

The Institutionalization of Human Rights Education and its Challenges in Taiwan

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The 2021 International Conference of Human Rights Development, Taipei, Taiwan
110.11.24 (revised)





Outlines

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**HRE Development in
Taiwan (1994~Present)**

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Contextualizing its Growth

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The Triad-Model for HRE

From ground zero to flourishing (1994 ~ Present)

- Four Phases
 - 1994 ~2000
 - 2000~ 2008
 - 2009~ 2016
 - 2017~ Present



The beginning: 1994~2000

- Pioneering and experimental teaching, small-scale workshops for teachers, limited to Taipei City, raising awareness, drilling holes on the walls of education conservatism



The beginning: 1994~2000

- Pioneers: the (Bo-Yang) Human Rights Education Foundation (1994)
- Profs. Mab Huang, Mei-ying Tang, Pesus Chou and concerned scholars
- Important but limited support from Taipei City Government



Moving Ahead: 2000~2008

- Expanding HRE through civic advocacy, curriculum revisions, participating professors and school teachers, gaining a foothold in higher education (the CFC Center for the Studies of Human Rights at Soochow University)
- Key Players: Committee on Human Rights Education of the MOE (2000), Curriculum Committees, HR advocacy groups



- Key concepts of HR included in Civics and Society Curriculum for senior High School level (G10~G12), 2006
- Key competences of HR established for Middle School level (G6~G9) , 2006
- Important developments: Seed teachers training and building national networks, producing teaching materials, HR courses at Universities



Wavering Period: 2009~2016

- Positives development:
- Progressive enactments, Domestication of International Covenants on HR took place
- Negative development:
- Countering culture and political conservatism surged, esp. on gender, ethnicity issues, in favor of returning to the Chinese-centered national traditions



- Key players: more assertive civic groups, universities, teachers in resisting the reversal trend, with lukewarm support from the MOE
- Activities: HR teachings become routinized and somehow not meeting with expectations
- Attacks from culture and political conservatism – on rights-related education reform, about gender, ethnicity, and citizenship



Marching Forward: 2017~present

- Returning of conscientious political atmosphere about HR issues, more coordination in the government
- Step-up of HRE by the MOE and the government as a whole
- Key Players: Strong civic society participation, coordinated administration and the legislature bodies



Examples

- HR expanded in the new Curriculum Guidelines (2019) with greater emphasis on learning of HR and Transitional Justice
- Enlarging Institution Networks on HRE by the MOE
 - Center of Education Resources for Human Rights
 - Center of Civics and Society
 - Center of Education Resources for Gender Equality



- Project Group for CRC
- Regional Education Centers for Indigenous People (with Council of Indigenous People)



- Important HRE organizations outside of the MOE
 - National Human Rights Museum
 - Judicial Reform Foundation
 - Civic and Law-related Education Foundation
 - Taiwan Association for Human Rights
 - Covenants Watch
 - Etc.



- Activities:
 - Teachers Training Workshops
 - Building Seed Teachers Networks for all levels
 - Discussion Forums for raising parent's awareness
 - Trainings for education administrators
 - Developing and archiving media and materials for HRE, teacher's HR tool-boxes



Contextualized Understanding

- How has HRE evolved from Civic Movements to Established Education?



Human Rights - rallying for political and social movements since late 1970's.

- On Political Front:
- Human rights are political rights, and rights for freedom of expression, for greater liberty and rooms for political participation



Human Rights - rallying for political and social movements since late 1970's.

- As political opposition, for example
 - The 1979 Formosa Magazine Incident (Kao-Hsiung Incident)
 - Calling for abolishing the Martial Law Regime and thorough re-election of the Congresses, the New Constitution Movement
 - Movement for Transitional Justice



- On the Social Front:
- HR became an umbrella term for various movements for social justice and equality since the 80's



- For example
- Women's Rights, Genders Rights
- Indigenous Rights
- Laborer's and Farmer's Rights
- Justice Reform for Rule-of Law
- Education Reform and Education Rights



- Environment and Ecological Movement
- Welfare Rights, Movement for the Handicapped
- etc.



- On Rule-of-Law:
 - support from legal professionals
 - Judiciary Reform (since 1992)
 - For example, enactment of new Administrative Acts, State Compensation Law, Legal Aid Act, Criminal Compensation Act, and revisions of Code of Criminal Procedure and etc.



In sum

- HR received strong supports from various sectors of the society, and sometimes cut across partisan politics.
- It's path of developments intersect with Taiwan's democratic development and changes of ruling parties



- Important Progress:
- Domestication of International Human Rights Treaties in 2009, and 2010's



- The idea: originated in 1998 by Taiwan's staunchest Human Rights advocate, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and Mr. Huang Wen-Hsiung (Peter).
- Incorporated by former President Chen Shui-bian of the DPP in 2000, in "Building the Nation with Human Rights" platform



The watershed of 2009

- Passing the Implementation Acts of the two International Covenants:
- ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ICESCR, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- in 2009.



- President Ma Ying-geo continued what was left by Chen Shuibian, and wished to make Taiwan internationally visible, and to expand room to participate in international society.



- The emergence of an alliance of more than 40+ HR civil groups, the founding of the Covenants Watch (2009) to make the government adhering to the enactments

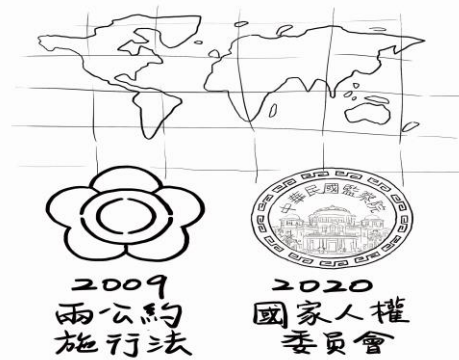


More Implementation Acts have come

- @ Act to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 2012)
- @ Act to Implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2014)
- @ Act to Implement the Convention on the Rights of the Children. (CRC, 2014)



Taiwan Model?



- National Reports and independent international review panels, with significant participation from HR civic groups.
- (the “Taiwan Model” or Taiwan characteristic for strengthening HR as a non UN member)



Educating the whole country

- This serves a very important human rights education process in the country.
- (National report and independent international review process)



Ground-breaking

- The Founding of National Human Rights Commission (long-awaited) in Control Yuan in 2020



Conclusion:

Triad-Model for HRE

- Three major sources for the flourishing of HRE in Taiwan since 2017
 - The protest and movements from below that changed the political arena, led to party rotations and regime changes
 - The advocacy and watch civil groups, NGO's that push forward for more civic, social and cultural rights
 - Pioneering and concerned scholars, educators and teachers



- On the top of the three, there is the body of UN's HR treaties and guidelines that have special relevance for a country that is unjustly shut out from the international society



For HRE to be successful and meaningful

- Teaching HR should be embedded in three inter-related dimensions likewise, where lives matter everywhere and everyday
 - lives in school
 - lives in family, community and society
 - lives in the world



- HRE is here for a better future for all, and a better world.
- Thank you.

