


EDUCATION IN HUMAN RIGHTS: EXPERIENCE AND APPLICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COURSE AT UNIVERSIDAD COLOMBIANA

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the result of an intervention on education in human rights in a pre-graduate course in Early Childhood Education at the University of Colombia, carried out as a result of a doctoral degree in the country. International and national education programs and documents in the field of human rights suggest training and the promotion of the capacity of teachers and masters on this topic. However, the norm is not always adopted and educators graduate from universities without training. The objective of this study is to determine, after interventions in which this theme is addressed, future teachers would be in better conditions to identify that education is in human rights and thus place in effective practice after graduates and graduates. The research showed that, subsequently, training on the subject, its knowledge was expanded and the participants were better prepared and prepared to face the challenges in this specific theme.

Keywords: Education. Education in Human Rights. Human Rights.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in human rights (EDH), without being called such, but by its ideological concept, has existed since now, grouping specific themes according to the time of each author or author. At this moment, themes such as being against physical punishment, the inclusion of people with disability, the education of women, and the equality of rights, among others, were highlighted. In the twentieth century, the theme evolved and advanced in literature and the theories of thinkers, of new importance Paulo Freire and Edgar Morín approach the theme through different documents, but with the inherent naturalness of human rights (Aires; Martins Filho, 2024).

However, in the course of the same siglo, the publication of international documents on human rights has advanced and practically all of them address the importance of the theme of education: education as a human right. It can be decided that this theme effectively begins with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is entirely dedicated to education. However, it was not until 1990, with the United Nations Decade for Education in the Sphere of Human Rights, that educational content was also considered susceptible to being the object of human rights, which culminated in the terminology "education in human rights". In other words, receiving an education is a human right, but from then, the disciplines and its themes should also be the result of a concept that inherently passes through human rights. And it was not enough to have a course on human rights. This theme should be transdisciplinary and reach the most diverse contents and concepts. Among the objectives are the formulation of strategies for the promotion of education in human rights at the international, regional, national, and local levels, the elaboration of didactic material, the promotion of HRE using communication, and the maximum diffusion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (OHCHR, 1995).

After 10 years since the end of the United Nations Decade for Education in the Sphere of Human Rights, we concluded that this period would not be sufficient to achieve the objectives of the document. The United Nations (UN) launched the World Program for Education in Human Rights, without completion. From time to time the organization launches new stages of the program. The first phase (2005) focused on primary and secondary education. The second (2010) to university education, public officials, and armed forces. The third (2015) to the media and the fourth (2020) to young people. Currently, the entity is working on the execution of a fifth phase. The program, in its most varied phases, aims to promote and apply educational policies, to think about human rights

also in the learning environment, to decide, on the ground in the classroom, in teaching (transversalizing education in human rights), and in the training and perfection of teachers.

The second phase of the program, which addresses higher education, is directly related to this article, since for the realization of this document an intervention was carried out in a class of the pregraded course of Early Childhood Education at the Universidad Santo Tomás, in Bogotá, Colombia. The aforementioned phase of the program says that university education should have policies for the application of HRE, processes, and tools for teaching and learning, that HRE should be part of the research of students and students, which should also have a reflection on human rights in the learning environment and that teachers are perfected in the subject of this theme (OHCHR, 2012).

The World Program for Education in Human Rights suggests that each country should have its own HRE plan, since nations have different realities and needs, especially in the educational universe. And many countries have. Here we will be in Colombia because the intervention carried out was in this country. Colombia has a national plan for education and human rights in 2009, updated in 2021. The plan aims to guide the subject at all levels of formal and informal education, work training, and human development (PLANEDDDH, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

Over three months, 5 interventions were carried out in a class of pregrade of Early Childhood Education at the University of Santo Tomás. In each meeting, we spent 20 minutes talking about HRE. In the first intervention, the group of approximately 20 people answered a questionnaire (ANNEX 1) with questions about whether they knew the concept of human rights and HRE if they had studied this topic, and, if so, where they had contacted the subject. To continue, I will discuss the conferences on HRE. In the first moment, it was explained about real episodes where there was a vulnerability of human rights in the school environment. These include, among others, the emblematic cases of Paola del Rosario Guzmán Albarracín (Inter-American Court, 2020) and Sergio Urrego (Colombia, 2015), as well as generalized cases on violence rates in schools, data on the increase in episodes of bullying and adolescent embarrassment, among other themes inherent to HRE.

Subsequently, classes on the concept of human rights and HRE were discussed, according to international and national human rights documents, including the objectives of

the different phases of the World Program for Education in Human Rights and the National Plan for Education in Human Rights in Colombia.

Subsequently, possibilities were presented for a transversal education in human rights, such as the promotion of debates that involve the school and the community, the organization of commemorative closures in formats different from those that are currently being held, the offer of cine/debates with works that deal with human rights, the production of pedagogical work carried out with filming with cell phones on this theme, exhibitions of photographs, drawings, essays and poetry, research by human rights activists and production of works on human rights. Above all, to inform the school and the local community about protection mechanisms and how to seek help in topics related to human rights. In addition, it is also important for human education to achieve transversality, or the sea, which is not plastique, solo within the class, but that is involved in the educational community. Afterward, activities were carried out with the participants on the theme, with open questions that provoked reflection among the participants. The themes dealt with transsexuality, bullying, and freedom from expression, among others.

With this immersion, students were able to build the vision of human rights, recognize and assume a conception of human rights, articulate awareness-raising actions, build educational environments that respect and promote human rights, incorporate human rights into the school curriculum, introduce the theme in education, stimulate support materials and work on HRE from the reality of the class.

FUNDAMENTAL REASON

The incorporation of human rights documents, such as those produced by the UN, is not a mandatory formality between countries, since the organization is not supranational, but it is a humanitarian formality and important according to international law:

These same programs proposed by the UN, which have as their objective the formation in the sphere of human rights, such as the Decade for Human Rights (1995-2004) and the Action Plan for the first stage of the World Program on Human Rights (...), are the product of the correlation of forces in the international scope of the discourses that circulate within the economic order, social and political in force. (...) these policies and the concern in particular for HRE respond to new needs, pressures, and problems that are becoming more and more visible in the national, regional, and global spheres (Bernal, 2013, p. 40).

According to the World Programme for Education in Human Rights, each country should develop its national plan for education in human rights to recognize its needs in the

field of education in the sphere of human rights and to address local practices for promotion and the advancement of education in the sphere of human rights. And so there is a record in Colombia, along with other new Latin American countries.

(...) The PLANEDH (National Plan for Education in Human Rights of Colombia) is a guideline of the pacts and treaties of the organs and action plans proposed in them, each country has been building its plan of education in human rights according to the specificities, characteristics, conditions, and needs of the nation (Bernal, 2013, p. 46).

This adaptation to each country is indispensable, since the educational needs of a country like Finland, for example, are different from those of education in Latin America. From there the a need to include regional factors in the planes of education in human rights, to try to resolve local conflicts through HRE.

The Human Rights School proposes the participation of the community, presents the capacity of a vision of universal human rights, respecting differences (the same nationality, color, culture, language, among others) so that the pairs can know each other as equals, thus ensuring the critical reflection in the thought and the teaching, in the strengthening of the bonds, having as a reference the reality of each region and community (Duran; Duran, 2014).

Human education in the school acts and transforms into the only the bell subjects, in a particular way, the same educational practices and life in the school, based on respect, dialogue, communication, freedom of thought and expression, emotions and feelings, among others (Bernal, 2013, p. 58).

Human resources as an aggregating aid in education are a primordial factor in the objectives and purposes of education. The pedagogical proposals in favor of HRE provide new realities and ways of looking at curricular contents, thinking about a humanization in education and its cultural rescaté. "Educating for human rights means transiting through the historical memory of the people, through their circumstances, particularities, cultural collections, and ancestral legacies" (Rodríguez-Balcázar et al, 2022, p. 448).

To provide an EDH es, according to the authors studied here, to encompass human rights in their set in the most diverse disciplines and educational contents. Embracing the acronym in the various disciplines and activities existing at each educational level provides a transdisciplinary vision of the acronym and a better benefit of the contents offered. López et al (2008, p. 38) found that:

Critical pedagogy and pedagogy in human rights imply a permanent strategic pedagogical action that goes beyond the theoretical contents and that we cannot disconnect from the daily experience of each individual, from their attitudinal changes, and their context.

In this way, HRE "contributes to the creation of a civic capital capable of maintaining always in force the critique of democracy in the perspective of expanding it in a participatory sense" (Vargas, 2011, p. 25).

According to Candau (2017, p. 401):

The experiences of education and human rights have multiplied throughout the Latin American continent. From the available information, we found that most of them were carried out in contexts of formal education, an aspect traditionally privileged by popular education (new translation³).

The author advises about the need to expand access to HRE also in settings outside of non-formal education. However, in this process there is an obstacle caused by the system, as pointed out by the same author:

(...) The introduction of the theme of human rights in the training of teachers and educators in general, in initial and permanent education, remains shy. Few organizations work systematically in this perspective. However, it is an urgent matter if we want to collaborate in the construction of a culture of human rights that penetrates the different social practices. Seeking strategies, from this perspective, is fundamental (Candau, 2017, p. 410, new translation⁴).

In other words, without effective training of educators, as well as the rest of the school community, HRE will not achieve the expected results to generate robust social changes, as well as the point of social transformations in the most diverse educational environments.

A crucial factor inherent to human rights that appears in different documents and authors is the training of multipliers in human rights. Beings capable of transforming educational and social reality through HRE.

³ Experiences of human rights education have multiplied throughout the Latin American continent. From the available information, we found that most of them have been carried out in non-formal education contexts, an aspect traditionally favored by popular education.

⁴ (...) The introduction of the theme of human rights in the training of teachers and educators in general, in initial and continuing education, is still timid. Few organisations are systematically working in this perspective. However, this is an urgent issue if we want to collaborate in the construction of a culture of human rights, which penetrates the different social practices. Seeking strategies, from this perspective, is fundamental.

(...) Education in human rights implies socializing processes of culture in human rights, which disseminate it in social relations and practices, to form subjects (individual and collective) to defend and promote this culture (Silveira, 2017, p. 246, new translation⁵).

But this solo training will be possible when teachers are interested in bringing educational and social changes in this process:

Education as a practice of freedom is a way of teaching that any girl can learn. This learning process is easier for those maestros who also believe that their vocation has a sacred aspect; that we believe that our work is not simply sharing information, but participating in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. Teaching in a way that respects and protects the soul of our students is essential to creating the necessary conditions for learning to be more profound and intimate (hooks, 2017, p. 25 – the author may be named in lowercase, our translation⁶).

For him, the training of the teacher and the educational community is important. Therefore, this is the product of this article: the formation of future educators. However, for there to be an EDH in schools and universities, teachers must previously access EDH. This is foreseen in the World Program for Education in Human Rights and many national education plans in Latin America. This can be done in the day-to-day of education:

When education is a practice of freedom, the students are not the only ones called to share, to confess. The committed pedagogy does not simply seek to empower and empower students. Each class in which a holistic learning model is applied will also be a place of growth for the teacher, who will be strengthened and empowered by this process. This empowerment will not occur if we refuse to open it to the students to take risks (hooks, 2017, p. 35, transduction ours⁷).

Educating human rights and thinking strategically about the future. It is thinking about today's social needs and, through HRE, trying to overcome them.

⁵ (...) Human rights education includes socializing processes of a culture in human rights, which disseminate it in social relations and practices, in order to train subjects (individual and collective) to defend and promote this culture.

⁶ Education as a practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. This learning process is easier for those teachers who also believe that their vocation has a sacred aspect; who believe that our job is not simply to share information, but to participate in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. Teaching in a way that respects and protects the souls of our students is essential to creating the conditions necessary for learning to begin in the deepest and most intimate way.

⁷ When education is a practice of freedom, students are not the only ones called to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not simply seek to strengthen and empower students. Every classroom in which a holistic learning model is applied will also be a place of growth for the teacher, who will be strengthened and empowered by this process. This empowerment will not occur if we refuse to open up while encouraging students to take risks.

Educating in the contemporary world means building a new educational model oriented to sensitizing, emancipating, rationalizing, strengthening resistance, teaching it to work, recognizing cultural diversity, overcoming social inequalities, taking advantage of opportunities, human making, together, and in front of others, by formal and informal means, within and outside the school, permanently and infinitely, while living (Duran; Duran, 2014, p. 291, transduction ours⁸). Human rights education is both a means and an end. It is a process of dissemination of information for the construction of a culture, which aims to be universal, in which the attitudes strengthen respect for the dignity of the human person, promoting understanding, tolerance, and the equality of all men and women (Maia, 2017, p. 99, translation of our own⁹).

INTERVENTION: PROBLEMATIZATIONS AND LEARNING

As previously mentioned, the intervention in a class of Early Childhood Education at the University of Santo Tomás began with the application of a form, as a way to identify the knowledge that the public had about human rights and human rights. Questions were asked to bring up previously notorious concepts. In the end, it was again to plant the same questions, as a way to follow the evolution of the knowledge addressed in the EDH.

When applying the questionnaire for the first time, a diversity of opinions and wisdom was noted according to the suggested question. In the first question, "What is the meaning of human rights?", all the participants gave different answers, but validated according to the concept established by the thermos. Therefore, at this first moment, similar responses emerged, which placed the meaning of human rights as norms that aim to protect the integrity and dignity of each individual and individual. One of the answers is that "human rights are conditions inherent to human beings and that they should be known".

Below, the questionnaire asks if it is possible to relate issues concerning human rights. The answers are different from each other, but if we add the testimonies, we find the meaning of the question. In response, protection, attention, care, respect, right to life, freedom, equality, beliefs, reason, religion, and dignity will be addressed.

The next question was a point of division among the respondent public, as they wondered if and where the person had ever studied human rights. 45% of the people did not study and 55% spent the majority of their time in universities.

⁸ Educating in contemporaneity means building a new educational model oriented to raising awareness, emancipating, rationalizing, strengthening resistance, teaching how to function, recognizing cultural diversity, overcoming social inequalities, taking advantage of opportunities, making human, with, alongside and in front of the other, by formal and informal means, inside and outside the school, permanently and infinitely, as long as one lives.

⁹ Human rights education is both a means and an end. It is a process of disseminating information to build a culture, which aims to be universal, in which attitudes strengthen respect for the dignity of the human person, promoting understanding, tolerance, and equality of all.

Finally, regarding the theme of education in human rights, 85% said they knew the meaning of the term, but they had different clarifications such as:

- I am not very aware of what human rights education means, but in my opinion education in this area includes everything that has to do with the formation of each individual in how he or she should behave with others.
- Educating human rights is to know, to understand, to be able to disseminate human rights.
- It is one of the rights to which we must have all and should be free for all.
- It is the quest to contribute with humans to the conquest of their rights.
- It seeks to strategically promote education in different institutions.

These are similar concepts, although there is no academic knowledge that implies a uniform sense of HRE. The lack of knowledge is more evident in the following question, in which the participants consulted with the World Programme for Education in Human Rights, a guiding document on the theme throughout the world and which served as a source for the realization of national plans in the matter. 100% of those found unknown or misinterpreted the meaning of the document. An interviewee said that he had never spoken of the program and others said that he had never read about the document in question.

The following question is if it is known in the National Plan for Education in Human Rights of Colombia. 70% of the interviewees stated that they did not know the document, but they did not correspond to the meaning of the plan. Among the remaining 30%, we had some responses, such as the following:

- Foster a culture of respect, tolerance, inclusion, and non-discrimination, through education and awareness of the population.
- I don't have much knowledge, but its objective is to guarantee a comprehensive education in human rights for all Colombians.
- It is a public policy instrument formulated to guarantee respect for human rights,
- It is about guiding human rights at all levels of education.

Finally, the questionnaire posed the following question: Is it important to know about human rights education for their training? Why? Some answers that we see below:

- Of course it is, because as teachers in training, we are those who will impart education to children, who have formed their training and who have done, and for it is fundamental to know education in human rights.

- Yes, of course, it is important because we work in the integral formation of human beings and we must respect their rights and ours to be able to defend if not violate them.
- These are vitally important to learn how not to violate the rights of our children and communities.
- I consider it important to know about human rights that my work is oriented to form personas.

It can be observed that the interviewed audience recognizes the importance of knowing education in human rights, including knowing the real meaning of the concept.

After the application of the questionnaire, the intervention was felt through HRE classes. It is based on real examples of vulnerability in human rights, going through theoretical issues in official documents of human rights and human rights. Then, examples were given of how HRE can affect the life of the individual or individual, and also to issues related to health and public security, the individual economy, and also to think about the macro (city, department, and country), mental health, the reduction of cases of violence in school environments, in better conduct on the part of teachers and teachers, in fewer episodes of bullying and, therefore, also in cases of suicidal bullying in adolescence (which is currently on the rise) (RINCÓN MEJÍA; PIVATTO, 2023). And finally, the class ended with didactic examples of how to work on education in human rights in the classroom. The objective was to situate educators in the role of leaders in cases of vulnerability of human rights and to solve possible cases that may occur in school and university environments.

For example, we do not ask ourselves if bullying will occur, but when. And for this, teachers should be prepared to face the problem in the best possible way. Therefore, it was important to carry out the intervention with this class of Early Childhood Education at the University of Santo Tomás. This importance will become clearer when we look at the results below.

RESULTS

After the application of the study for the second time, and after the students went through interventions on HRE, we saw significant changes in the answers issued, especially in what refers to HRE, which was previously considered unknown by a large part of the interviewees.

As for whether he had also studied human rights, there were varied responses on having studied in secondary school or the university, and some declared that the interventions of the current project were the first time that they came into contact with the theme.

Regarding the meaning of education in the matter of human rights, the answers were varied, but in part, they represented the meaning of the term. Let's look at some comments from the audience:

- Make everyone equally aware of the rights they possess and the causes to which they may be vulnerable.
- Teaching to know how to conduct situations in which there is vulnerability of human rights and also recognize them/teaching in the contexts in which we work, to prevent the population from suffering or making a vulnerability of human rights.
- I have just met it and it is education in a context based on universal rights. Given the existence of a national plan, which was previously unknown to many and much, the Cambio situation was disregarded after the interventions in the university:
- Plan that allows these aspects to be addressed in the educational environment and outside it so that citizens know how to deal with them.
- I have just learned: that links human rights from school in a transversal way.
- Now I do know that Colombia has a human rights education plan.

Finally, it is asked whether the knowledge of education in human rights is important for the training of the participants. The answers read:

- Yes, as a teacher in training and an agent in society, I must assert my rights and those of the people around us.
- Yes, you must know how to manage many school and non-school problems.
- Yes, to be able to take and act in various situations, without leading to harm to others.
- It is important for my professional training to be oriented towards forming cities.
- Yes, since in the spaces in which one is immersed, every day, situations can arise in which any type of right is violated.

CONCLUSION

It was evidenced that the contact with themes related to education in human rights brings more baggage to them and the students participating in the intervention. An obstacle in the process of meeting with the class was the little time available to study and think about the topic addressed. Thus, it is clear that the signature aroused the interest of students and students to learn more about the theme and take it to class, both as content and for prevention or problem-solving.

What calls the attention of the study is the lack of knowledge, before the intervention, about the World Program for Education in Human Rights and the National Plan for Education in Human Rights of Colombia, since both should function as work tools for future educators. The lack of attention to these documents in the training of the teachers is not a reality in the studied class. Concomitantly with this study, the research and intervention were carried out with other public universities. The result was similar to what was agreed upon in this article.

It is worth remembering that one of the main points of the World Program for Education in Human Rights is the training and development of the capacities of educators, as a way to propagate the concepts of human rights among the school and university public. If teachers do not have the necessary basis to effectively address education in human rights, the results that are sought in the documents will not be achieved. It is considered that the theme should be addressed in all the disciplines of students and alumnae, in a transversal way, so that education in human rights can, little by little, be more present in the educational life of future teachers and, consequently, of the students of this public.

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ANNEX 01 – EVALUATION OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Do you know the meaning of human rights? If so, what is it?
2. Can you give examples of human rights issues? In other words, when I talk about human rights, we talk about...
3. Have you ever studied human rights? If so, where did you study (school, university, diploma)?
4. Do you know the meaning of human rights education? If so, what is it?
5. Have you read or studied the World Program for Education in Human Rights? If you know it, what could you write about this program?
6. Do you know that Colombia has a National Plan for Education in Human Rights? Can you indicate what the document is about?
7. Is it important to know education in human rights for training in the area of Pedagogy? For what reason?