



# HREIT

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY INSTITUTION OF TÜRKİYE

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL, METHODOLOGICAL, AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Prof. Dr. Muharrem KILIÇ





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Muharrem KILIÇ\*

### Abstract

The rise of human rights activism in the last quarter of the 20th century has made human rights a discourse of the modern age by bringing positive acceleration toward institutional structuring to the development process of human rights. The potential of human rights to transform societies that have been structured through normative constructs has been a main focus of international institutions and organizations. These institutional structuring practices for human rights have revealed the need to gain insight into the declarative, conceptual, and institutional framework of human rights. Focusing on human rights education (HRE) for building a value system has become a widespread institutional goal. Rights education as an ideological and pedagogical strategy is structured with the aim of disseminating and systematizing the universal human rights regime.

The methodology of HRE is not rhetorical or dialectical between trainers and trainees; rather, it can be viewed as an operational process. At the same time, the teaching process for providing knowledge of rights can be defined as a behavioral type of transfer structured and internalized with values. HRE, which has many definitions based on different theoretical perspectives and tendencies, has received a wide array of theoretical and conceptual criticism ranging from essentialist arguments to formalist and critical approaches in the globalizing world. The focus of these criticisms has been the emergence of regulatory human rights practices with the reduction of human rights to law. It is considered that HRE must focus on the erosion of citizenship, democracy, and human rights under the devastating effects of deepening social injustice in a world built on neoliberal policies. The development dynamics of rights education on a theoretical level necessitates a multi-stakeholder and multi-actor participatory perspective. Therefore, it is clear that national human rights institutions as institutional actors should be more involved in rights education.

**Keywords:** Human rights, rights education, cultural pedagogy, internalized rights teaching method, philosophy of values, national human rights institutions.

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## Extended Abstract

The rise of human rights activism in the last quarter of the 20th century has turned human rights into a discourse of the modern age by bringing positive acceleration toward an institutional structuring to the evolution of human rights. The potential of human rights, which are structured through normative constructs, to transform societies has become a main focus of international institutions and organizations. The declarative normative framework of HRE was initially regulated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Expressing the normative framework determined by the Declaration regarding the right to education, the principle of *"everyone has the right to education"* (UDHR, 1948, Art. 26/1) raised the issue of the right to education on a global scale. The transformation of HRE into a global movement corresponds to the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The United Nations (UN) World Conference on Human Rights (UN, 1993), held in Vienna, represented a turning point for HRE. In fact, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (UN, 1993, para. 78), which was adopted as an output of this conference, emphasizes that "HRE, 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."

Within the framework of national and supranational documents, HRE has shown a dynamic of gradual development. The first phase, prior to 1948, primarily discussed the historical roots of HRE in regards to the relationality between basic educational theories and morals education from Plato to John Dewey. The second phase (1948-1994) was focused on the institutionalization of HRE as an educational activity aimed at legitimizing the values and principles of universal human rights. The third phase (1995-2010), corresponding to the transformation of HRE into a global movement, began with the declaration of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. As a result of these gradual developmental phases, rights education has become a driver of global activism aimed at raising awareness of the rights granted and registered in human rights treaties.

The development dynamics of rights education on a theoretical level makes a participatory perspective with multi-stakeholders and multi-actors essential. It is therefore clear that national human rights institutions should be more involved in rights education as institutional actors. Such institutional structures play significant roles in systematically monitoring and reporting on pedagogies related to HRE and their impacts and putting awareness-raising activities into practice.

The methodological approaches to HRE have been characterized as a quest for a fusion of horizons that will bring forth an intercultural consensus in the field of human rights (see., Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2004). However, the envisaged consensus is not based on notions of transcendent idealism or moral realism. Rather, it is a consensus affirmed and conceptualized within the framework of many cultural structures. The educational models developed for HRE in the last quarter of the 20th century have generated a number of schemas for theorizing the emergence, conceptualization, and exercising of human rights. Although there are many methodological approaches to HRE, it can be said that there is a general consensus on some basic components. First of all, HRE should encompass both content and learning processes. Second, HRE should include relevant objectives related to cognitive (*content*), attitudinal or emotional (*values/skills*), and action-oriented components.

While the main focus in the current HRE paradigm is "education on human rights," the relational hermeneutic interpretive paradigm focuses on education for the actualization of human rights and their equivalents. In that hermeneutic paradigm, the main focus is the dissemination of knowledge of rights by means of cultural epistemology. On the other hand, the dissemination of knowledge of rights by means of the Western conceptualization of human rights appears as the main focus of the modern HRE paradigm. The grounding of HRE in relational hermeneutic epistemology will make it possible to eliminate tensions between educational orthodoxy and universalist-relativist trends.

Therefore, it is necessary to address HRE from the perspective of hermeneutics, which has become a philosophy of interpretation in the modern period. Unlike structured education models, hermeneutics, which reflects the multi-faceted dialectic between the comprehensor and interpreter, makes it possible to construct a "subject." In fact, a subject-centered methodology is not considered in structuralist education models. However, education entails the construction of a semantic world. Similarly, human rights also appear as a pluralistic and dynamic cultural universe, as they address the dynamism of life as well as rights and freedoms. Therefore, HRE should be addressed from a hermeneutic perspective, not a structuralist perspective.

It should be noted that there are a number of critical perspectives focusing on the effectiveness of HRE, learning methodologies, pedagogical strategies, and human rights discourses. HRE has been criticized for many reasons, including

the transformation of HRE into a global movement, HRE turning into political commitments, literature focusing on purely pedagogical and methodological issues, the declarative nature of education, and the colonization of rights education. These criticisms reveal the tense relationship between the modern theory of human rights notion and cultural relativism. Furthermore, it is seen that HRE is generally organized around a human rights discourse specific to Western culture. In this context, it is emphasized that human rights education is based on a Western-centered pedagogy of human rights rather than culture-based pedagogies.

Constructed as an institutional entity for producing and teaching knowledge, the existential essence of rights education is inherent in the spirit of universal principles and values. The existential tensions between theory and practice, tradition and modernity, and values and interests affect the pedagogical philosophy of rights education. Considering all these critical perspectives, it is quite important to develop methodological pedagogies that enable the building of a universal language, a spiritual texture, and a culture specific to the teaching of rights and to examine the forms of methods produced for rights education through the lens of the paradoxical relationship between socio-economic and socio-political realities. All these exploratory efforts are critical for the identification of the organic structural problems that HRE has been facing.

## I. Introduction

Human rights have taken on a normative form in terms of both substantive and procedural law in accordance with the rationalizing, structuring, and bureaucratizing onto-epistemology of the modern mind. The idea that human rights, which are organized with reference to declarations and international conventions or transformed into supranational institutional structures and/or mechanisms, basically correspond to a field of axiological values is often overlooked. The technocratic nature of the concept of rights and freedoms revealed by the human rights acquis, which is produced through original structural constructions and/or mechanisms, leads to deep mental alienation. This alienation, which reflects the ontic decoupling between the ideal and the real, makes it impossible to internalize human rights as a set of values. This alienation furthermore corresponds to a fundamental problem area that can be subjected to multi-faceted analysis. At the forefront of these problem areas is the production of human rights as a subject of education, training, and learning.<sup>1</sup> The philosophy, epistemology, methodology, and pedagogy of the production and transmission of human rights as an object of knowledge stands before us as a field that requires problematization in its specific context.

The transfer of the immanent values of human rights as an object of knowledge and a subject of learning presupposes a dialectic based on the tripartite knowledge-consciousness-action approach at its origin. The multi-layered nature of the possibilities of the self-actualization of an individual in an existential sense makes it necessary to construct learning processes in a more sophisticated way that will embrace the cognitive, affective, and actional levels. It is precisely at this point that it is aimed to gain a specific awareness of rights by internalizing the values, attitudes, and cultures of the individual as the singular subject of HRE in a concrete form. The awareness of the rights in question entails the content and transmission of values that become actions. As Ioanna Kuçuradi has stated, HRE reveals the desire to "do something" or take an individual action in the face of rights violations in accordance with the purpose of "awakening consciousness."<sup>2</sup>

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1 In this study, the terms "education," "teaching," and "learning" are used with the suspension of conceptual background distinctions or semantic nuances.

2 Ioanna Kuçuradi, "İnsan Hakları Eğitimi ve Dayanışma İçin Eğitim: Eğiticilerin Eğitimi," in *İnsan Hakları Kavramları ve Sorunları* (Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, 2011), 259; Ioanna Kuçuradi, "İnsan Haklarının Etik Eğitimi," in Ioanna Kuçuradi & Harun Tepe (eds.), *Türkiye'de ve Dünyada İnsan Hakları Eğitimi* (Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, 2020), 21.



This value-centered desire for action is based on the idea of creating a social consciousness expected to transform into a public *modus operandi*, not just a *habitus* that needs to be developed from the point of view of the individual.

HRE, which has many different definitions shaped by different theoretical perspectives and tendencies, is the subject of comprehensive criticism ranging from essentialist approaches to formalist and critical approaches in the globalizing world. When these criticisms are analyzed, it can be stated that the focus of HRE has evolved toward the "culture industry," so much so that the determination of the subject and the conceptual framework of the education often turn into a cultural industry that brackets the reality of actual human rights. HRE, which is shaped within the framework of the culture industry in question, sometimes establishes its own episteme based on supremacist, elitist, and colonial agendas and develops its curriculum and pedagogy accordingly.

Considered within a holistic framework, it can be said that there are three main problem areas of HRE. The first of these areas is related to inquiries about the ontological background of HRE. In this context, the philosophical foundations, conceptual roots, and objective goals of HRE constitute the main issues of importance for this problem area. The second involves analysis of the epistemological background and methodological framework of HRE as an object of knowledge and learning, while the third entails the questioning of HRE on an axiological basis as a transmission of a set of values. In this context, HRE is also subject to analysis in the sense that it has qualities of ethics education. When an integrated analysis of all these problem areas is performed, HRE may gain the opportunity to be grounded on a unique conceptual basis in the context of meanings and values.

HRE is a field that requires problematization through hermeneutic interpretive cycles, which we can define as the tripartite "understanding-interpretation-application" approach. However, it should be noted that most modern rights education practices cannot create a developing educational dynamic within the framework of this interpretive cycle. Therefore, it is necessary to reproduce HRE with a holistic paradigmatic attitude through radical pedagogy because the previously developed methodological approaches to HRE are losing their relevance, especially in the face of rapid transformations in the digital and technological fields. Education is now being shifted to more modern platforms and "digital pedagogy" is being adopted for educational activities. In the face of

the extensive transformative dynamics of the current century, HRE inevitably needs to be reanalyzed in terms of its basic philosophy, axiological foundations, methodology, and pedagogy.

In line with the realities described here, the present study offers different perspectives that will make it possible to analyze HRE within a holistic framework. Within the framework adopted here, the development dynamics of HRE in the direction of theorization from a historical perspective are first discussed. HRE is then explained from original methodological perspectives. Subsequently, HRE is questioned from a critical perspective by taking into account different theoretical approaches. Finally, HRE is evaluated from an institutional perspective in terms of the functions, effectiveness, and spatial encirclement of national human rights institutions. With this multi-faceted perspective, the study is intended to expand the understandings of opportunities and problem areas in HRE by dimensioning them.

## **II. Historical Perspective: The Theorizing Dynamics of Human Rights Education**

The rise of human rights activism in the last quarter of the twentieth century has made human rights a discourse of the modern era by giving positive impetus to the development process of human rights in the direction of institutional structuring. The potential of human rights to transform societies, which are structured through normative fictions, is a fundamental issue on which international institutions and organizations have focused. Thus, human rights have become a supranational discourse transcending national borders. The development dynamics of institutional structuring have made it possible to recognize human rights as an integrative moral force that empowers each citizen to demand protection and development.<sup>3</sup>

These institutional structuring practices for human rights reveal the importance of gaining insight into the declarative, conceptual, and theoretical framework of human rights. In fact, human rights appear to be the intersection point of many new trends, including conflict resolution in education, legal education, development education, peace education, anti-racism education, multi-cultural

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3 Nancy Flowers, Marcia Bernbaum, Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, & Joel Tolman, *The Human Rights Education Handbook: Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change* (Human Rights Resource Center, University of Minnesota, 2000), 7.

education, and global education, as shown in the chart below. As can be seen in all of these trends, human rights are increasingly being reduced to standardized rules and marginalized with curricula structured according to a “back-to-basics” trend that denies holistic learning. Nevertheless, human rights continue to be seen as a value system that affects all areas in a holistic manner and contributes to systemic transformation.<sup>4</sup>



**Chart:** Conceptual Framework of HRE<sup>5</sup>

The focus on HRE has become a corporate goal that aims at building a value system. However, it should still be noted that HRE is not only based on valuing or respecting; it is also an ideology associated with advocacy for the purpose of securing these conditions.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, HRE is considered a strategic “ideological device” to support human rights activism. HRE<sup>7</sup> is seen as both an ideological and pedagogical strategy in terms of facilitating democratization

4 Flowers, Bernbaum, Rudelius-Palmer, & Tolman (n 3), 35.

5 This chart was prepared with reference to Nancy Flowers, *COMPASITO: Manual on Human Rights Education for Children* (2nd edition, Council of Europe, 2007).

6 Felisa Tibbitts, “Understanding What We Do: Emerging Models for Human Rights Education” (2002) 48 IRE, 162.

7 For detailed information on the importance of human rights education, see M. Arthur Diakité, “The Importance of an Education in Human Rights,” in Jonas Grimheden and Rolf Ring (Eds.), *Human Rights Law: From Dissemination to Application* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006), 25.

and active citizenship.<sup>8</sup> As a political strategy, HRE refers to educational and instructional activities intended for individuals, those excluded from the established social sphere (i.e., "others"), or vulnerable groups in a singular sense.<sup>9</sup>

In the literature, HRE is defined as "a means of disseminating and systematizing the universal human rights regime." In this context, the human rights norms and institutional structures incorporated into both international and local or national legal systems created by hegemonic discourse mechanisms produce a common reference area in terms of HRE. The set of norms in question recognizes HRE as the most important tool for disseminating the universal human rights regime.<sup>10</sup> Thus, HRE is positioned as an ethical and pedagogical structure. The structure in question corresponds to the situation of acceptance of epistemological foundations in a social context. From an ethical perspective, it is necessary to take into account the virtues and values that constitute human rights, as well as the ethical foundations built upon them. There is a need for a pedagogical approach that internalizes cardinal virtues (*justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in terms of educational activities with reference to Aristotelian ethics.<sup>11</sup> The ethical and pedagogical aspects of human rights shapes the interpretative context existing between the learner subject and the teacher. Therefore, it requires prioritizing the relationship between "I" and "other."<sup>12</sup>

It is necessary to take into account the methodological specificity of the teaching of human rights as ethics education with reference to the philosophy of natural rights. At this point, the teaching of human rights in particular should turn into a type of values education that will make it possible to internalize a sense of responsibility within itself. In order to ensure that the teaching of humans rights is transformed into values education, a tripartite typology is proposed that includes education about human rights (*cognitive methods*), education through human rights (*skill-based participatory methods for active citizenship*), and education

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8 Monisha Bajaj, "Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches" (2011) 33(2) HRQ, 483.

9 A. Kayum Ahmed, "Human Rights Education" (2021) OREOE, <https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-1573>. Date of Access: 20 August 2022.

10 A. Kayum Ahmed, J. Paul Martin, & Sameera Uddin, "Human Rights Education 1995–2017: Wrestling with Ideology, Universality, and Agency" (2020) 42(1) HRQ, 196.

11 Aristoteles, *Nikomakhos'a Etik* (Turkish translation, 2nd edition, BilgeSu Yayıncılık, 2009).

12 Cornelia Roux, "A Social Justice and Human Rights Education Project: A Search for Caring and Safe Spaces," in Cornelia Roux (Ed.), *Safe Spaces: Human Rights Education in Diverse Contexts* (Sense Publishers, 2012), 41.

for human rights (*developing students' ability to speak out and act in the face of injustices*) in order to reveal the relationship between education and human rights.<sup>13</sup>

The declarative and normative framework of HRE was first regulated by the United Nations (UN) in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Everyone has the right to education" (Art. 26/1) expresses the normative framework set forth by the Declaration on the subject of the right to education. Article 26/2 of the declaration, on the other hand, defines education on the axis of a humanist ideology.<sup>14</sup> According to the relevant article, "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."<sup>15</sup> Historically, the transformation of HRE into a global movement corresponds to the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The UN World Conference on Human Rights (1993), held in Vienna, marked a turning point in terms of HRE.<sup>16</sup> The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, considered as the output of the conference, states that "the development of stable and harmonious relations among communities and the provision and mutual understanding, tolerance and peace for the promotion of HRE, teaching and the need to inform the public" is essential.<sup>17</sup>

The contracts and documents adopted by the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and other diverse international organizations have emphasized the right to education as a human right, and especially HRE.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, it is seen that international organizations and

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13 Bajaj (n 8), 483.

14 Muharrem Kılıç, "Pandemi Döneminde Dijital Eğitim Teknolojisinin Dönüştürücü Etkisi Bağlamında Eğitim Hakkı ve Eğitim Politikaları" (2021) 11(1) YD, 27.

15 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>. Date of Access: 13 November 2022.

16 Monisha Bajaj, *Introduction in Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis*, in Monisha Bajaj (Ed.), (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 3.

17 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/vienna-declaration-and-programme-action>. Date of Access: 13 November 2022.

18 İnsan Hakları Eğitimi On Yılı Ulusal Komitesi, *İnsan Hakları Eğitimi On Yılı Ulusal Komitesi 2000 Yılı Çalışmaları* (İnsan Hakları Eğitimi On Yılı Ulusal Komitesi, 2001), 5.

conventions have also made important contributions to the conceptual and theoretical development of HRE since the Second World War. International documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, 1950), which is a major convention agreed upon by the member states of the Council of Europe, and the European Social Charter (1965), which is a complement to the former convention, constitute a conceptual framework for the principles and foundations of HRE.<sup>19</sup> The UNESCO Recommendation concerning on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), adopted as an agreement to encourage and support governments in ensuring the education of all people for the purpose of establishing and maintaining justice, freedom, human rights, and peace, is another text that presents a conceptual framework for HRE.<sup>20</sup>

Efforts to promote HRE are at the heart of a number of initiatives, including the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). In this context, the UN General Assembly launched the World Programme for Human Rights Education on December 10, 2004, in order to ensure the implementation of HRE programs in all sectors. Designed in line with the achievements of the UN Decade of HRE, the aim of the World Programme is to provide a framework for promoting a common understanding of the basic principled values and pedagogical methodologies of HRE.<sup>21</sup> The World Programme is structured in successive stages in order to ensure that national HRE methodology focuses on specific sectors and issues. The first phase (2005-2009) focused on HRE at the primary and secondary school levels, while the second phase (2010-2014) focused on developing HRE programs for higher education institutions, teachers and other educators, public officials, law enforcement officers, and military personnel. The third phase (2015-2019) involved activities to strengthen the implementation of the first two phases and to promote HRE for members of the press. The fourth phase of the World Programme for HRE (2020-2024), which is currently ongoing, focuses on youth-related issues.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Hlyya Kendir, *Trkiye'de İnsan Hakları Eđitimi Arařtırma Raporu* (İnsan Hakları Eđitimi Ađı, 2021), 13.

20 "Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" (1974), [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13088&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13088&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). Date of Access: 19 August 2022.

21 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, *Human Rights Education: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions* (2nd edition, Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, 2019), 9.

22 "World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing)," <https://www.ohchr.org/en/resources/educators/>

In line with the "pedagogy of the decade," the UN has made recommendations on procedures for establishing national committees focused on HRE. At the same time, it is aimed to conduct comprehensive reviews of the state of HRE on the national scale. In this context, the National Committee for Human Rights Education was established in Türkiye in 1998. The National Committee has been tasked with "preparing a National Action Plans, and monitoring and evaluating the work to be carried out within this program."<sup>23</sup> HRE has been set as a separate goal in the Action Plan on Human Rights, which was published as a political agreement on March 2, 2021. In this context, it is stated that HRE should be disseminated at all levels of education in order to increase human rights awareness.<sup>24</sup>

Within the framework of national and supranational documents,<sup>25</sup> HRE has shown a dynamic of gradual development. The first phase, prior to 1948, considered the historical roots of HRE in regards to the relationality between basic educational theories and morals education from Plato to John Dewey. The second phase (1948-1994) focused on the institutionalization of HRE as an educational activity aimed at legitimizing the values and principles of universal human rights. The process in question arises as an output of the standard-setting stages associated with the creation of international norms. The third phase (1995-2010), corresponding to the transformation of HRE into a global movement, began with the declaration of the UN Decade for HRE. The pedagogy of the decade was supported by the international community in order to transform HRE into a legitimate and justified educational approach and to provide a structured conceptual framework for HRE. As the legitimacy crisis of the global human rights

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human-rights-education-training/world-programme-human-rights-education. Date of Access: 19 August 2022.

23 United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (n 18), 11.

24 "Adalet Bakanlığı, İnsan Hakları Eylem Planı" (2021), [https://insanhaklarieylemplani.adalet.gov.tr/resimler/%C4%B0nsan\\_Haklar%C4%B1\\_Eylem\\_Plan%C4%B1\\_ve\\_Uygulama\\_Takvimi.pdf](https://insanhaklarieylemplani.adalet.gov.tr/resimler/%C4%B0nsan_Haklar%C4%B1_Eylem_Plan%C4%B1_ve_Uygulama_Takvimi.pdf). Date of Access: 21 August 2022.

25 Human rights education is regulated in a number of international human rights instruments, particularly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the following: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Article 7); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Article 10); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Article 10); Convention on the Rights of Children (Article 29); Convention on the International Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Article 33); Convention on the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities (Articles 4 and 8); and UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Articles 14 and 15). See., Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 9.

discourse deepened and spiraled into complete counter-hegemonic distrust, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training in 2011.<sup>26</sup>

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training defines HRE as facilitating “the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours.”<sup>27</sup> The Declaration emphasizes the vital role of protecting and developing the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual, community, and group in society through educational activities. In line with this vital role assigned to education, it recommends providing HRE to member states in order to develop universal respect for and a culture and understanding of human rights.<sup>28</sup>

Another universal call to action through which HRE is promoted is found in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs promote HRE as a specific goal of Objective 4.7, which includes qualified education. The relevant target is explained as follows: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”<sup>29</sup>

As a result, HRE finds its existence as a “habituated action” guided by the self-proclaimed values and immanent ideologies of human rights. HRE has a discursive nature in that it aims to construct subjects, such as the bearers of rights or vulnerable groups.<sup>30</sup> As global activism, HRE is focused on raising awareness about the rights regulated by human rights conventions and existing procedures

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26 Michalinos Zembylas & André Keet, *Critical Human Rights Education: Advancing Social-Justice-Oriented Educational Praxes* (Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 20.

27 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), A/RES/66/137.

28 Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Guide to A Strategic Approach to Human Rights Education* (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2017), 18.

29 “Global Initiatives for Human Rights Education,” [https://www.power-humanrights-education.org/wpdata/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Exhibition\\_HRE\\_Full\\_Version\\_2.pdf](https://www.power-humanrights-education.org/wpdata/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Exhibition_HRE_Full_Version_2.pdf). Date of Access: 18 August 2022.

30 André Keet, “Discourse, Betrayal, Critique: The Renewal of Human Rights Education,” in Cornelia Roux (Ed.), *Safe Spaces: Human Rights Education in Diverse Contexts* (Sense Publishers, 2012), 21.



to eliminate violations of rights. Numerous policy documents developed by the UN, affiliated organizations, international policymakers, and regional and national human rights organizations emphasize that human rights subjects should be addressed in schools, especially with reference to HRE.<sup>31</sup>

### III. Methodological Perspective: Methodological Tools for Rights Education

Education is characterized as both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of actualizing other human rights.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, educational activities have the potential to strengthen individuals and encourage them to become active and responsible members of society. This situation is similarly valid in terms of HRE. HRE should eliminate the practices that lead to human rights violations and the conditions that lead to the systematization of those violations in order to carry out activities that ensure the preservation of social order. The perspective of HRE, which removes systematic violations, makes positive change possible for all sectors in a holistic manner. In this context, a number of concepts have been introduced in the literature of this field in the process of working to develop an empowering and transformative educational understanding perspective. Some of these concepts are inspired by the “popular education” (*educação popular*) movement, which was adopted to improve the living conditions of poor and marginalized people.<sup>33</sup>

One of the models that provide a conceptual and theoretical basis for education is the banking education model developed by educational philosopher Paulo Freire in order to define and criticize the traditional education system. In this educational methodology, which is based on “banking education”, education focuses on knowledge transfer as the only method and the educator is accepted as the “authority of knowledge.”<sup>34</sup> In this educational model, it is seen that the relationship between the teacher and the learner has a “narrative” quality. This relationality consists of a narrating subject, or teacher, and patiently listening objects, or students. Freire states that the things that are narrated, whether they

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31 Felisa Tibbitts & Peter Fritzsche, “Editorial: International Perspectives of Human Rights Education (HRE),” in Felisa Tibbitts & Peter Fritzsche (Eds.), *International Perspectives of Human Rights Education (HRE)* (Special Issue of Journal of Social Science Education, 2006), 1.

32 Kılıç (n 14), 28.

33 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 32.

34 Ibid. 32, 33.

are values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend to “degenerate” and “petrify” in the process of being narrated to such an extent that, according to him, “education suffers from the disease of narration.” He also states that students are led to memorize these narratives mechanically. Strikingly, for him, the narrative transforms students into “bins” and “containers” that must be filled by teachers. Thus, education becomes a “savings investment.”<sup>35</sup>

Another concept coined in this field is the distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Top-down and bottom-up approaches define the behavioral patterns of individuals or groups in imposing their ideas on other individuals or groups. It is seen that relationships between individuals and groups are deconstructed hierarchically and on the basis of power in these methodological approaches.<sup>36</sup> As another educational methodology, critical pedagogy entails encouraging a deep understanding of the events that affect the world and communities.<sup>37</sup> Dialogue-based educational methodology, on the other hand, is centered on the idea that real learning processes will take place when people come into contact with or listen to different opinions, thoughts, and experiences. According to this methodological approach, with real dialogues that decode the communicative tensions between students and teachers, each individual will be able to gain the ability to learn in a singular sense. In this context, the role of the human rights educator is to create a true learning community where all relevant people, including the educator, can learn from each other. Thus, both the content of HRE and the learning process result in individual and collective empowerment and transformation.<sup>38</sup>

The methodological approaches shaped in line with these concepts, which form a framework for HRE, offer a holistic perspective. The methodological basis of human rights and education was framed by American scholar Paul Healy. Healy envisages the referencing of “hermeneutic” principles in order to be able to improve the global implementation of a viable human rights regime in a manner commensurate with the preservation of culture-specific differences. The epistemological perspective presented by the methodological approach

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35 Paulo Freire, *Ezilenlerin Pedagojisi* (Turkish translation, 8th edition, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2011), 50, 51.

36 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 32, 33.

37 Freire (n 35), 160.

38 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 32, 33.

developed in order to build up the idea of universal human rights functions as a constructive tool in terms of overcoming the decisiveness inherent in the debate between universalism and cultural relativism. Methodological approaches to HRE are characterized as a quest for a “fusion of horizons”<sup>39</sup> that brings forth an intercultural consensus in the field of human rights. The prescribed unanimity is not based on the idea of transcendental idealism or moral realism. Rather, this unanimity is upheld and conceptualized in a multiplicity of cultural structures.<sup>40</sup>

The educational models developed in the last quarter of the 20th century in relation to HRE have produced a number of schemes for portraying the historical roots, theorization, and implementation of human rights.<sup>41</sup> Although there are many methodological approaches to HRE, it can be said that there is a general consensus on a number of basic components. The first of these basic components is the fact that HRE should encompass both learning content and learning processes. The second is the fact that HRE includes relevant goals for cognitive (*content*), attitudinal or emotional (*values/skills*), and action-oriented components.<sup>42</sup> In fact, HRE encourages contributions to the construction and development of a universal human rights culture by providing individuals with knowledge, skills, and understanding, thus improving their attitudes and behaviors. It is important to integrate an educational methodology<sup>43</sup> structured on the tripartite approach of knowledge, skills, and attitude development into HRE models because the internal awareness of students about human rights does not constitute a qualification. In addition, it is necessary to delineate the level of knowledge they acquire and to focus activism in this direction in order to develop appropriate behavioral attitudes toward the exercising of their rights and their respect for the rights of others.<sup>44</sup>

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39 Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2004).

40 Paul Healy, “Human Rights and Intercultural Relations: A Hermeneutico-dialogical Approach” (2006) 32 PSC; Fuad Al-Daraweesh & Dale T. Snauwaert, *Human Rights Education Beyond Universalism and Relativism: A Relational Hermeneutic for Global Justice* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 48.

41 The US-based Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), an organization characterized as an effective epistemic community in the field of human rights education, coordinates a number of online services. As noted by academic David Suárez, the HREA operates with a mission of “implementing, negotiating, improving and shaping human rights education” through “discourse and active reflection” with more than 16,000 members from more than 170 countries. See., Bajaj (n 16), 6.

42 Ibid. 3.

43 For Bloom’s taxonomy, see Benjamin Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* (Addison-Wesley Longman, 1969).

44 Danish Institute for Human Rights (n 28), 18.

The first qualified research on HRE models was Felisa Tibbitts' study of emerging models in this field. Tibbitts makes a distinction between "values and awareness, accountability and the transformational model"<sup>45</sup> in such a way that HRE is put forward as a model characterized as holistic in the form of a pyramid consisting of differentiated content and target audiences with a tripartite typology.<sup>46</sup> The "HRE Model for Transformation" developed by Tibbitts in 2002 is generally defined as a "transformative and liberating learning process" designed to encourage learners to gain criticality regarding sociopolitical and socio-psychological realities and to show "activity" in the face of injustice.<sup>47</sup> Tibbitts suggests that the learning process in question can be transformative for those who have internalized repression. In addition, according to her, integrating liberating and transformative learning processes makes it possible for students to become actors in the change and transformation paradigm by taking on active roles. The theory of transformation includes both personal transformation and actions or behavioral attitudes in order to eliminate human rights violations.<sup>48</sup>

The transformation model described here was revised in 2017 to include a dimension of activism. The basic idea behind the inclusion of that dimension was primarily an aim of internalizing human rights values and providing a critical perspective. Thus, in this methodology, activist discourses on human rights and social change are to be provided. In the revised transformation model, students are encouraged to adopt a number of positive behavioral attitudes in their own lives, such as gaining awareness about inequalities and personally participating in activist campaigns.<sup>49</sup>

With the first model of the tripartite approach developed by Tibbitts, namely the values and awareness model, HRE focuses on transferring basic knowledge about the field of human rights and integrating that knowledge with social values. It can be said that the purpose of this transfer model for HRE is to pave the way for a world that respects human rights through awareness and commitment to the normative goals set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other

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45 Tibbitts (n 6), 163.

46 Bajaj (n 8), 486.

47 Ahmed, Martin, & Uddin (n 10), 207.

48 Ibid. 207.

49 Ibid. 207.

important documents. With this model, a perspective on the history of human rights and information about human rights protection mechanisms and problem areas related to international human rights, such as child labor, human trafficking, and genocide, are put forward. The most important pedagogical strategy that makes this first model of values and awareness remarkable is that it encourages activism-based student participation on issues related to human rights. On the one hand, the methodological approach in question gives students the ability to think critically, while, on the other hand, it also encourages the ability to approach problematic areas related to human rights from a human rights perspective. Thus, those who learn with this methodological approach are considered as “critical consumers” of human rights.<sup>50</sup>

Model 1: Values and Awareness Model	
<b>Overview</b>	Philosophical-historical approach
<b>Means</b>	Formal education and public awareness campaigns
<b>Typical Topics</b>	History of human rights, fundamental human rights documents, international court system, global human rights issues
<b>Common Audiences</b>	Public, schools
<b>Strategy</b>	Socialization, cultural reconciliation, social change

**Table 1:** HRE Model<sup>51</sup>

As the second model, the accountability model aims to enable students to relate directly and/or indirectly to the basic principled values of human rights through professional roles. In this model, HRE has a methodological approach in the direction of directly monitoring human rights violations and human rights advocacy, and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups/communities. However, personal change and transformation are not explicit goals in this model. Rather, this methodological approach emphasizes the need for broader social change. Therefore, with this methodological approach, community-based national and/or regional goals are set in order to carry out human rights reforms.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Tibbitts (n 6), 6.

<sup>51</sup> These tables on human rights education models were prepared with reference to Felisa Tibbitts' article, *ibid.* 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

<b>Model 2: Accountability Model</b>	
<b>Overview</b>	Legal-political approach
<b>Means</b>	Education and/or networking
<b>Typical Topics</b>	Monitoring procedures, litigation proceedings, code of ethics, relations with the media, public awareness
<b>Common Audiences</b>	Lawyers, human rights defenders and observers, professionals working with vulnerable groups, public employees, medical professionals, members of the press
<b>Strategy</b>	Human rights acquis, social justice and social change, promoting and empowering leadership

**Table 2:** HRE Model

As the third model, the transformational model is aimed at increasing the individual's inner awareness in terms of both identifying human rights violations and eliminating those violations. The target audience of this final model is not only individuals, but all social structures in a holistic manner. The most effective pedagogical strategy of the transformation model is allowing students to think about portraits of human rights in the communities to which they belong.<sup>53</sup>

<b>Model 3: Transformational Model</b>	
<b>Overview</b>	Psychological-sociological approach
<b>Means</b>	Widespread and popular education and self-help
<b>Typical Topics</b>	Human rights as part of women's development, community development, economic development, and minority rights
<b>Common Audiences</b>	Vulnerable communities, victims of abuse and trauma, post-conflict societies
<b>Strategy</b>	Individual empowerment that leads to activism for change, training of human rights activists, leadership development

**Table 3:** HRE Model

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53 Ibid. 9.

Based on the tripartite typology developed by Tibbitts, Monisha Bajaj proposes a tripartite ideological classification of HRE.<sup>54</sup> The first of the models developed by Bajaj is that of HRE for global citizenship.<sup>55</sup> This model produces an international standard by repositioning learners not only as national citizens but also as members of a global community. The methodological approach includes knowledge of international agreements on human rights, the implementation of national and international initiatives, and the historical dynamics of human rights.<sup>56</sup>

An example of an organization based on this educational methodology is the Indian Institute of Human Rights (IIHR, 1999). The mission of the Indian Institute of Human Rights is to carry out educational activities related to the field of human rights on a global scale through two-year distance education courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition to human rights courses, the Institute periodically organizes conferences and workshops on human rights.<sup>57</sup> People's Watch<sup>58</sup> also provides HRE on a national scale in India through the Institute of HRE as a complement to legal and advocacy studies. In this context, projects are being developed to identify problem areas related to human rights and raise awareness. In the early days of these HRE projects, it was observed that school principals, teachers, and students still maintained caste distinctions that had been systematized in educational institutions. For instance, Dalit students, members of the lowest caste and previously called "untouchable," were banned from participating in school activities or there were incidents that were incompatible with human dignity, such as demanding that Dalit students clean the school. However, with the implementation of these HRE programs, students' dogmatic attitudes regarding the caste system have changed both inside and outside of school.<sup>59</sup>

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54 Bajaj (n 8), 489.

55 Charl C. Wolhuter, "The Intersection Between Human Rights Education and Global Citizenship Education," in J.P. Rossouw & Elda de Waal (Eds.), *Human Rights in Diverse Education Contexts* (AOSIS, 2019), 63.

56 Bajaj, (n 8), 490.

57 Ibid. 495.

58 A human rights organization established in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu in 1995.

59 Monisha Bajaj, Beniamino Cislighi, & Gerry Mackie, *Advancing Transformative Human Rights Education* (OpenBook Publishers, 2016), 32, 37.

At this point, it can be stated that ideological diversity<sup>60</sup> shaping national and/or international policy reform plays an important role in the development of HRE methodologies. The activities of organizations that advocate or support HRE at the level of national policy and local and/or international practice as described above confirm that human rights initiatives can have a significant impact on the basic values associated with human dignity.<sup>61</sup>

The second model of the tripartite approach envisioned by Bajaj is HRE for coexistence. This model presents portraits of marginalized groups in post-conflict societies that facilitate the re-examination of violent events from a historical perspective. This methodological approach emphasizes the role of minority rights and pluralistic human rights methodology as important parts of human rights.<sup>62</sup> The Center for Social Justice (CSJ), based on such training methodology, was established in 1994 to provide legal assistance through advocacy and representation of vulnerable communities. After social riots between Muslims and Hindus in Gujarat in 2002, the CSJ started conducting a school-based HRE program with reference to the values and principles of cultural diversity, dignity, equality, and justice. The educational modules include narratives focusing on gender equality, pluralism, cultural diversity, citizenship, and peace. For instance, in a narrative included in one module, there is emphasis on the human decency of a Hindu child and a Muslim child, despite the differences that arise between their communities. Other narratives deal with gender inequalities, caste discrimination, and other forms of social exclusion. After each narrative, there are reflection questions that challenge the status quo and encourage students to think about alternatives to stereotypes and discrimination.<sup>63</sup>

As can be seen from all these examples, many different community-based HRE models envisage educational activities in order to address forms of social exclusion and violence. These community-based models are mostly referenced as a methodological approach in rural areas of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.<sup>64</sup>

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60 OHCHR & Equitas, *Bridging Our Diversities: A Compendium of Good Practices in Human Rights Education* (United Nations, 2022).

61 Monisha Bajaj, *Schooling for Social Change: The Rise and Impact of Human Rights Education in India* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 151.

62 Bajaj (n 8), 493.

63 Ibid. 499.

64 Bajaj, Cislighi, & Mackie (n 59), 13.



The final model of the tripartite typology described here is HRE for transformative action, an action-oriented approach to human rights between ideal and real situations.<sup>65</sup> The most basic purpose of this model is to identify social problem areas and to foster critical thinking and dialogue. In this model, instructors “store” information in students’ minds and then subject students to exams based on that information. The transformation model aims to raise individuals’ awareness about human rights through both individual and social activism.<sup>66</sup>

Another educational methodology described as a whole approach to HRE utilizes the idea that human rights should be learned and applied simultaneously at all levels of education. This methodological approach is consistent with the international discourses on HRE produced from the 1980s to the present day.<sup>67</sup> As an example of a whole school approach, a 2008 project titled “Transforming a School Through Human Rights,” conducted at a school in Portugal, can be mentioned. This project was carried out in a neighborhood school that enrolled about 650 children between the ages of 5 and 18. The neighborhood designated for the project attracted public attention with low academic achievement rates and high levels of violence. A whole school approach to HRE was determined as the educational methodology for the project. The methodology was designed such that universal values of human rights were not only included in the curriculum; it was aimed to integrate them into all aspects of school life in a holistic manner, including school policies, decision-making processes, relations with the local community, teaching methods, and even the physical environment. This vision based on a holistic school approach made it possible for the school to transform that project into a good practices model whereby students take more responsibility, anti-social behaviors are reduced to minimal levels, and learning outcomes are improved.<sup>68</sup>

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65 Bajaj (n 8), 493.

66 Bajaj, Cislaghi, & Mackie (n 59), 19.

67 The most recent and relevant example of international discourse in terms of the whole-school approach is the ongoing UN World Programme on Human Rights Education, which includes human rights in education in its Phase One Action Plan and calls for a “whole, rights-based approach.” See., Sam Mejias & Hugh Starkey, “Critical Citizens or Neo-Liberal Consumers? Utopian Visions and Pragmatic Uses of Human Rights Education in a Secondary School in England,” in Richard C. Mitchell & Shannon A. Moore (Eds.), *Transdisciplinary Approaches to Critical Citizenship in the Classroom and Community* (Sense Publishers, 2012), 124.

68 “Success Stories,” <https://www.power-humanrights-education.org/exhibition/success-stories/>. Date of Access: 20 August 2022.

The “world cafe” method is another educational methodology that has found implementation in HRE. This methodology is defined as “a creative learning process to facilitate collaborative dialogue, to share information and ideas in order to create a lively conversation and action network.”<sup>69</sup> During the learning process, a cafe environment is created where participants discuss a question or topic in small groups around a table. The participants move to new tables at regular intervals to discuss different issues from different perspectives. At the end of the process, the main ideas are summarized in a general session and a discussion environment is created for them.<sup>70</sup>

HRE through storytelling is another educational methodology that is widely used on a global scale. Storytelling is defined as the process of organizing experiences within the framework of a number of important events.<sup>71</sup> The storytelling education methodology shapes behaviors rather than reflecting the behavioral attitudes of individuals. It is increasingly finding implementation in educational activities due to its potential value in shaping behaviors.<sup>72</sup>

The transformation of human rights into a narrative through storytelling makes it possible to promote HRE and participation processes based on ethical values and principles because the methodological approach in question is considered as a process associated with attitudinal and behavioral changes rather than mere acts of lecturing.<sup>73</sup>

As a result, it is inevitable that HRE, as a system of rights itself, makes positive development possible for both individuals and societies. Educational activities related to human rights shape individual consciences at the level of values. On the political level, such education makes it possible to carry out activities in the dimension of activism with the intent of protecting and improving the rights and

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69 The World Café Community Foundation, “A Quick Reference Guide for Hosting World Café” (2015), <https://theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf>. Date of Access: 14 November 2022.

70 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 158.

71 Ibid. 158.

72 Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert (n 40), 169.

73 Joanne Coysh, *Human Rights Education and the Politics of Knowledge* (1st edition, Routledge, 2017), 147.

freedoms of vulnerable groups in society.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, in order for educational activities to move beyond fact-based content and include skills, attitudes, values, and actions, a horizontal educational structure is required instead of a hierarchical one.<sup>75</sup>

#### **IV. Critical Perspectives: A Critical Analysis of Human Rights Education**

HRE is seen as the most effective way to integrate people in an increasingly fragmented globalized world.<sup>76</sup> However, it must be recognized that there are a number of critical perspectives that focus on the effectiveness of HRE, teaching methodologies, pedagogical strategies, and human rights discourses. In this context, the issues considered by critical approaches toward HRE may be listed as follows: criticism of modern human rights discourses, the transformation of HRE into a global performance that is alienated from its principle values and thereby a shallow form of marketing, the main ideas behind the adoption of HRE by states, the UN's construction of a control mechanism over states by institutionalizing human rights, the literature on HRE focusing only on pedagogical and methodological problems, the declarative nature of HRE, the colonization of HRE, the tripartite orthodoxy of HRE, and the lack of culturally based pedagogies.

The main argument of these criticisms is aimed at the emergence of a regulatory human rights practice with the reduction of human rights to law. The interest in human rights criticism, which is at the heart of HRE, is based on the idea that such criticism will show resistance to the marketing of HRE. In this context, the problem of converting human rights into capital rights is discussed. It is precisely at this point that HRE is assessed to allow for a focus on the erosion of citizenship, democracy, and human rights under the destructive influence of a world based on neoliberal policies that deepen social injustice.<sup>77</sup>

From the perspective of the neo-realist approach, it is suggested that HRE is adopted by states in a two-faced manner and focuses on the international benefits of conducting such educational activities. While it is agreed that adopting HRE can

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74 Tibbitts and Fritzsche (n 31), 5.

75 Flowers, Bernbaum, Rudelius-Palmer, & Tolman (n 3), 59.

76 UNESCO, *Contemporary Issues in Human Rights Education* (UNESCO Publishing, 2011), 12.

77 Zembylas & Keet (n 26), 10.

contribute to stable democracy by creating a set of common values and norms that include both majority and minority groups,<sup>78</sup> this approach holds that the human rights discourse that is still conceptualized as an ideal creates constraints in terms of explaining why the adoption of education as a fiction of building human rights-friendly societies and democratic citizenship is in the interest of states. In this regard, Monisha Bajaj explains that "nation-states and policymakers have varying reasons to support HRE, whether it contains a transformative vision or not, and despite a rhetorical consensus at the interstate level and it cannot be said that education of this nature is in the interests of nation-states."<sup>79</sup>

Another criticism directed at HRE suggests that by considering HRE from the perspective of values, there has been a departure from universal principles and values. According to these criticisms, HRE has become alienated from its basic values. It is argued that HRE has become an "advertised ideology" with the production of countless courses, programs, seminars, and educational materials on a global scale. The dissemination of HRE through advertising has led to its alienation from the basic paradigmatic principles of human rights. This situation is portrayed as a transformation of HRE into a "global spectacle."<sup>80</sup>

However, the most striking criticism toward HRE is directed at the UN's ideology of the institutionalization of human rights. It is suggested that the UN is gradually institutionalizing and centralizing human rights, establishing more and more authority over the discourse of HRE.<sup>81</sup> Although the UN's institutional structures have a positive view of the independent adoption of comprehensive human rights contents and pedagogies by national governments, some academics, such as Sonia Cardenas, consider the role of states in this process of developing HRE from a more skeptical perspective.<sup>82</sup> Considering the contracts and contractual obligations established within UN HRE systems in terms of positive effects of education on a global scale, despite the expansion of the educational activities,

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78 Knut Vesterdal, "Championing Human Rights Close to Home and Far Away: Human Rights Education in the Light of National Identity Construction and Foreign Policy in Norway" (2019) 2(1) HRER, 11.

79 Bajaj (n 16), 8.

80 André Keet, "Does Human Rights Education Exist?" (2017) 1(1) IJSR, 9.

81 Joanne Coysh, "The Dominant Discourse of Human Rights Education: A Critique" (2014) 6(1) JHRP, 92, 93.

82 Bajaj (n 8), 488.

paradoxically, sustainable and meaningful analysis is not possible.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, there is a risk that such educational efforts may be potentially costly for states. Indeed, Cardenas emphasizes that "HRE, which is revolutionary in nature, has the potential to generate social opposition, as well as increasing demands for justice and accountability if implemented effectively."<sup>84</sup>

In line with all these criticisms, it has been argued that the UN uses its financial resources and political influence to create a HRE framework that can integrate international human rights into individual minds, societies, or communities more readily than national governments. Based on Michel Foucault's idea that institutions control the formation of discourse in order to regulate social structures, and since a discourse is "a set of linguistic, polemical and strategic facts designed to produce and maintain an economy of truth,"<sup>85</sup> it is suggested that controlling the production of HRE discourses facilitates the way in which the UN adopts and manages human rights from the point of view of individuals and communities.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the way in which power produces knowledge has critical importance for deciphering the production of HRE discourses and the ways in which different discursive orientations coexist in systematized struggle relations. Each form of production determines the field of HRE at any given time. In addition, it constitutes the basis of the tension between legitimacy and illegitimacy or struggle and submission. In this context, the discourse of HRE is seen as a central part of an information struggle in which multiple power relations are operating.<sup>87</sup>

For this reason, the construction of a global HRE discourse has been based on the subjugation of certain types of information. It is suggested that this situation is actualized through the institutionalization and formalization of HRE and the burying or masking of historical information. The idea of HRE could be said to have arisen as part of the UN Convention, which eliminated all kinds of pre-existing knowledge, discourse, and approaches to HRE.<sup>88</sup> In fact, it is further

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83 Keet (n 30), 7.

84 Bajaj (n 8), 488.

85 Michel Foucault, *Power* (The New Press, 2001), 3.

86 Coysh, "The Dominant Discourse of Human Rights Education: A Critique" (n 81), 94.

87 Ibid. 94.

88 Ibid. 94. See., Michel Foucault, *Toplumu Savunmak Gerekir* (Turkish translation, 6th edition, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013); Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (Picador, 2003).

suggested that HRE<sup>89</sup> was designed with the aim of shifting and changing values and behaviors toward the values prioritized by the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>90</sup> In this context, HRE has been defined as the "operational plans of the rising global education philosophy."<sup>91</sup>

Another criticism regarding HRE is directed at the transformation of the field's literature into a body of work addressing primarily pedagogical and methodological issues. Thus, it is stated that the HRE methodology has largely shifted toward a curriculum-based<sup>92</sup> approach.<sup>93</sup> In this context, the ultimate goal of HRE is described as the integration of human rights into basic education systems and practices. It is suggested that theoretical studies on HRE have built a declarative, conservative, and uncritical framework that prevents the integration of human rights criticism into HRE. Therefore, instead of facilitating the transformative radicalism of human rights, the dominance of this approach creates constraints in terms of the pedagogical values of HRE.<sup>94</sup> These "declarative, conservative, and critical" approaches to HRE may sometimes create irregular doctrines of HRE that are isolated from social reality. In turn, such doctrines provide room for a singular methodology that focuses only on certain educational areas or certain cultural or individual values. This process leads to the imposition of a one-way moral system that denies diversity and multiculturalism.<sup>95</sup>

In relation to the above findings, another striking criticism of HRE suggests that it is declarative in nature. South African human rights researcher André Keet, who has published important criticisms of the methodology of HRE, suggests that the practice of HRE is still "declarationist" in nature, focusing on political literacy

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89 For examples of countries, see Carole Hahn, "Human Rights Teaching: Snapshots from Four Countries" (2020) 3(1) HRER.

90 Anne Becker, "Decolonial Human Rights Education: Changing the Terms and Content of Conversations on Human Rights" (2021) 4(2) HRER, 52.

91 Keet (n 30), 8.

92 Cecilia Decara, Carol Rask, & Felisa Tibbitts, *Guide On Human Rights Education Curriculum Development: Furthering SDG Target 4.7 in Primary and Secondary Schools* (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2021), 2.

93 Coysh, *Human Rights Education and the Politics of Knowledge* (n 73), 75.

94 Keet (n 30), 7.

95 Gloria Ramirez, "Emerging Rights: A Topic of HRE" (2006) 5(1) JSSE, 17, 18.

or legal compliance and denying participatory social change.<sup>96</sup> According to him, HRE structures itself around the dogmatic belief that all human rights realities are produced and completed in human rights documents such as declarations and conventions.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, it is suggested that HRE has become a part of the colonial order. To save HRE from the colonial mentality, it is necessary to develop a serious strategic perspective that removes Eurocentric thinking and re-contextualizes HRE theory and pedagogical practice within the historical context of colonialism. In order for HRE to be more critical and transformative, it is necessary to go beyond the epistemological and ontological basis that exists at the core of the hegemonic human rights regime. In this context, there is a need for pedagogies that eliminate the colonial mentality and curricula that problematize human rights and the precursors of HRE.<sup>98</sup>

In this process, colonial mental constructions and assumptions need to be eliminated. It is generally concluded in this context that deconstructing colonial hegemony and building pluralistic knowledge-based and understanding-based educational systems entail different methodologies. One of the methodological approaches in question is the Ubuntu philosophy,<sup>99</sup> which is proposed as the antecedent of human rights. It is assumed that such resistance to the colonization of HRE will create opportunities for the inclusion of suffering, struggles, conflicts, and re-awakenings within the greater body of human rights knowledge. A systematic and relational onto-epistemological decolonial process will be able to change both the conceptual structure and the content of HRE discourses.<sup>100</sup>

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96 Keet (n 30), 7.

97 Zembylas & Keet (n 26), 19.

98 Ibid. 132.

99 Ubuntu entails the belief that common bonds within a group are more important than any individual arguments and divisions. Kenyan literary scholar James Ogude proposes that Ubuntu can serve as a counterweight to the individualism that is so prevalent in the modern world. Steve Paulson, "I Am Because We Are": The African Philosophy of Ubuntu" (2019), <https://www.ttbook.org/interview/i-am-because-we-are-african-philosophy-ubuntu>. Date of Access: 22 August 2022.

100 Becker (n 90), 63.

Strategies to decolonize human rights and HRE inevitably function as part of the task of decolonizing education and knowledge. In this regard, a tripartite strategy is being put forward. The first decolonial strategy is the re-contextualization of human rights and HRE. The strategy in question here involves an approach that José-Manuel Barreto<sup>101</sup> calls the "re-contextualization" of human rights, which includes the need to expand the history and context of human rights beyond European borders on the basis of the assessment that Western epistemology colonizes other cultures. The re-contextualization of the hegemonic theory of human rights in the material conditions of modern (post-)colonial geography and history will make it possible to rewrite the geography and history of human rights.<sup>102</sup>

The second decolonial strategy entails criticism of critical theory and pedagogy. Sabine Broeck argues that critical theory needs to be changed in order to take into account the violence produced by imperialism.<sup>103</sup> The third decolonial strategy is the adoption of the "ethics of emotions" as an ethics of human rights and HRE.<sup>104</sup> Decolonization pedagogy for HRE needs to go beyond critical pedagogy. Decolonization pedagogy should focus on a human rights discourse based on a critical perspective instead of producing a naive and emotional narrative.<sup>105</sup>

Another critical approach to HRE argues that the current version of HRE leads to a tripartite orthodoxy including the so-called heaven-and-hell binary, one-way traffic paradigm, and abolitionist paradigm. The hell-and-heaven binary, as the first orthodoxy of HRE, basically divides the world into two metaphorical social typologies, namely heaven and hell. Countries that respect human rights are portrayed with the metaphor of "heaven," while countries that violate human rights are portrayed with the metaphor of "hell." More specifically, this typology describes Western societies as heaven in a figurative sense while presenting "Third

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101 See, José-Manuel Barreto (Ed.), *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective: Critique, History and International Law* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

102 Zembylas and Keet (n 26), 139.

103 Sabine Broeck, "The Legacy of Slavery: White Humanities and Its Subject," in José-Manuel Barreto (Ed.), *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective: Critique, History and International Law* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 102.

104 Zembylas & Keet (n 26), 140.

105 Michalinos Zembylas, "Re-contextualising Human Rights Education: Some Decolonial Strategies and Pedagogical/Curricular Possibilities," (2017) 25(4) PCS, 2.



World" countries as hells overrun with incessant conflicts and hardship due to the intensity of their human rights violations.<sup>106</sup> As the human rights discourse, the intellectual property of which is largely reserved for the "modern Western world," has become an inspiring myth of the modern age with the journey of development toward institutional structuring, it is seen that an accompanying kind of belief or dogma (*credo, corpus*) has been produced.<sup>107</sup> There is no doubt that such dogmatic beliefs will also affect HRE.

The second orthodoxy arising from modern HRE practices is the one-way traffic paradigm. This paradigm arises as a result of the reduction of human rights to a single tradition or Western-centric thoughts about human rights. HRE takes this paradigm as a reference and thus manifests itself in only Western conceptualizations of human rights. The third orthodoxy is the abolitionist paradigm. As a result of relying on a single conceptualization of HRE, theorists demand "the abolition of local practices that are contrary to the requirements of international human rights law."<sup>108</sup>

The modern HRE paradigm provides the transfer of human rights knowledge mostly with reference to Western-centric human rights discourses. In contrast, the grounding of HRE in relational hermeneutic epistemology would make it possible to eliminate these educational orthodoxies and universalist-relativist tensions. It is argued that rights education based on Western-centric human rights ideas will create an education based on the banking model, as described above, and it is precisely at this point that it is necessary to address HRE with a hermeneutic perspective, reflecting the philosophy of interpretation in the modern period. While the current HRE paradigm focuses on education regarding human rights, the relational hermeneutic interpretive paradigm focuses on education for the actualization of human rights and their equivalents. With the hermeneutic paradigm, the focus is on the dissemination of knowledge about rights using cultural epistemology.<sup>109</sup>

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106 Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert (n 40), 142.

107 Muharrem Kılıç, "Mit ile Gerçeklik Arasında İnsan Hakları Anlatısı," in *İnsan Haklarını Yeniden Düşünmek Bildiriler Kitabı* (Türkiye İnsan Hakları ve Eşitlik Kurumu, 2018), 214.

108 Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert (n 40), 142, 146.

109 Ibid. 48.

Hermeneutics, which reflects the multifaceted dialectic between a knower/interpreter and a text, makes the construction of a "subject" possible, unlike structured educational models. In fact, subject-centered methodology cannot be observed in structuralist educational models. However, educational processes entail the construction of a dialectical world of meaning. The knowledge of human rights, which is the subject of the education in question, also finds its existence in a pluralistic and dynamic cultural universe. Therefore, HRE should be considered from a hermeneutic perspective, not with structuralist modeling. Otherwise, subjects will not be able to dissociate themselves from the onto-epistemological universe to which they completely belong in accordance with the paradigmatic framework prescribed by modernity. The hermeneutic perspective will make it possible for subjects to find a foothold in the onto-sociological universe to which they belong.<sup>110</sup>

HRE, which aims to make self-actualization possible for individuals, should reference a relational epistemology. HRE, which by its nature takes relational epistemology as a reference, produces a conceptual framework for constructing meaning between cultures. This conceptual framework carries with it the potential to transform aspects of cultures that are incompatible with the normative framework of human rights. It has been stated that most current practices in education focus on the transfer of knowledge rather than the development of the capacities to produce and internalize knowledge, and so they remain mechanisms for pedagogies and policies of the status quo.<sup>111</sup> At this point, it should be emphasized that the most effective way to improve the practice of HRE is to build human rights structures and systems with dialogue-based mechanisms rather than any formal institutional mechanisms. In this way, it will be possible to develop a self-reflective learning process that offers guidance in making sense of the different forms of HRE. In this way, it may be said that HRE corresponds to another dimension of human rights struggles.<sup>112</sup>

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110 Muharrem Kılıç, "Anlamin İnşası ve Anlama Etkinliđi Bađlamında Geleneđin Sorunsallařtırılması" (2010) 22 SDÜ SBD, 125.

111 Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert (n 40), 160.

112 Coysh, *Human Rights Education and the Politics of Knowledge* (n 73), 75.

In summary, when critical perspectives on HRE are analyzed in a holistic manner, it can be concluded that the paradigm change needed in global HRE must entail a culture-sensitive pedagogy.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the holistic methodological structure of the tripartite approach related to the learning process, involving knowledge, skills, and attitude, should be taken as a basis. It is important to produce methods that are developed according to the structure in question and based on internalization, not externalization. In fact, the methodology of HRE is not rhetorical<sup>114</sup> or dialectical between the teacher and the learner; rather, it operates as an active process. At the same time, the human rights teaching process can be defined as a transfer of behavioral forms structured and internalized with values. It is important to internalize the learning of human rights in accordance with the human rights systems built on the theory of natural rights. Human rights must not be transferred as external educational materials; rather, it is necessary to develop a tripartite approach to HRE that is directly related to the learning process. For all these reasons, it is necessary to develop a methodology for internalized rights learning for HRE.

## **V. Institutional Perspective: National Human Rights Institutions and Human Rights Education**

The practice of institutional structuring, based on the idea of protecting and improving human rights, has taken shape in the shadow of global politics formed by periodically changing geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics and, more fundamentally, ideological conditioning. These mechanisms, which may be structured as national human rights institutions, act as bridges between national practices and supranational dynamics within the framework of the mission of monitoring and supervising the national implementation of the constituent human rights conventions with which they are associated.<sup>115</sup> International authorities and nongovernmental organizations increasingly emphasize the need for local structures to ensure national compliance with the obligations of states to protect, respect, and fulfill human rights.<sup>116</sup> On a case to case basis, the establishment of

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113 Al-Daraweesh & Snauwaert (n 40), 169.

114 Audrey Osler & Jon Arne Skarra, "The Rhetoric and Reality of Human Rights Education: Policy Frameworks and Teacher Perspectives" (2021) 13(3) MER, 207.

115 Muharrem Kiliç, "İnsan Haklarının Kurumsallaşması: Ulusal İnsan Hakları Kurumları" (2022) 5(8) TİHEK AD, 17, 18.

116 Jeong-Woo Koo & Francisco O. Ramirez, "National Incorporation of Global Human Rights: Worldwide Expansion of National Human Rights Institutions, 1966-2004" (2009) 87(3) SF, 1324.

such institutional structures provides a concrete indication of the extent to which international human rights standards have been incorporated into national laws and practices. These institutional structures function as “receptor sites” where global human rights norms may become established in the local context.<sup>117</sup>

National human rights institutions are structured as local institutional mechanisms that are emplaced with the aim of protecting and promoting human rights per se and they are defined in General Comment No. 10 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) as established structures “in states with very different legal cultures and regardless of their economic situation.” These institutional structures carry out activities within the framework of their institutional jurisdiction, primarily handling complaints, publishing recommendations, reporting activities, and overseeing educational and awareness-raising activities.<sup>118</sup>

Although the missions of national human rights institutions vary on a global scale, it is observed that most institutional structures carry out activities related to HRE, whether directly or indirectly. Such institutional structures mostly focus on HRE as an awareness-raising strategy. In the experience of the National Human Rights Institutions' HRE Network,<sup>119</sup> HRE is generally considered to entail “promotional activities,” including, for example, awareness-raising campaigns, informative activities on key areas of human rights, or the distribution of pamphlets. However, in accordance with the definition of HRE in the International Declaration on HRE and Training, HRE functions as a process that provides people with knowledge, skills, and attitudes and is based on didactic principles of education.<sup>120</sup>

At this point, it should be noted that the Danish Institute for Human Rights conducted a survey on HRE activities among its global peers, including national human rights institutions and HRE experts, in 2014. The survey revealed that

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117 Susan Garnett Russell & David F. Suárez, “Symbol and Substance: Human Rights Education as an Emergent Global Institution,” in Monisha Bajaj (Ed.), *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 27.

118 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), General Comment No. 10: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Protection of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/1998/25.

119 <https://www.humanrights.dk/projects/nhri-network-human-rights-education>. Date of Access 22 August 2022.

120 Danish Institute for Human Rights (n 28), 23.

national human rights institutions do not have a common understanding or vision regarding their institutional roles and responsibilities in relation to HRE. According to the survey results, national human rights institutions lack common standards and guidelines for HRE. In addition, there is a knowledge gap regarding strategic approaches to HRE. Another finding of the survey was that national human rights institutions generally focus on face-to-face educational activities while HRE initiatives and programs are not integrated into these structures.<sup>121</sup> Although the results of this survey revealed a lack of coherency in global pedagogy regarding HRE, national human rights institutions have the potential to encourage individuals to mobilize for human rights by “creating an operational discourse through rights education, including learning by influencing HRE programs, supporting the development of human rights projects and implementing the learned knowledge.”<sup>122</sup>

It should furthermore be noted that there are some difficulties and restrictions faced by most, if not all, national human rights institutions in the course of performing their institutional duties in terms of HRE. These difficulties can be listed as the lack of development of HRE strategies at the national policy level, the fact that HRE has not been identified as a priority area for national human rights institutions, the necessity of organizing HRE with long-term projections, and the challenges in ensuring a sufficient budget and appropriate human capital due to the fact that HRE requires a large number of skill sets.<sup>123</sup>

The Action Plan for the second phase of the World Programme for HRE (2010-2014)<sup>124</sup> set out a framework for human rights institutions to work in collaboration with governmental institutions in determining the scope, planning, implementation, and evaluation of national HRE plans. National human rights institutions, together with public authorities, have the duty of monitoring and reporting on the development of national HRE plans. They also have the duty of reporting any information on the outputs of HRE programs to the UN via relevant human rights reporting mechanisms. In this context, inclusive educational

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121 Ibid. 8.

122 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 21.

123 FRA, “Strong and Effective National Human Rights Institutions: Challenges, Promising, Practices and Opportunities” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020), 59.

124 United Nations, World Programme for Human Rights Education: Second Phase (United Nations, 2012).

activities were foreseen for each working area of such institutional structures. A number of activities including national investigations, monitoring, and reporting on human rights violations were recognized among the basic methodologies of HRE.<sup>125</sup>

As one of those basic methodologies, monitoring the implementation of HRE provides perspective on the fulfillment of contractual obligations and commitments of states in the international norms system. Furthermore, systematic monitoring of the outputs of educational activities makes it possible for such commitments to not merely remain on paper; they are more readily translated into action and practice.<sup>126</sup> Within the framework of all these institutional activities, some examples of good practices developed by human rights institutions related to HRE can be mentioned.

For instance, the methodologies developed by the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)<sup>127</sup> regarding HRE are remarkable. A project entitled "SUHAKAM Going Digital with Monash" (2015-2017), a two-year HRE initiative in Malaysia, offers a remarkable methodological example in terms of HRE. In this context, a "Robot Activist" was designed to provide information about SUHAKAM and to introduce "smart" questions and answers and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in both Malay and English. This artificial intelligence-based education methodology also incorporates "Simon Says" as an interactive game session with students. The innovative methodology developed in collaboration with SUHAKAM and Monash University aimed to bring the Robot Activist to all schools in Malaysia.<sup>128</sup>

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125 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 20.

126 Human Rights Education Associates, "Human Rights Education Indicator Framework: Key Indicators to Monitor and Assess the Implementation of Human Rights Education and Training" (HRE, 2020), 1.

127 Established under Malaysian Human Rights Commission Law No. 597, SUHAKAM, as an organization with institutional powers and responsibilities such as raising awareness on human rights, conducting human rights education activities, and advising the Malaysian government, aims to report the difficulties encountered in addressing human rights education constraints and the protection and improvement of fundamental rights and freedoms in Malaysia. See., Eysin Chew, Umer Sikander Khan, & Pei Hsi Lee, "Designing a Novel Robot Activist Model for Interactive Child Rights Education" (2021) 13 IJSR, 1641.

128 Chew, Khan, & Lee (n 127), 1641.

The Human Rights Centre in Finland also published a baseline study on HRE in 2014. That study was undertaken to investigate the level of adoption of the basic components of HRE in the education sector and provide diversified recommendations for improvements to HRE. In this context, the following were among the report's proposed activities: "Preparation of an action plan for HRE, inclusion of human rights in all levels of educational activities and increasing the level of human rights knowledge and skills of educators."<sup>129</sup>

As another example of good practice, the Australian Human Rights Commission's HRE program aims to ensure understanding of and respect for rights at home, at school, at work, and in the social sphere. Under the Australian government's Human Rights Framework, the Commission was allocated a four-year fund (2010-2014) to expand community-based education and its participatory role.<sup>130</sup> In this context, activities such as the following were carried out:

- "Promoting the integration of HRE in schools as part of the development of a new national curriculum, as well as providing human rights teaching resources for teachers and human rights information for students,
- Effectively using social media to engage the Australian community in action-based human rights discussions,
- Interacting with the business world and industry in order to promote the universal principles of human rights as a daily part of their activities,
- Working with employers in cooperation in order to prevent discrimination at the workplace,
- Supporting national sports according to the rules that promote inclusive, safe and fair sports" (Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, 24).

The Austrian Ombudsman Board's weekly TV program *Bürgeranwalt* (Advocate for the People) is another example of good practice that should be mentioned. These broadcasts present real-life complaints made to the Ombudsman Board

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<sup>129</sup> The Human Rights Centre, "Human Rights Education in Finland" (Helsinki, 2014), 24.

<sup>130</sup> Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 27.

and suggestions for solutions to those complaints. With this program, the Board aims to increase institutional awareness and visibility by presenting its works to the attention of citizens. In addition, the consideration of problems from real life makes it possible to increase public awareness of rights.<sup>131</sup>

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Poland have also developed educational practices within the framework of different methodological approaches to HRE. For instance, the Commissioner for Human Rights oversaw the establishment of a "human rights tent" at the Pol'and'Rock music festival held in Poland. In addition, this office has brought human rights issues to the attention of the public through productions, performances, board games, dances, and workshops.<sup>132</sup>

In 2017, the Asia Pacific Forum launched an effort to establish the Asia Pacific National Human Rights Forum Institutions Facilitators Network as a result of feedback from its members. The aim of this network is to "build the understanding and practice of facilitating participants in adult-centered learning and HRE and to create a region-wide network of human rights facilitators." Furthermore, the network strives to increase the effectiveness of HRE by strengthening participant-centered human rights capacity-building practices instead of the teacher/instructor-centered teaching methodologies for HRE.<sup>133</sup>

The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREIT; Turkish acronym: TİHEK),<sup>134</sup> which is structured as the country's national human rights institution, carries out educational activities within the framework of authority and duties for national human rights protection, development, anti-discrimination, and prevention mechanisms. The duties of HREIT related to HRE have been regulated as follows in accordance with the relevant articles of Institution Law No. 6701:

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131 FRA (n 123), 59.

132 Ibid. 59.

133 Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 21), 27.

134 HREIT was structured as an equality and human rights institution with Law No. 6701 on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye, dated 20 April 2016, to replace the Human Rights Institution of Türkiye, which had been established in 2012 with Law No. 6332. In addition to being an equality and human rights institution, HREIT also exercises legal powers as an institution that has the duty of overseeing a "national preventive mechanism." See., Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye, <https://www.tihkek.gov.tr>. Date of Access 28 August 2022.



- “To develop public awareness on human rights and anti-discrimination issues through information, education and also, using mass media,
- To contribute to the preparation of the sections on human rights and non-discrimination in the national education curriculum,
- To carry out activities jointly with universities for the protection of human rights, the elimination of discrimination and the development of an understanding of equality in society,
- To contribute to the establishment of human rights and equality related departments of universities under the coordination of the Council of Higher Education and determine the curriculum of human rights and equality education,
- To contribute to the determination of the principles of pre-professional and intra-professional human rights and equality education programs of public institutions and organizations and to the implementation of these programs,
- To cooperate with public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations and universities that carry out activities within the scope of protecting human rights and fighting against discrimination.”<sup>135</sup>

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135 Law on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye, Law Number 6701, Date of Adoption: 6.4.2016, Official Gazette 20.4.2016/29690.

In this context, HREIT's activities related to HRE are listed in the table below.

<b>Institution/ Organization Requesting Education</b>	<b>Group Receiving Education</b>	<b>Subject of Education</b>
Presidency of Strategy and Budget	Strategy and Budget Assistant Experts	Studies and Practices in the Field of Human Rights
Ministry of Interior	Candidates for District Governor for the 107th Period	International Documents in the Field Of Human Rights, The Process of Institutionalization Of Human Rights in Türkiye, The Human Rights and Equality Institution and The Innovations It Has Brought, Legislation on the Working Principles of Provincial and Sub-Provincial Human Rights Boards, Implementation Examples
Directorate of Communications	Nominated Officers	Theory and Historical Development of Human Rights, Fight Against Discrimination, Mechanisms for Protecting Human Rights
Ministry of Labor and Social Security	Nominated Officers	Theory and Historical Development of Human Rights, Fight Against Discrimination, Mechanisms for Protecting Human Rights
Presidency of Migration Management	Migration Assistant Experts	Studies and Practices in the Field of Human Rights, Historical Development of Human Rights, Mechanisms for Seeking Rights, Decisions of HREIT on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Historical Development and Principles of the National Prevention Mechanism, Visits

General Directorate of Migration Management (Project "Phase-II," A Project for the General Directorate of Migration Management to Strengthen the Capacity of Repatriation Centers within the Framework of International Human Rights Standards)	Directors of Repatriation Centers	Theory and Historical Development Of Human Rights, Fight Against Discrimination, Mechanisms for Protecting Human Rights
National Directorate of Education of Arnavutköy District	Special Education Teachers	Disability Rights in Education
National Directorate of Education of Arnavutköy District	Parents of Children With Special Educational Needs	Disability Rights in Education, Ways of Claiming Rights
National Security Council (NSC)	NSC Staff	Concept and Historical Development of Human Rights, Decisional Mechanisms of Claiming Rights, HREIT's Decisions on the Prohibition of Discrimination
The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities	NGOs Working in the Field of Human Rights	Preparing Reports in the Field of Human Rights

Directorate General of Migration Management (Prevention of Child, Early, and Forced Marriages Project)	Provincial Migration Experts/Assistant Experts	Theory and Historical Development of Human Rights, Fight Against Discrimination, Mechanisms for Protecting Human Rights
European Union of Medical Students - Türkiye	Medical Students	Human Rights, Prohibition of Discrimination, Medicine and Human Rights

**Table 4:** HRE Conducted by HREIT in 2021.<sup>136</sup>

As a result, national human rights institutions, which have the duty and authority to protect and promote human rights, play important roles in raising awareness through HRE. However, these institutional structures should focus on HRE not only as a strategy for raising awareness but also as a separate area of duty. Considering the survey results obtained by the Danish Human Rights Institute, it is obvious that there is a need to create a common conceptual framework for HRE. In this context, the fact that national human rights institutions lead the creation of action plans for rights education and monitor the prescribed activities related to the goals and objectives contained in such plans will contribute to the transformation of rights education into action. Considering the situatedness of national human rights institutions in the social sphere, the pedagogy developed for the systematic monitoring of HRE and practice is also important for ensuring that such commitments be converted into action.

## **VI. In Lieu of a Conclusion**

The dynamics of the development of human rights in the direction of institutional structuring have revealed the need to gain deeper insight into the declarative, conceptual, and theoretical frameworks of these rights. Thus, focusing on HRE in a multi-dimensional way has become an institutional goal. By taking into account the multi-dimensionality of HRE, institutional structures have focused on rights education. Historically, HRE has been at the center of the initiatives of various

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<sup>136</sup> HREIT 2021 Annual Report (2022), 94.

international organizations, and especially the UN, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. In this regard, the UN Declaration on HRE and Training defines HRE as “all education, training, information and learning activities that contribute to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses,” thus highlighting the critical role of protecting and promoting the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual, community, and group.

HRE is increasingly being recognized as the most effective way to integrate the pieces of a globalized yet fragmented world. As Mesut Gülmez accurately states, “HRE is necessary primarily for obtaining basic human rights knowledge from the point of view of human rights subjects. Individuals are unable to recognize the rights that documents entitle to them from birth due to the fact that they are human.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore, as a type of global activism, HRE has focused on raising awareness about the rights regulated by human rights conventions and existing procedures for eliminating violations of rights. However, HRE, which is structured on the basis of global trends, is now facing an existential crisis. Beyond reviving global trends, it is necessary to build an understanding of the values produced with a pluralistic methodological perspective on human rights to be internalized on an axiological basis.

It is important to emphasize that there are a number of critical perspectives that focus on the effectiveness of HRE, teaching methodologies, pedagogical strategies, and human rights discourses. As has been detailed in this article, HRE is a subject of criticism in a multi-dimensional way, from the modern human rights discourse to the transformation of HRE into a global performance, from the fact that HRE has become a political commitment to the fact that the literature often focuses on purely pedagogical and methodological problems, and from the declarative nature of education to the colonization of rights education. All of these criticisms reflect the tense relationship between modern human rights theory and cultural relativity. The structuring of HRE around a human rights discourse specific to Western culture leads to the creation of a Western-centric human rights pedagogy rather than a culture-based pedagogy. Reflecting the tensions between cultural relativism and human rights theory, this pedagogy reflects the need for a culture-oriented analysis of human rights. In this regard, it is necessary to create curricula that problematize human rights and HRE based on local and national cultures.

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<sup>137</sup> Mesut Gülmez, *İnsan Hakları ve Demokrasi Eğitimi: Egemenlik İnsanındır* (2nd edition, TODAİE Yayını, 2001), 48.

The development dynamics of HRE on a theoretical level require a multi-stakeholder and multi-actor participatory perspective. Therefore, it is obvious that national human rights institutions need to be more involved in HRE as institutional actors. National human rights institutions leading the creation of action plans for HRE and monitoring the activities envisaged in relation to the goals and objectives in such plans will contribute to the transformation of rights education into action. Such institutional structures play important roles in systematically monitoring, reporting, and transforming the awareness-raising activities developed in relation to HRE into practice. Increasingly, these institutional structures are gaining a say in HRE.

In summary, all of these indicators focused on knowledge, consciousness, and action for the production of human rights information inevitably acquire a particular form within the framework of specific demographic, sociological, and economic dynamics. The existential essence of HRE, constructed as an institutional entity of knowledge production and teaching, is inherent in the spirit of universal principles and values. The existential tensions between theory and practice, tradition and modernity, and values and interests affect the pedagogical philosophy of HRE. Therefore, in order for HRE to not lose its essence, it is necessary to develop a pedagogical understanding that supports the growth of empathy and sympathy at the core of education. In a methodological sense, such an approach should be based on the fact that HRE is produced in a form that will provide practical wisdom. In addition, the holistic methodological structure of the tripartite approach of knowledge, skills, and attitude related to the learning process should be taken as a basis.

It is important to produce methodologies that are structurally developed in the local context and are based on internalization instead of externalization. HRE methodology cannot operate as a rhetorical or dialectical process between the teacher and the learner; rather, it must operate as an active process. At the same time, the human rights teaching process can be defined as a transfer of behavioral forms structured and internalized with values. It is also important to internalize the learning of human rights in accordance with human rights systems that are built on the theory of natural rights. It is necessary to avoid transferring human rights as mere external educational materials; instead, it is necessary to develop the tripartite approach to HRE in relationship to the learning process.

For all these reasons, it is necessary to develop an internalized rights learning methodology for HRE. All organizations and institutions must examine the methodological approaches to HRE in the context of the socio-economic and socio-political reality. Such exploratory efforts are important in terms of identifying and resolving the structural problems that HRE is facing.

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