is followed by a discussion on HRE intervention strategies in section six with concluding remarks in section seven.

The Concept of HRE

HRE has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) as the learning and practice of human rights; a lifelong process by which all people learn respect for the dignity of others and mechanisms for ensuring that human rights are respected and valued (Human Rights Resource Centre 2000). Human rights are entitlements that an individual has by virtue of being a human being; they are inborn, inalienable and indivisible (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [MoEVT], 2014). These include the rights and freedoms of the individual, as spelt out in various legal instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICERSCR), which are collectively known as the International Bill of Human Rights (Human Rights Resource Centre, 2000). HRE is therefore the process of individuals developing the knowledge, skills and values of these rights - inside and outside educational institutions - to enable them to uphold them and those of others.

Clearly, although education is a basic human right, HRE is about the teaching and learning of human rights, freedoms and responsibilities. The concept of HRE is increasingly expanding due to globalization, the expansion of education and the discourse on human rights.

HRE Context and Rationale

Efforts to provide HRE began soon after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 and the call made by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that required member states to educate their citizens about human rights. However, such efforts were not extended beyond the formal school setting, and excluded the majority of the adult population - those who had finished school and those who had never had the opportunity to attend school. With the rise of the human rights movement, economic integration and advances in communications in the 1960s and 1970s, the need to extend HRE opportunities to all segments of society was strongly felt for various reasons. First, HRE empowers individuals and communities to create a just world of harmonious relations essential for overcoming violence and to ensure the balance of power. Second, it transmits the core values of social justice and human dignity that are necessary for creating a culture of respect for diversity and equality, mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. Third, HRE enhances participatory processes and improves individuals' capacity to think and take an informed course of action. Individuals are expected to continually develop and improve their abilities to make them active. The UN Resolution declaring the Decade for Human Rights Education (1994-2004), for example, asserts that HRE enhances participation and democratic processes aimed at developing societies in which all human rights are valued and respected. Fourth, it promotes equality and sustainable development, preventing conflict and human rights violations. Fifth, HRE is also essential for human rights activism as it empowers people with the knowledge, skills and values of human rights to take appropriate action and to defend and claim their rights; only those people who are aware of human rights will strive to defend and claim them. Sixth, HRE can also function as a 'pre-emptive' mechanism for averting human rights violations (see Fernandez and Brillantes, n.d).

The purpose of HRE is to create a universal culture of human rights aimed at: (1) strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (2) developing human personality and a sense of its dignity; (3) promoting understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups; (4) enabling all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law; (5) building and maintaining peace; and (6) promoting people-centred sustainable development and social justice (UNGA, 2007).

HRE Models and Contents

There are three models for HRE namely, Values and Awareness, Accountability and Transformational (Tibbits, n.d). The *Values and Awareness* model uses a philosophical-historical approach to transmit the basic knowledge about human rights issues, such as human rights history, its roots, UDHR, human rights instruments and covenants. The *Accountability* model

involves legal and political approaches to human rights, focusing on aspects such as court cases, codes of ethics and how to deal with the media. The *Transformational* model focuses on the psychological and sociological aspects of human rights—aspects relating to vulnerable groups, women, minorities and victims of abuse—and on recognizing human rights violations and mechanisms for eliminating them.

The goals of HRE are to learn about human rights and for human rights (Human Rights Resource Centre, 2000). Learning about human rights involves learning about its history, human rights documents and implementing mechanisms; while learning for human rights involves understanding and embracing the principles of human equality and dignity, being committed to respecting and protecting the rights of others, clarifying values, changing attitudes, developing solidarity and skills for advocacy and action, analysing human rights situations and formulating appropriate strategies for tackling human rights violations.

In 1993, the United Nations, through the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, required all states and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, peace, democracy, development, social justice and the rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all their learning institutions, in formal and non-formal settings, the aim being to achieve a common understanding of and universal commitment to human rights. The learning of human rights was therefore conceived as the 4th R of basic education, in addition to the 3Rs—Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The learning of human rights was expected to impact learners in three domains - cognitive (acquiring knowledge of political systems and processes), affective (developing values and attitudes that uphold democratic practices) and psychomotor (developing skills for democratic practices). The key contents of HRE are summarized in Box 1.

Box.1: Summary of key Human Rights Education contents

Human rights history and documents: Roots of human rights, UDHR, International Bill of Human rights, International/regional covenants/treaties and obligation of states.

Human rights issues: The nature of the human rights issue involved, its historical, political, sociological and economic context, analysis of the issue and strategies for addressing the issue, progress and future actions.

Human rights values and skills: Personal attitudes, values and action skills, documentation and analysis skills.

Source: Human Rights Resource Centre, 2000

HRE Practices and Trends

In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly declared 1994-2004 the United Nations Decade of Human Rights Education. The General Assembly cautioned that the task of providing HRE involved all elements of society - the government, NGOs, professional associations, civil society and individuals. A guideline on how the international community should implement HRE in both formal and non-formal education settings was then issued by UNCHR. According to this

guideline, HRE can be integrated in the existing school curricula as part of civic education, in arts programmes, non-formal education programmes and clubs, training programmes, community development programmes and campaigns, and in special events occurring in the school setting (Tomas Evski, 2004). It is against this background that HRE in Tanzania has been provided in various formal, non-formal and informal settings, and an attempt is made to examine them in the ensuing sections of this paper.

Formal Learning Setting

In the formal learning setting in schools, colleges and universities, HRE takes various forms in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. In pre-schools, for example, children are taught various issues concerning human rights through songs, plays and poems that help them to recognize their rights and those of others. In addition, they are taught good morals, how to observe rules and regulations, and to respect their parents, elders, neighbours and the whole community.

In primary and secondary schools, there are subjects that incorporate some aspects of human rights education, aimed at developing knowledge about human rights. For instance, the subject of Civics has some aspects relating to the civil and political rights of the individual, such as the first generation of human rights, the right to live, the right to vote and be voted for, the responsibilities of citizens, the right to worship and expression and civil rights movements. In History, workers' movements, the history of the slave trade and world wars are some of the aspects that are taught and are *inter alia* the aspects that triggered the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In General Studies, aspects relating to democracy and its principles, culture, gender relations, oppression, basic rights and freedoms of citizens and rule of law are stressed, which are also reflected in the second generation of human rights. In Geography, responsibility for environmental conservation is emphasized to enable each student to enjoy his/her environmental right to live in a decent environment, popularly known as the third generation of human rights. In higher learning institutions and colleges, knowledge about human rights is taught in various courses, such as Development Studies, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Gender, Political Science, Law, Education, Philosophy and Religious Studies. They provide knowledge about various aspects of human rights, including the context within which human rights were conceived and originated, categories of human rights, democracy, rights of marginalized groups and rights and freedoms of the individual.

Philosophy, in particular, has rich literature that contributed to the foundation of human rights. The ideas of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are a case in point. Locke, for example, felt that people have natural rights simply because they are human beings and these natural rights must be protected by the government, while Rousseau believed that human beings are equal and free and distinguishes between natural, civil and moral freedom, which contributed to the conception and development of human rights. Some universities, such as the University of Dar es Salaam, has a specific course on HRE, its content of which includes the concepts of human rights and human rights education and related terms, categories of human rights, UDHR and

other human rights documents, human rights of selected groups, implementation of human rights in Tanzania, democracy, and developing and teaching a HRE programme.

As part of their extra-curricular activities, students in formal learning institutions also engage in various clubs, associations and debating groups that promote human rights and enable students to understand their rights. However, students' learning not only takes place in the formal learning setting but it also involves experiences that take place in many other social contexts as well as non-formal and informal institutions.

Non-formal Learning Setting

In the non-formal learning setting, learning outside the formal learning system, some aspects of HRE have been provided by some government institutions and NGOs. *Siasa jamii* has been offered by the then Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) since 2002, the components of which include human rights and the duties of citizens. Some form of HRE has been offered through the media (e.g. radio, TV and newspapers), as well as religious and political institutions, Government ministries and NGOs. The Institute of Adult Education (IAE), for example, organizes mass education programmes through seminars, workshops and training programmes on cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDs, the environment, human rights, gender, civic education and literacy programmes. It also offers certificate courses in Law and Education degree programmes with some elements of HRE.

Apart from government institutions, NGOs have had a critical role in promoting HRE and learning, in response to the call made by the UNGA in 2009. In Tanzania, several NGOs have been providing human rights education on various aspects through the mass media, training programmes, symposia, workshops, conferences and seminars. The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) for example, promotes and protects human rights and duties as well as good governance. The Environmental Human Rights Care and Gender Organization (ENVIROCARE) provides the knowledge and skills for conserving the environment and livelihoods using a gender, human rights-based and participatory approach through advocacy, capacity building and action research. A similar undertaking is currently being carried out by the University of Dar es Salaam Joint Environmental and Development Management Action (JEMA), aimed at conserving the environment at the university and the surrounding community. It also provides education on democracy, environmental management and youth development that promotes a closer relationship with the community.

HakiElimu promotes awareness of human rights, democracy and social justice, while the Legal Aid Committee (LAC) provides legal aid services to indigents. The Legal Human Rights Centre (LHRC) makes people aware of their legal and human rights, especially underprivileged groups in the community through legal and civic education, the provision of legal aid and advocacy. The National Organization for Legal Aid (NOLA) uses the law to further the cause of legal and social justice as well as human rights in the country, while *Policy Forum* influences policy

processes to reduce poverty and enhance equity and democratization so as to increase the participation of an informed civil society. Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania (REDET) was established by the University of Dar es Salaam to sensitize the general public about key issues relating to democracy with a view to improving their capacity to function effectively in the democratic process.

Shirika la Uchumi la Wanawake Tanzania (SUWATA) organizes legal literacy and training and provides legal and counselling services, while *Shirikisho la Vyama vya Watu Wenye Ulemavu Tanzania* (SHIVYAWATA) campaigns against social injustice facing disabled people through the economic, social and political system. Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA) creates awareness of women’s rights and gender issues among the general public, religious and government institutions, NGOs and political parties in order to fight against gender-based violence and promote women’s development in general. Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) educates the public by raising awareness of gender and legal rights issues through the media, seminars, publications, and it campaigns for women and children on issues of equality and human rights. It also provides legal aid services to vulnerable children and women. While the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) promotes gender equality and equity through policy advocacy and training, Tanzania Legal Society (TLS) monitors human rights violations and take up cases of violations in court. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Tanzania, promotes and strengthens strategies aimed at increasing women’s participation and awareness of human rights through education and training, while the Women’s Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) provides legal aid services and HRE to vulnerable children and women, and calls for an end to gender-based violence. Welfare through Law (WTL) disseminates information on human rights and the law and provides counselling services. Table 1 shows a summary of HRE activities offered by NGOs.

Table 1: Summary of HRE activities offered by NGOs

NGO/Institution	Human rights education activity
CHRAGG	Promotes and protects human rights, duties and good governance
ENVIROCARE	Provides knowledge and skills in relation in environmental conservation/livelihood with a gender and human rights-based approach
HakiElimu	Works to realize, <i>inter alia</i> , human rights and democracy in education and promotes social justice
LAC	Provides legal aid services to indigents
LHRC	Creates legal and human rights awareness, provides legal aid and education/advocacy
JEMA	Conducts a campaign aimed at environmental conservation
NOLA	Uses the law to further cases of legal and social justice as well as human rights
POLICY FORUM	Influences policy processes to reduce poverty reduction, and enhance equity and democratization to improve civil society’s participation
SHIVYAWATA	Campaigns against social injustice facing the disabled through the social, economic and political system
SUWATA	Provides legal counselling and organizes legal literacy and training programmes
TAMWA	Creates awareness of women’s rights and gender issues

TAWLA	Educates the general public and raises awareness of gender, equality and human rights issues
TLS	Monitors human rights violations and takes up such cases in court
REDET	Sensitizes the general public about key issues relating to democracy, environmental management and youth development
TGNP	Promotes gender equality and equity through policy advocacy and training
WiLDAF	Promotes women's participation and awareness of women's human rights through education and training
WLAC	Provides legal aid services and HRE
WTL	Disseminates information about human rights and the law and counsels the needy

Informal Learning Setting

Some aspects of human rights knowledge and values are acquired through the informal unsystematic and uncoordinated learning process that involves the daily acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and experience as people interact with the family, community, in buses while travelling, in marketplaces, at religious gatherings, political rallies, and through the mass media, seminars, conferences, workshops and symposia. Some aspects of HRE were also emphasized in traditional African society before the introduction of formal and non-formal education. Indigenous African society, for example, offered general and age-grade education comprising, *inter alia*, civics, history, moral education, codes of good behaviour, social responsibilities and courtship, which are still emphasized in families today (Mushi, 2012). This form of education inculcated a sense of self-reliance, tolerance, respect, obedience and cooperation, which are also stressed in HRE. It imparted moral values to youth to enable them to respect everyone, to discourage them from engaging in criminal or other undesirable activities, and to prepare them to take on social roles and responsibilities, some of which are emphasized by HRE. Much of HRE learning, therefore, takes place informally, in various settings. Subjects/courses and programmes that have HRE components are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Subjects/Courses/Programmes Incorporating HRE Aspects

Learning Setting	Level of Education	Subject/Programme
Formal	Pre-school	Moral education
	Primary	Civics, history, Geography and General Studies/ Extra-curricular activities
	Secondary	Civics, History, Geography and General Studies Students' clubs, associations & debating groups
	Colleges	Development Studies
	Higher Education	Development Studies, History, Sociology, Education, Anthropology, Law, Political Science, Education, Philosophy and Gender courses, extra-curricular activities - students' clubs, associations and debating groups
Non-formal	Adult/community education	ICBAE/COBET/REFLECT/Yes I Can programmes, Training Programmes, Seminars, Symposia, Workshops and Conferences.

		Mass education campaigns on crosscutting issues - HIV AIDs, human rights, civic and voter education, , environmental education, gender and literacy programmes Siasa jamii-human rights/constitution and duties of citizen
Informal	All levels/life settings	Day-to-day experiences, values and skills acquisition

HRE Challenges and Concerns

Despite these initiatives, there are several challenges that need to be addressed if the HRE goals are to be achieved. First, knowledge about human rights is lacking. Recent studies (URT, 2011) have revealed that there is little awareness of human rights and the obligations of citizens, a finding that is supported by Bhalalusesa (2002) and Olengurumwa (2010). Equally important, the number of people taking part in elections has been declining. Incidences of human rights abuses are on the increase (MoEVT, 2014). Illiteracy is growing and is currently estimated to be 31 per cent and has been increasing at the rate of 2 per cent annually (MoEVT, 2011). Whereas in the past the Directorate of Adult Education and the Institute of Adult Education played a decisive role in educating people through various approaches to improve their capacity to participate in the democratic process and exercise their rights, the adult literacy programmes that have been introduced by the government - Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE), Complementary Basic Education In Tanzania (COBET), Regenerated Freirean Literacy Empowering Techniques (REFLECT) and YES I CAN - hardly enable people to understand their rights and how to defend them and the programmes contain no aspects of HRE. Given this lack of awareness of human rights, there is a need to ensure that people are educated in the subject of human rights to enable them to exercise their duties and claim their rights effectively. Thus, there is need to revisit the adult literacy programmes with a view to reforming them to match the current socio-economic realities.

Second, HRE lacks a lifelong dimension. Although one of the strategic objectives of the Adult Education Development Programme (AEDP) (2012/13-2016/17) is to review and revise curricula for basic, post-literacy and continuing education for out-of-school children, youth and adults by 2014 so as to integrate the cross-cutting issues of human rights, gender, the environment, civic education and good governance, this has not been done. Some civic education programmes have been organized by the National Electoral Committee (NEC) and the IAE in collaboration with the office of the Political Registrar, but such programmes are not comprehensive and lifelong, nor are they integrated in adult and non-formal education programmes. Programmes such as civic and voter education are offered only when it comes to mobilizing people for elections, e.g. on election expenses. Once the elections are over, the programmes cease to function.

Third, HRE lacks a clear policy/guideline. HRE activities have been conducted without a clear policy/guideline. Although the Education and Training Policy (1995) makes it plain that one of the aims of education and training in Tanzania is to develop and promote an understanding of

and respect for human dignity and human rights, the policy does not provide a framework for how HRE should be implemented at various levels of education. In addition, there is no specific HRE programme except at the University of Dar es Salaam, which has a course on HRE offered as an option to undergraduate and postgraduate education students.

Fourth, HRE is narrow in scope. In educational institutions HRE lacks a clear balance in terms of knowledge, values and action skills. It would appear that HRE provision in Tanzania has largely adopted the Value and Awareness model that focuses entirely on transmitting some aspects of human rights that are largely cognitive, which excludes other relevant aspects relating to values and skills. Clearly, HRE is not simply an integration of HRE aspects in school or college curricula. There needs to be a holistic approach to a review of curricula at all levels of education to ensure that a clear balance is maintained between the knowledge, skills and values concerning human rights.

Fifth, another serious concern is that NGOs are offering HRE in isolation although they are performing the same role. There is no agency or specific institute mandated to organize and coordinate HRE programmes as in other countries such as South Africa, Malaysia and Sweden. HRE programmes provided by government institutions and NGOs are uncoordinated, resulting in unnecessary duplication of activities. Given the importance accorded to HRE at national, regional and international level, there is a need to create an agency whose responsibility will be to carry out advocacy/sensitization activities and coordinate HRE programmes to ensure that they are effectively implemented as directed by UNGA (2007). Because the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) has a department known as Mass Education and Women's Development and has been organizing mass education programmes with some HRE components, perhaps it could be assigned this task to start with.

Sixth, the teaching of HRE is teacher-centred. Although HRE assumes that each individual is different and has the right to an opinion (MoEVT, 2014), non-participatory teaching and learning methods have largely dominated the teaching of HRE aspects in the same way as the teaching of other subjects. Learner-centred methods ensure that HRE moves beyond the transmission of mere knowledge to include action skills, attitudes and values.

Last but not least, HRE activities are confined to urban areas. Most HRE activities outside the formal system are conducted in urban areas, which excludes the majority of adults living in rural areas, especially in communities the media and NGOs cannot reach.

HRE Intervention Strategies

The government is already aware of the inherent deficiencies in the provision of HRE and has seen the need for corrective interventions. One of the strategic objectives of the Adult Education Development Plan (AEDP) for adult, non-formal and continuing education for the period 2013/14 -2016/17, for example, is to strengthen advocacy and sensitization on HRE to make society aware of and respect human rights, which is to be achieved through the development and implementation of human rights education programmes at all levels of education by 2017 (MoEVT, 2011). Strategies for achieving this are outlined in Box 2.

Box.2: Strategies for Promoting HRE

1. MoEVT, IAE, Commission for Human Rights and Good governance (CHRAGG) and CSOs will develop HRE programme;
2. IAE through its Mass Education Department will prepare and disseminate participatory human rights education materials for the education system;
3. MoEVT will promote the capacity of the National Literacy Centre to undertake effective HRE advocacy and sensitization activities, carry out studies and research on human rights and human rights education in collaboration with other stakeholders;
4. MoEVT will facilitate the publication and printing of HRE materials such as calendars, posters, leaflets, and other media;
5. MoEVT and Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports (MIYCS) will facilitate the production and broadcasting of HRE on radio and TV spots, in jingles and films;
6. MoEVT and MIYCS will facilitate the utilization of culture and sports to promote HRE;
7. MoEVT will coordinate the mainstreaming of HRE issues in respective departments, institutions and CSOs;
8. MoEVT will promote networking with organizations and civil society groups concerning HRE; and
9. MoEVT will liaise with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs through CHRAGG and other stakeholder ministries to facilitate implementation of the HRE Strategic Plan.

Source: MoEVT, Adult Education Development Plan (AEDP) 2012/2013-2016/17.

The strategies are meant to create a culture that will ensure respect and support for human rights and guard against the violation of human rights in the country. The MoEVT has already started to implement the AEDP and by June 2014 had developed guidelines for the provision of HRE in schools, colleges, and adult and non-formal education centres in collaboration with CHRAGG. The guidelines are meant to illuminate and enrich key aspects of human rights that need to be emphasized in the teaching and learning process (MoEVT, 2014). However, although the aim of the AEDP was to develop an HRE programme that will cover the pre-school to the tertiary level of education, this has not been covered by the guidelines. In addition, the guidelines are silent on how personal values and human rights skills should be developed through teaching. It would appear that the guideline developers were guided by the Values and Awareness model that focuses entirely on transmitting the knowledge and values of human rights with no attempt being made to incorporate action skills that are equally important for enabling learners to deal with practical human rights issues.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has discussed HRE provision in Tanzania. Although efforts have been made by the government and NGOs to promote HRE, several challenges need to be addressed if the goals are to be achieved. First, HRE must be comprehensive and have a clear balance between knowledge, values and action skills, and must have a life-long dimension. Some HRE aspects should not merely be contained in school/college curricula or adult education programmes, and so a holistic approach to HRE reform needs to be implemented at all levels of education – formal and non-formal. Second, for effective provision of HRE, an agency needs to be established to coordinate HRE activities offered by various institutions/organizations to avoid unnecessary duplication and to promote networking among them. Third, additional efforts are needed to disseminate HRE among the adult population, particularly in rural areas and hard-to-reach communities, as most HRE provision is confined to urban areas.

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