

# Human Rights Education in Mongolian Schools: Present State and Challenges

CH. ALTANGEREL\*

Mongolia upholds fundamental human rights and freedoms through its 1992 Constitution and the ratification of more than thirty international human rights treaties. The country therefore fully and legally supports human rights principles in terms of domestic legislation and international agreements. Since Mongolia chose the democratic and market-oriented system in the 1990s, one of its most important tasks was the development of a new legal basis for education. To achieve this goal, several laws were passed by the Great State *Hural* (Parliament) in 1995 including the State Education Policy, the Education Law, the Higher Education Law, and the Primary and Secondary Education Law. These laws introduced the policy of democracy and openness in educational administrative structures; decentralized the administration and financing of all public schools; transferred the management of schools to local governments in the *aimags* (provinces); increased the autonomy of colleges and universities; and enabled the establishment of private educational institutions. The State Education Policy defines education as a priority sector of society, as well as an important source of support for rapid growth in scientific, technical, economic and social development fields. In addition, for the first time the importance of non-formal continuing education-for-all is recognized.

## Human rights situation

Human rights were repressed in Mongolia by state measures when it was under the socialist system. Although significant and positive political, social and economic developments occurred over the past 15 years, some practices remain. This heritage from the old totalitarian regime is a negative influence on the realization of human rights in Mongolia. Abuse of power by government officials is still common.

Reports from the government, the National Human Rights Commission and the international organizations affirm this situation. Members of the police and other law enforcement agencies do not adequately respect the security and liberty of the people. Civil rights are most commonly violated.

People are afraid of government officials who have power to make decisions on their behalf. They are not sure whether struggling for their own rights will benefit them or not.

The mass media often report on human rights abuses and violations. But most people, except lawyers and professors, have no systematic knowledge on human rights to be able to properly appreciate the news on human rights.

Although Mongolians believe that human rights are important, they do not realize them in their daily lives. Human rights usually receive public attention only when they are violated. People begin to see the real meaning of human rights only after suffering injustice.

The main reason for this situation is the low level of human rights awareness among the people that does not enable them to know how they can be protected under the law. If their knowledge of human rights is poor, they cannot also be fully involved in decision-making processes.

Various organizations undertook during the last few years several national studies aimed at determining the human rights awareness of Mongolians. The Asia Foundation did a study on “Legal Empowerment in Mongolia” in 2004 and the Mongolian Youth Development Center did a “Needs Assessment of Mongolian Youths” in 2000. This author completed a study entitled “Survey on Human Rights Education in Mongolia: The Impact of Cultural Factors” within the framework of the Central Asian Research Initiative (CARI) Project in September 2005. Moreover, a number of NGOs and research organizations have done studies in more specific fields such as the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, women’s rights, and human rights in mass media. The findings of these studies clearly indicate that people are not well-informed and educated on necessary skills to protect their own human rights.

The above-mentioned human rights research results point to a social imperative that requires appropriate measures and initiatives to be able to incorporate human rights education into the primary and secondary school system in Mongolia.

### **Need for human rights education in schools**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) assigns a crucial role to education. In its Preamble, it calls on us to promote “understanding, tolerance and friendship” and to “strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms”. In addition, Article 26 declares that we must ensure that education is “directed to the full development of the human personality”. The United Nations (UN) resolution declaring the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) states that: “Human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies.”<sup>1</sup>

Human rights education is both an opportunity and a responsibility for all human beings. According to the current conception, human rights education should become part of the basic education for all members of society.

Mongolia was one of the countries that failed to adequately respond to the call of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) to develop human rights education programs. The Great State *Hural* (Parliament) of Mongolia adopted the National Human Rights Action Programme in October 2003. Article 1.1.2.6 of the Action Programme states that

... on the basis of research on the current state of human rights education, formal and non-formal education systems shall be developed [to provide for] xxx human rights education for government officials, leaders, and students at all levels.

The article also states that a sub-program on human rights education shall be developed and implemented to train national specialists and trainers to support and encourage advo-

cacy through the mass media. Article 1.1.2.7 states that knowledge of human rights shall be used as a selection criterion for officers in public services (e.g., administrative and special offices). However, the Action Programme and the Sub-Programme on Human Rights Education are still awaiting implementation.

Under the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), which started on 1 January 2005, the UN General Assembly urges Member States to undertake, at a minimum, the following actions during the first phase (2005-2007) of the program:

- (a) An analysis of the current situation of human rights education in the school system;
- (b) Setting of priorities and the development of a national implementation strategy;
- (c) The initial implementation of planned activities.

Consistent with research results, human rights education is meant to change both the Mongolian people's mentality and the structure of Mongolian society. The changes in mentality will contribute to the transformation of the "authoritarian citizen" into a "free citizen" who is aware of his/her rights and duties, and who respects other's rights and acts based on democratic and civic principles. This change requires support, especially in a post-socialist country like Mongolia. The main goals of human rights education are to inform, educate, and practice human rights and responsibilities.

### **Human rights education in schools**

There are several major national projects on human rights education in Mongolia. One major initiative is for the formal education sector.

The structure of the education system in Mongolia includes pre-school education (kindergarten) and general education (primary, lower, and upper secondary). Schools for the

primary, lower, and upper secondary levels generally do not exist separately. Virtually all schools have at least eight grades, while schools up to Grade 10 are mainly found in the larger towns and cities. Higher education in Mongolia is provided by universities, colleges, and institutes. Colleges offer mainly undergraduate programs, while universities focus more on research and graduate study.

Ongoing reforms in Mongolian education have been designed to change from a highly specialized and compartmentalized system of education based on the Russian model to a more flexible system. Such reforms include improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education at all levels through rationalization and decentralization. Since 1990, there has been a relaxation of state control over the curriculums in Mongolia accompanied by efforts at diversification based on local community needs.<sup>2</sup>

Human rights education is becoming an important component of the formal education sector in Mongolia. With this new conception of education, a number of activities have been advancing human rights and democratization in the education sector.

Since the curriculum is changing from being highly standardized to a more flexible and locally relevant one under the Education Law of 1995, schools and teachers can use a certain part of the curriculum for teaching whatever they see fit. This provides an excellent opportunity for willing teachers to teach human rights. At the primary level, human rights are integrated into some subjects such as social studies and moral education.

A significant action carried out by Mongolia as part of the UN Decade for Human Rights is the comprehensive revision of the legal education curriculum of secondary schools.<sup>3</sup> The revision of the legal education curriculum of secondary schools was carried out under the "Street Law" program of the Mongolian Foundation for Open Society during the 1998-2003 period. The program attached great importance

to the human rights education of the youth. As a result of the revision, the curriculum for each grade now contains human rights components. At Grade 6, students study human rights as a separate subject. The objectives of the human rights course under the revised legal education curriculum are to improve human rights knowledge, develop students' abilities to make use of violation prevention mechanisms, and build an attitude respectful of the rights and freedoms of others. Certainly, these competencies cannot be developed solely through conventional methods of teaching. They must include the application of various teaching methods by teachers, as well as adequate physical and psychological settings for teaching human rights.

As a result of the 1998-1999 change in the primary and secondary curriculums, human rights in general and child rights in particular are studied both directly and indirectly in kindergarten and at the primary and secondary levels. The subjects and total hours of the curriculum for Social Studies are presented in Table 1.

Preschool education consists of systematically organized activities to help children obtain skills that meet their needs and interests from the time of birth until they enroll in school. It gives the student the basic knowledge of human rights while teaching them correct self-expression, how to understand and speak to others, and good habits. Preschool also helps them understand culture, customs, and etiquette. At the primary level, students learn to freely express their own thoughts and gain basic knowledge about social life, health, ethics and value of labor, citizenship, and human rights. The students also learn about national customs, cultural legacy, justice, hygiene, the value of labor, and teamwork.

Legal education, studied as an independent subject in Grades 6-8, includes the constitutional concepts of civil rights and duties and freedom. Social studies at the secondary level cover four main topics: politics, economics, the legislative process, and philosophy. Human rights are integrated into all of these fields. Social studies also includes general knowledge

**Table 1: Curriculum for Social Studies in Primary and Secondary Schools, 1998-1999 <sup>4</sup>**

Subject	Total Hours per Year (by Grade)													
	1	2	3	4	Total	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	
Moral Education	52	68	68	68	256									
History and National Culture						68								
History of World Civilization; Ethics							70							
History of World Civilization; Legal Education								87						
Mongolian History; Legal Education									87					
Mongolian History										88				
Social Studies											36	72		
Total						68	70	87	87	88	36	72	508	

of freedom, equality, principles of democracy, the Constitution, the Constitutional Court, crime, punishment, investigation, the judiciary, the economic system, and so on. Knowledge, skills, direction, and critical thinking acquired at the secondary level form the foundation for human rights education and are needed not only for higher education, but also for molding good citizens<sup>5</sup>.

At higher education level, human rights started to be offered in law schools from 1997, following a joint decree by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Enlightenment for thirty-six hours of human rights study per semester. However, very few law schools offer human rights as a compulsory course, whereas the majority offer it as an optional course, which is not adequate to educate law students on human rights. As for other universities and colleges, although they claim that they teach human rights, they are only taught within the Constitutional Law courses and there is no link between human rights and specific professional courses. Moreover, a number of university administrators, lecturers, and students regard human rights as a subject that is relevant only to lawyers. Currently, the legal education curriculum of universities and colleges is being revised with the support of the World Bank, and specialists are working hard to make human rights a compulsory course. The pilot curriculum includes a 40-hour optional course on Human Rights Law and a 48-hour optional course on the Rights of the Child.

### **Educational policy reform**

In 2004, the government undertook a major reform of the education sector, which aims to strengthen achievements in educational field and to harmonize them with international norms. Part of the reform has been to undertake a complete revision of all curriculum areas for primary and secondary schools. In this context, all schools, including private schools, must follow the new National Standard for Educa-

tion. In accordance with the Education Law, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS) determines the standard curriculums for primary and secondary levels while the National Center on Metrology and Standardization is responsible for certifying those standards.

Within the context of systematic reform, the national standard for primary and secondary education has been fully changed. One basic component of the new standard is the “Educational Standard for History and Social Studies”. It is important that human rights education is incorporated into the standard curriculum for primary and secondary school system. In particular, human rights have become an integral domain for all educational levels. They are now part of achievement objectives for each grade level as well as requirements for teaching-learning processes and perspectives. Before the standard curriculum reform, they were limited as a subject only to 6th grade. This reform is an adaptation of the recommendation made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which states that human rights education should be taught regardless students’ age, opinion, or social situation.<sup>6</sup>

Also, the new content framework for social studies is an important step towards improving the quality and effectiveness of the subject. How do the changes under the reform measures support human rights education?

**Objectives and outcomes:** Human rights education, similar to Social Studies, aims to develop learning competence that includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes for students. The goal of such education is empowerment, that is, giving students the knowledge and skills to take control of their own lives and participate in decisions that affect them. Human rights education is essential for becoming a responsible and engaged citizen, a goal shared by Social Studies.

**Contents:** Educational standards of law and human rights consists of 4 basic content domains such as Rule and law, Rights and re-

sponsibilities, Government, and Applied law. “Content domain” refers to a core knowledge system, which develops from simple to complex throughout primary and secondary levels. Applied to human rights education, the competencies would be as follows: K1 - construct knowledge on human rights, K2 - take action using this knowledge, K3 - learn life skills, and K4 - learn citizenship and socialization.

**Methodology:** New objectives, principles, and content are required to change methodologies for all classes. The new standard suggests that teachers combine a variety of interactive and participatory techniques for their classes. It encourages the critical analysis of real life situations and taking appropriate action to promote and protect human rights.

**Evaluation:** The former education standard on student’s assessment was concentrated only on knowledge. Now, the student assessment is based on the competencies acquired by students in the course of their studies.

Some of the major human rights components included in the new education standard for social sciences and history are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

**Level:**

Primary Education: (children 6-11 years old)

**Subject:**

People and Society ( Grades 1-5)

**Objectives:**

Enable children to do the following:

- Respect self, parents, and others
- Understand differences and value diversity
- Define their rights and duties in everyday life through simple examples
- Learn how to exercise their rights and perform their duties.

**Content:**

- About myself, my parents, and my community

**Table 2: Curriculum for Social Sciences and History in Primary and Secondary Schools<sup>7</sup>**

Grade 1	People and Society	36	180
Grade 2	People and Society	36	
Grade 3	People and Society	36	
Grade 4	People and Society	36	
Grade 5	People and Society	36	
Grade 6	Citizenship	37	148
Grade 7	Citizenship	37	
Grade 8	Citizenship	37	
Grade 9	Citizenship	37	
Grade 10	Citizen and Society-I	57	57
Grade 10	Citizen and Society-II	114	114
Grade 6	History	37	203
Grade 7	History	56	
Grade 8	History	55	
Grade 9	History	55	

Source: National Standard of Primary and Secondary Education of Mongolia, 2005 - Decree #164 of the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Culture, 20 May 2005.

- I am a learner and a member of a community
- My social environment and administrative units
- Historical and cultural heritage at the local, national, and international levels
- Moral norms and ethics
- Rules and law
- School rules and student responsibilities
- The rights of children and adults, and their differences
- Government structures and local administration.

**Level:**

Secondary School (12-16 years old)

**Subject:**

Citizenship (Grades 6-9)

**Objectives:**

- Give students more knowledge about specific laws
- Understand the role of law in individual and social life, and legal relations
- Learn human rights, freedom, and the legal protection of human rights
- Integrate human rights into personal awareness and behavior.

**Content:**

- Rules and laws: basic conception of law
- Laws on social welfare, labor, and government
- Civil Code of Mongolia
- Citizen's rights, freedoms, and basic duties as provided for in the Constitution
- International and national human rights protection mechanisms.

**Level:**

Upper Secondary Level: (17 years old)

**Subject:**

Citizen and Society (Grade 10)

**Objectives:**

- Give students more knowledge about social relations and their functions
- Introduce the political system, the decision-making process, and citizenship
- Identify problems related to social issues
- Do research and gather information in related fields.

**Content:**

- Social institutions, functions, differences, and integration
- Politics, the decision making process, and political participation
- Democracy and democratic values and principles
- Social inequality and stratification
- Culture
- International community and Mongolia.

Researchers and human rights educators distinguish two basic directions of human rights education: learning *about* human rights and learning *for* human rights. Education *about* human rights provides people with information about human rights. Education *for* human rights helps people feel the importance of human rights, internalize human rights values, and integrate them into the way they live. Education *for* human rights also gives people a sense

Learning about Human Rights	Learning for Human Rights
<i>Emphasis</i> on Knowledge, Understanding, Valueing	<i>Emphasis</i> on Respect, Responsibility, Solidarity
<p><i>Contents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genesis, history and relevance of human rights documents</li> <li>• Controversies and conflicts of human rights in international debate</li> <li>• Content of various declarations and conventions</li> <li>• Realization and practice of human rights (including national and international actors)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Contents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Participation in the transformation of community life and society</li> <li>• Solidarity/the rights of others</li> <li>• Tensions between adaptation to the established norms of society and the resistance and struggle for the fulfillment of basic rights</li> </ul>

of responsibility to respect and defend human rights and empowers them, through learned skills, to take appropriate action.

All human rights programs entail this first dimension of human rights education (learning about human rights), and most of them proceed further with the second dimension (learning for human rights). The main goal of this second dimension is empowerment to become an active individual. This understanding of human rights education puts an emphasis on social competencies, including solidarity, collective action, and performance of all hu-

man dignity. Therefore, we should try to set up a conception of human rights for the entire education system. How do we move from learning about human rights to action on a personal and community level? As David Shiman (1988) asserts, human rights are not a subject that can be studied at a distance. Students should not just learn about the UDHR, or about apartheid, or about homelessness, without also being challenged to think about what it all means for them personally. As human rights educators, we ask our students and ourselves, “How do all this relate to the way we live our lives?” The answer we receive tells us much about both how, and how effectively, we teach this subject.

This fundamental change in the education system is resulting in innovations in subject content, curriculums, teaching methodologies, and textbooks for teachers and students. In addition, MECS publishes and approves textbooks and curriculums and provides support for the supervision of local educational centers and national universities. Also, one of the major changes that took place is the extension of secondary education to Grade 11 at the national level.

### **Major weaknesses**

A number of factors have contributed to the ongoing problems of the education system in Mongolia, especially teacher training for human rights. These difficulties can be categorized into three different areas:

#### *Economic difficulties*

Economic difficulties have led to a decline in public funding for education from around 11.0 per cent to 5.0 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Currently, the teachers’ professional development has been stopped because of high in-service teacher training costs. Other difficulties are the following

- Low quality of instruction due to inadequate teacher training and low salary

- Lack of adequate telecommunication infrastructure
- Poor medical service and unhygienic conditions in schools (common in rural areas).

#### *Instructional quality*

Education at the primary and secondary levels is still teacher-centered and characterized by passive and rote learning. There are also

- Lack of experienced and trained staff who are able to use rights-based methodology and content
- Curriculums and teaching methods are often not relevant to the life-skill and livelihood challenges facing students. The legal education curriculum especially does not conform to the realities and needs of different communities. This is because most of the materials in this curriculum are translated from other languages and cultures
- Books and instructional materials on human rights education written in Mongolian language are lacking. It is therefore difficult for teachers to explain such a complex subject.

#### *Lack of Support*

- Lack of systematic support from government and local administration
- Lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation in pre-service and in-service teacher training
- Limited involvement of parents in the educational activities.

Also, there are still some common myths about human rights such as:<sup>9</sup>

- Human rights are only concerned with violations
- Only adults and lawyers can understand the significance of human rights
- Human rights violations occur only in poor, foreign countries
- Human rights are only legal rights.



Continuing human rights violations, poor implementation of laws, lack of transparency in government, and abuse of power committed by government authorities all indicate the need for more effective and integrated human rights education programs. To solve the above-mentioned problems, Mongolians need to develop complex educational programs on human rights. Human rights education, as a powerful tool for social transformation and justice, is needed.

On the other hand, some effective practices have been reported. The major strengths in the formal education sector during the transformation period can be summarized as follows:

- Mongolia has a highly literate population
- Female participation in education has been high, particularly at post-secondary levels
- There has been an increasing will and capacity to implement human rights education at the national level
- A wide-ranging curriculum has been introduced into the school system with new educational standards
- NGOs provide legal consultation services and help protect the rights of children and women against violence in the family and other human rights violations
- There has been enthusiastic support from teachers and students
- Policies and programs have been implemented to enable disabled children to receive equal access to schooling.

### **National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia**

The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (NHRCM) is an institution mandated with the promotion and protection of human rights. It is also charged with monitoring the implementation of the provisions on human rights and freedoms guaranteed in

the Constitution of Mongolia, as well as the laws and international treaties to which Mongolia is a party. A law established the NHRCM in 2000.<sup>10</sup> According to this law, one of the key functions of NHRCM is the promotion of human rights. The Commission's human rights education strategy targets:<sup>11</sup>

- ♦ Education institutions at all levels
- ♦ Specific groups in society
- ♦ The general public.

As the main actor for human rights education in Mongolia, NHRCM has been implementing a number of initiatives at the national level. In 2004, NHRCM implemented a project on "Human Rights Education," which aims to integrate human rights education at higher education levels. Within the framework of this project, NHRCM developed a Model Human Rights Curriculum for law schools. The goal of the Model Curriculum in terms of learning competencies for law students includes development of knowledge on human rights, ability to use human rights protection and redress mechanisms, and attitude to respect human rights and freedoms. These learning competencies are essential to prepare people who will become lawyers and government officials. To make the Model Curriculum more realistic and effective, it was piloted in three law schools.

One of the major activities that NHRCM is undertaking is a project on "Human Rights Education in Secondary School" with the support of UNESCO. This project was started in 2005. The objective of this project is to evaluate the current situation of human rights education in primary and secondary schools and develop recommendations to the relevant parties. The results of the study showed that human rights education is still unsatisfactory at the national level. Recommendations for future action based on lessons learned throughout the study were developed and disseminated to the relevant authorities and to the public. Within the framework of the work, NHRCM developed a minimum qualification standard

for instructors who are teaching human rights. The teachers' standard establishes criteria to assess their performance on rights-based learning. Providing bonuses to teachers based upon performance results will improve the quality of the teachers' instruction. Moreover, NHRCM staff members will share their experiences on human rights with teacher trainers for the development of human rights curriculums for teacher training. All these activities are carried out by NHRCM with the purpose of integrating human rights education into the formal education system.

### **Teacher training on human rights education**

In light of the WPHRE first phase plan of action focusing on the primary and secondary school systems, a Global Strategic Planning Meeting on Teacher Training for Human Rights Education was organized in June 2005.<sup>12</sup> The participants discussed research, networking, and information-sharing in the area of teacher training at the international, regional, and national levels. During the discussions, the participants (human rights educators and researchers) identified and proposed a number of recommendations for teacher training on human rights education to actors and stakeholders identified in the WPHRE first phase plan of action as bearers of the responsibility to implement the plan.

Human rights should be a fundamental organizing principle for professional practice, so that all prospective teachers come to see themselves as human rights educators and advocates.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the most important task of teachers would be to integrate human rights within their subjects. On the other hand, this situation requires a policy that human rights education be incorporated into both the pre-service and in-service teacher-training systems. Two main issues need to be addressed in order to expand human rights education in schools: 1) Training for the teachers to enhance their awareness of human rights and; 2) Training to

improve their teaching skills in active and participatory learning. It is not only training for teachers that is considered important, but also training for education policymakers and school administrators and NGOs. Thus, it is necessary to integrate human rights education into the teacher training curriculum of universities and colleges.

The Mongolian State University of Education is the largest institution of teacher training for the education and science sectors in Mongolia. The WPHRE declares that "introducing human rights education in primary and secondary education implies that the school becomes a model of human rights learning and practice. Within the school community, teachers, as the main depositories of the curriculum, play a key role in reaching this aim".<sup>14</sup> Under these circumstances, the Mongolian State University of Education should have a policy on incorporating human rights education into the teacher training curriculum as well as training teachers on human rights. There are only a few initiatives in the pre-service teacher training management to underline the importance of teaching human rights as an independent subject, but they are very effective. These initiatives also seek to integrate human rights into other courses for teacher preparation. For example, human rights education was introduced into the teacher curriculum for social studies and history in 2004. In addition, the university has engaged in several activities related to this field such as research, evaluation, and training activities for student teachers. Also, students are encouraged to visit human rights institutions, local administration offices, police stations, and prisons to introduce them to real human rights situation. Although the Mongolian State University of Education has undergraduate courses on human rights education, most pedagogical institutes do not offer this subject for their students. The role of the teacher training institution is of particular importance in enhancing the quality of teaching methodologies and strategy in the area of hu-

man rights education, and for the best use and creation of learning materials.

Over the past three years, the Mongolian State University of Education implemented the project “Teacher 2005” which aims at reforming the teacher training system of Mongolia. The project is concentrated in three areas of pre-service teacher education reform:

- Professional development of professors on teacher training
- Curriculum Reform
- School–University Partnership.

The main characteristic of the “Teacher 2005” project is the symmetrical partnership between schools and teacher training institutions. Each of the participating university professors works closely with a secondary school teacher over the course of three years. This way, teacher education becomes closer to school reality and student needs, and schools, in turn, help student teachers to become good and effective teachers.

The 2005 Global Strategic Planning Meeting proposed the following recommendations<sup>15</sup> to teacher training institutions, including the universities and pedagogical colleges:

1. Develop guidelines and research tools for effective Teacher Training in human rights education.
2. Review existing research in human rights education in pre- and in-service teacher training.
3. Develop research priorities and support such research on human rights education in teacher education.
4. Disseminate widely the existing international human rights documents, constitutions [with provisions] for integrating human rights education, and documents from international conferences related to human rights education on the local, national, and global levels.
5. Develop human rights resource centers for pre-service and in-service teachers and teacher educators.

6. Convene local, national, regional, and global conferences and teacher trainings on human rights education.
7. Create and build a network of Universities and pedagogical institutes interested in and engaged in human rights education.
8. Develop human rights education twinning programs and faculty exchanges between organizations/universities in different regions.
9. Provide pre-service teachers with training opportunities with human rights education mentors or schools that are modeling the principles of human rights.
10. Develop partnerships to enable pre-service teachers to have cross-regional practical training on human rights education.
11. Publish human rights education teacher training articles and research in educational journals and reviews.
12. Create partnerships with schools interested in teaching human rights to support teachers and provide professional development support.
13. Develop an internet sharing tool for emerging practices and human rights education lesson plans to help in teacher training and professional development efforts for teachers.

To achieve these goals, the Mongolian State Education University has been making efforts on teacher training for human rights education. One of the current initiatives is a research project entitled “Human Rights Education and Cultural Relativity,” and funded by the Open Society Institute. The project aims to research on human rights issues and human rights education within diverse cultural contexts. This work resulted in the introduction of a new academic course on human rights education for the undergraduate level at the university. The syllabus, which is based on participatory methods and human rights principles, is bringing new approaches into the teacher training cur-

riculum. Currently, the university has been working to establish a Human Rights Education Center in collaboration with UNICEF Representative Office in Mongolia. The Center will implement the following goals for the pre- and in-service teacher training system. The Center will:

- Conduct needs assessments and convert the findings to instructional content on human rights education
- Prepare content and materials for use in training sessions on rights-based education instruction
- Conduct trainings and workshops for teachers and trainers on human rights
- Produce, reproduce, and distribute curriculums and learning materials to schools, teachers, and students.

Furthermore, the Center will conduct in-service professional development programs for rural teachers using distance learning technology. Moreover, other private teacher training colleges should create partnerships with schools interested in teaching human rights as well as provide professional development support to teachers.

### **NGOs and human rights education**

Human rights as a subject of study must be included in the curriculum and syllabuses of schools, colleges, and universities. The students should be taught that the observance of human rights would enhance day-to-day life, and life in society as a whole. The media, volunteer workers, and NGOs also have an important role in this education process. Over the past decade, the Mongolian civil society organizations have begun to replace the government as the main provider of human rights education. They should give positive orientation and direction to the human rights movements.<sup>16</sup>

Human rights NGOs especially play a crucial role in protecting human rights in all spheres of society. Some of their main goals

are to inform, educate, and disseminate human rights, and engage in human rights protection activities. A number of NGOs implement short and long-term projects that promote human rights and the role of civil society in Mongolia. Most of them have developed many extracurricular programs and produced a number of textbooks and training materials on human rights, democracy and health education in collaboration with other supporting actors. For example, the Mongolian Foundation for Open Society has also produced a textbook on human rights and organizes a number of workshops for teachers and educators. Other institutions (e.g., Amnesty International Mongolia, Human Rights and Development Center, Center for Children's Rights Protection, and other NGOs) conduct similar training activities for both trainers and the public. NGOs also provide legal consultation services and help protect the rights of children and women against violence in the family and other human rights violations. In these circumstances, the NGOs are of vital importance. While human rights education programs are developing through various approaches, these are not fully integrated into the school curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

The last few years saw gradual changes in the approaches of the education sector in Mongolia, including approaches to human rights education. A number of organizations, in particular the National Human Rights Commission, the Mongolian State University of Education, governmental organizations and NGOs have already begun to work on human rights education. Their initiatives should be considered an important part of the incorporation of human rights education into the formal education sector in Mongolia. In particular, more emphasis should be given to teacher training in universities and for future human rights teachers.

It is necessary to introduce human rights

into the curriculum at all levels of the formal education system of Mongolia. To achieve this aim, the focus should be on pre-school, primary and secondary education, vocational, post secondary, pre-service and in-service teacher training. This article proposes the following major strategies for human rights education:

- ♦ Development of human rights education programs that integrate human rights in general as well as specific professional courses for all levels of education;
- ♦ Development of human rights education programs based on the principle of learning for human rights, including social competencies such as solidarity, collective action, and the upholding of the human dignity of all;
- ♦ Development of local, national, and international networks to produce materials, curriculums, and programs on education for human rights and citizenship, exchange methods and materials, and develop best practice approaches;
- ♦ Development of teaching competencies in the use of national and international human rights mechanisms in order to identify, investigate, and eliminate human rights violations;
- ♦ Creation of conditions through human rights education activities to ensure collaboration and good relations among stakeholders in the education system (including teacher-teacher, teacher-student, teacher-school manager relations) in promoting equality, justice, and human rights in school and society;
- ♦ Treatment of human rights education as a value in democratic development and adapting it to the Mongolian lifestyle;
- ♦ Enhancement of the capacity of the human rights NGOs and other civil society organizations;
- ♦ Development of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure to provide more people the op-

portunity to access all kinds of information without any restriction.

Finally, these educational programs should also include the development of basic skills, such as critical thinking, communication skills, problem solving, and complaint submission for the protection and promotion of human rights.

## Endnotes

\* I would like to express my appreciation to the Open Society Institute's Central Asian Research Initiative (CARI) scholarship program which supports a number of young members of teaching faculties in Central Asia region.

Also, I would like to extend my special thanks to Mrs. Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Co-Director of Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota for her excellent research mentorship.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994.

<sup>2</sup> John Weidman, "Developing the Mongolia Education Sector Strategy 2000-2005," *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 3(2)-article (May 1, 2001)

<sup>3</sup> National Human Rights Commission, *Research Report: Human Rights Education at Secondary School System*: Ulaanbaatar 2005, page 3.

<sup>4</sup> Narangerel Rinchin, *Mongolia: Human Rights Education in Schools* (Paper presented in HURIGHTS OSAKA, 1998) available at [www.hurights.or.jp/hreas/3/03rinchin.htm](http://www.hurights.or.jp/hreas/3/03rinchin.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Rinchin, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education (UN, A/52/469/, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> See Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education (UN, A/52/469/, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> MESC, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, "*Human Rights Education and Curriculum Integration.*" Presentation in Mongolia State University of Education, Ulaanbaatar, 2005

<sup>10</sup> The National Human Rights Commission Act, 7 December 2000.

<sup>11</sup> National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (NHRCM), Appendix D of the *Report on Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia*, Ulaanbaatar, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Organized by the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center in June 2005 in New York, U.S.A.

<sup>13</sup> Nancy Flowers and David A. Shiman, "Teacher Education and the Human Rights Vision" in George

J.Andreopoulos and Richard Pierre Claude, editors, *Human Rights Education for the Twenty First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) pages 161-175.

<sup>14</sup> Appendix E.20, World Programme for Human Rights Education (A/59/525/Rev.1).

<sup>15</sup> Recommendations For Primary And Secondary School Teacher Training For Human Rights Education in [www.hrusa.org/workshop](http://www.hrusa.org/workshop).

<sup>16</sup> Ashok R. Basu, "Education for Human Rights," in Vishwanath D.Karad et al., editors , *Human Rights Education, Social Change and Human Values* (Pune: Balwant Printers, 1999), page 87.

## References

- Andreopoulos , George J. and Claude, Richard Pierre, editors. 1997. *Human Rights Education for the Twenty First Century*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Asia Foundation. 2004. *Legal Empowerment in Mongolia: Research Report*. Ulaanbaatar.
- Banks, Dennis N. 2005. *Promises to Keep: Results of the National Survey of Human Rights Education*. Available at: [www.forum.mn/publications](http://www.forum.mn/publications)
- Hitchcock, Barry. 2002. *First Education Sector Development Program*. Available at: [www.adb.org/Documents/Speeches/2002/ms2002153.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Speeches/2002/ms2002153.asp)
- Karad, Vishwanath D. etc. 1999. *Human Rights Education, Social Change and Human Values*. Pune, Balwant Printers.
- National Human Rights Action Programme of Mongolia*. 2003. Ulaanbaatar.
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS). 2005. *Content Framework of Social Sciences and History*. Ulaanbaatar, MECS.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005 *Educational Standard of Social Sciences and History*. Ulaanbaatar, MECS.
- Mongolian Foundation for Open Society (MFOS). 2003. *The Legal Education Reform for Children and Youths*. Ulaanbaatar, MFOS.
- Mongolian Educational Structure. Available at: [www.ibe.unesco.org/International/Databanks/Dossiers/mainfram.htm](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/Databanks/Dossiers/mainfram.htm)
- Narangerel Rinchin. 2000. "Mongolia: Human Rights Education in Schools" in *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*. Osaka, HURIGHTS OSAKA.
- Rosario, Mercedes del. 2005 (unpublished). *The Mongolian Drop-Out Study: Report*. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolian Educational Alliance.
- Sedgwick, Robert. 2003. *Education in Mongolia*, World Education News & Reviews Online (eWENR). Available at: [www.wes.org/ewenr/03july/Practical.htm](http://www.wes.org/ewenr/03july/Practical.htm)
- United Nations. 2004. *World Programme of Human Rights Education (A/59/525/Rev.1)*.
- Weidman, John C. 2001. "Developing the Mongolia Education Sector Strategy 2000-2005" in *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 3(2).
- Mongolian Foundation for Open Society (MFOS). *Street Law Project in Mongolia*. Available at: [www.streetlaw.org/mongolia.htm](http://www.streetlaw.org/mongolia.htm)
- World Education Services. *International Grade Conversion Guide for Higher Education*. Available at: [www.wes.org/gradeconversionguidemongolia.htm](http://www.wes.org/gradeconversionguidemongolia.htm)