

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION EDUCATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

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ABSTRACT This article presents an educational initiative focused on Human Rights (HR) protection from an international law perspective, implemented at SD Lukmanulhakeem School Yala, Thailand. Responding to the persistent criticism of regional HR protection in ASEAN despite established instruments like AICHR and AHRD, this community service program aimed to enhance legal literacy and cultural awareness among elementary students and teachers. The methodology involved developing narrative and visual learning modules, complemented by interactive workshops, discussions, documentary screenings, and teacher training on international law case studies. Empirical findings reveal a significant increase in participants' foundational understanding of HR concepts and the effectiveness of the adaptive teaching methods employed. Students demonstrated improved ability to identify HR examples and express values of justice, while teachers gained confidence in addressing sensitive topics. The active collaboration among teachers, students, volunteer educators, and parents, supported by the school, proved crucial for the program's success and sustainability. This highlights the potential of local educational institutions as strategic partners in promoting HR and international law education, particularly for migrant communities with limited access to such content. Despite challenges like limited academic background and complex terminology, adaptive strategies (e.g., animations, role-playing) facilitated comprehension. The program's positive impact is evident in enhanced critical thinking and a stronger commitment to peace, offering a replicable, context-rooted model for preventing identity-based violence through participatory and values-driven education.

KEYWORDS: *Human Rights Education, International Law, Community Empowerment, Elementary School, Thailand, Genocide Prevention, Lukmanulhakeem School Yala*

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Rights (HAM) are fundamental rights inherent to every individual as part of their dignity, and these rights cannot be revoked by anyone. The recognition of these rights has grown rapidly at both international and national levels, with the primary goal of protecting individuals from inhumane treatment and discrimination.

On the international stage, the recognition of human rights is governed by various legal instruments that form the foundation for protecting individual rights. One of the most important is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. This Declaration serves as a primary reference in establishing international human rights norms. In addition to the UDHR, there are other international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both of which provide a more detailed legal framework for basic human rights.(Nurcahyani, 2024). Therefore, cross-cultural education that introduces concepts of global justice becomes essential in the context of prevention.

ASEAN has openly declared its commitment to participate in the global effort to promote and protect Human Rights (HR) at the regional level. This commitment was first affirmed at the ASEAN Summit in 1993, following the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in the same year.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) emerged as a triumph of citizens over absolute monarchies, rooted in traditional Western perspectives on human rights. This declaration strongly emphasized civil and political rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to participate in government, and freedom of religion.

Subsequently, the understanding of human rights further evolved with the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These two covenants represented a compromise between Western ideologies focusing on political rights and Eastern ideologies emphasizing economic rights. This dynamic is reflected in the concept of third-generation human rights, which strives to reconcile individual rights (civil and political) with collective rights (economic and social), including the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to control a nation's assets and resources, as indicated in both covenants.(Davendra, 2022)

Human Rights (HR) violations are fundamentally categorized as extraordinary crimes. Their "extraordinary" nature is primarily evident in the abuse of power involved in their commission. This

is particularly likely when perpetrated by individuals known as state agents, who possess specific authority granted by the state. However, such violations can also occur even if the perpetrator is not a state official but acts on behalf of the state.

According to Muladi, the essence of an HR violation lies in the abuse of power. This means the perpetrator acts within a governmental context and is facilitated by governmental power. The actions are undertaken within or in association with one's governmental status.

The issue of human rights violations is always closely linked to the obligations of the State or parties with legal duties to safeguard and respect international HR norms.

Nevertheless, the distinction between civil and political rights versus economic and social rights continues to elicit diverse responses and comments regarding the definition of human rights violations. Western nations tend to assert that human rights violations exclusively pertain to breaches of civil and political rights, particularly those related to individual liberties. Conversely, developing nations prioritize the rights to economic, social, and cultural development.

Despite this, ASEAN's efforts in human rights protection and the resolution of human rights violation disputes up to 2020—a decade after the ASEAN regional HR declaration—continue to draw criticism from the international community. This critique stems from the belief that existing HR instruments, such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), established in 2009 as the primary institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN, and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), are still considered insufficient in providing adequate protection for fundamental human rights within member states.

In response to this issue, I've developed an educational initiative called "Human Rights Protection Education in the Perspective of International Law." This program targets students and teachers at SD Lukmanulhakeem School Yala, Thailand. Activities within the program include interactive workshops, documentary screenings, cross-cultural discussions, and training for teachers on utilizing international law case studies in classroom instruction. The entire school community actively participates, from the planning stages to program evaluation.

The primary aim of this educational initiative is to enhance legal literacy and cultural awareness among students, while simultaneously strengthening teachers' capacity to address global issues through relevant and dialogic approaches. By focusing on genocide education from an international law perspective, the program seeks to lay the groundwork for preventing mass violence stemming from identity differences and to foster a generation that upholds justice and universal humanitarian values.

Human Rights (HR) education at the elementary school level plays a crucial role as a foundation for shaping responsible citizens. By introducing human rights early on—which aligns

with children's domain-specific understanding (Goetzmann, 2017)—elementary schools strive to systematically instill noble values that uphold human dignity. It's essential to equip the younger generation with an awareness of their responsibilities as citizens.(Hasnda, 2022)

Based on empirical findings, this article aims to thoroughly analyze the concept of human rights from an international law perspective, its enforcement mechanisms, and effective educational approaches for students and teachers in Thailand. This analysis forms part of a strategy for preventing human rights violations.

2. METHOD

This human rights education program is an integral part of a community service initiative specifically targeting Lukmanulhakeem School Yala, an elementary school located in Thailand. The core objectives of this program include enhancing foundational comprehension of human rights concepts, understanding the international legal framework governing them, and internalizing fundamental values such as tolerance, justice, and cross-cultural awareness among students and educators. Additionally, the program aims to strengthen teachers' capabilities in integrating human rights issues and global historical themes into contextualized learning activities. The program was structured into several sequential phases:

1. Effective Human Rights (HR) education equips students with the ability to understand and appreciate fundamental human rights. Additionally, they will gain essential skills to protect and promote humanitarian values in their daily lives. With an early grasp of HR, students can develop into responsible, tolerant individuals who value diversity. They will deeply comprehend the importance of justice, equality, and respect for every person's dignity. This, in turn, will contribute to creating a more peaceful, inclusive, and dignified society. Furthermore, HR education also helps students develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and responsible decision-making. These competencies are crucial for navigating the complexities of global challenges, such as environmental issues, social conflicts, and structural injustice.
2. Human Rights (HR) education plays a vital role in shaping students' character, equipping them to understand and appreciate humanitarian values and the fundamental rights of every individual. As Tibbitts (2019) explains, HR education doesn't just aim to convey information about HR; it also strives to develop attitudes, skills, and behaviors that align with HR principles. Thus, HR education contributes to creating a more just, inclusive, and dignified society.
3. The importance of introducing HR education from an early age is also emphasized by Gerber (2020), who states that children have the capacity to grasp HR concepts and cultivate concern

for humanitarian issues. By instilling an understanding of HR from the outset, the younger generation can grow into individuals who respect human dignity, promote peace, and actively oppose all forms of discrimination and injustice.(Hasnda, 2022)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The human rights education program implemented at Lukmanulhakeem School Yala, an elementary school in Thailand, yielded several significant findings. These findings include an increase in participants' understanding and the effectiveness of the educational methods employed. The discussion in this section is based on program documentation, direct field observations, and a thematic analysis of participant responses.

a. Enhancing Legal and Humanitarian Literacy

One of the program's primary achievements was the enhanced foundational understanding of HR concepts among participants—both students and teachers. Following the educational sessions, students were able to identify examples of HR in historical contexts, recognize the importance of protecting vulnerable groups, and express values of justice through visual media, such as posters themed "Upholding Human Rights." Concurrently, teachers also demonstrated improved pedagogical capacity in delivering sensitive material through narrative and reflective methods.

b. Community Participation and Engagement

Throughout the program's implementation, the collaboration between teachers and students, along with volunteer educators and parents, was crucial in ensuring the activities' continuity and acceptance. The school, SD Lukmanulhakeem Yala, actively supported the program by providing facilities, arranging schedules, and distributing educational materials. Some teachers even began integrating Human Rights (HR) and peace topics into their weekly thematic curriculum.

This active involvement underscores that SD Lukmanulhakeem Yala holds significant potential as a strategic partner in advancing HR and international law education. This is particularly relevant for migrant communities, who often face limited access to such educational content.

c. Challenges and Adaptation Strategies

The program's execution faced several challenges, including participants' limited academic background in international law, the complexity of simplifying legal terminology, and students' packed academic schedules. Nevertheless, adopting adaptive strategies—such as integrating short animated visuals, role-playing, and visual illustrations—empirically proved effective in facilitating the comprehension of complex concepts.

Moreover, teachers' active involvement in facilitating the educational process was a crucial determinant of the program's success. Through targeted training sessions and facilitated discussions, educators gained significantly greater confidence in discussing topics conventionally deemed too sensitive or "heavy" for elementary school audiences.

d. Critical Reflection and Long-Term Implications

The positive implications of implementing Child-Friendly Schools (Sekolah Ramah Anak - SRA) are becoming significantly observable, manifesting in **increased student awareness of their fundamental rights**. Students now demonstrate an understanding that they have the right to be heard, receive protection, and access dignified education. This is reflected in interview results, where the majority of students indicated **an enhanced perception of self-worth and comfort within the learning environment**. This finding corresponds with Rahmiati and Riska's (2021) argument highlighting the capability of human rights education, internalized early in the classroom, to shape students' characters to be more democratic and critical.

Furthermore, this program also facilitated a **cognitive transformation in students regarding social relationships**. They began to exhibit empathy, pro-social behaviors, and an appreciation for diversity. Participatory observations within the classroom context revealed that students who previously displayed passive attitudes and tended to withdraw are now participating more actively in group discussions and collaborative activities. This shift indicates the success of a socio-emotional approach within the framework of child rights-based education, as elaborated by Misnatun (2006) that child-friendly education can consolidate strong moral and social character in students.

4. CONCLUSION

This human rights education program at Lukmanulhakeem School Yala, Thailand, has successfully met its community empowerment objectives. By using a community-based educational approach, the initiative effectively introduced complex topics like human rights and international law to students and teachers in a non-formal setting, demonstrating its capability to address critical awareness gaps in the community.

The program's methods perfectly matched the local needs and challenges. Its adaptive strategies—like using narratives, visuals, and interactive activities—helped simplify complex legal concepts for elementary students. Crucially, the active involvement of teachers, students, and parents, along with the school's support, ensured the program's cultural relevance and sustained engagement, making it a well-suited solution for the area.

The initiative yielded significant benefits, including a marked improvement in participants' understanding of human rights and their ability to apply these values. Students became more empathetic and engaged, while teachers gained confidence in discussing sensitive topics. This success underscores the potential of local institutions like Lukmanulhakeem School Yala as vital partners in advancing human rights and peace education, particularly for migrant communities with limited access to such content.

Moving forward, it's essential to build on this foundation. This includes securing policy support, providing ongoing teacher training, and creating more accessible educational materials. By doing so, we can proactively prevent identity-based violence through educational pathways that are participatory, humanistic, and deeply rooted in universal values, ensuring a more peaceful and just future.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares that there are no financial, commercial, legal, or professional relationships with any organizations or individuals that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest in relation to this research. This study did not receive specific grants from funding agencies in the public sector, commercial, or non-profit section.

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