RESEARCH REPORT

TEACHERS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Knowledge, Perspectives and Practices of Primary School Teachers in Ireland

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE (DCU)

Centre for
Human Rights
and
Citizenship
Education

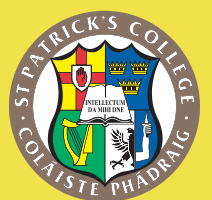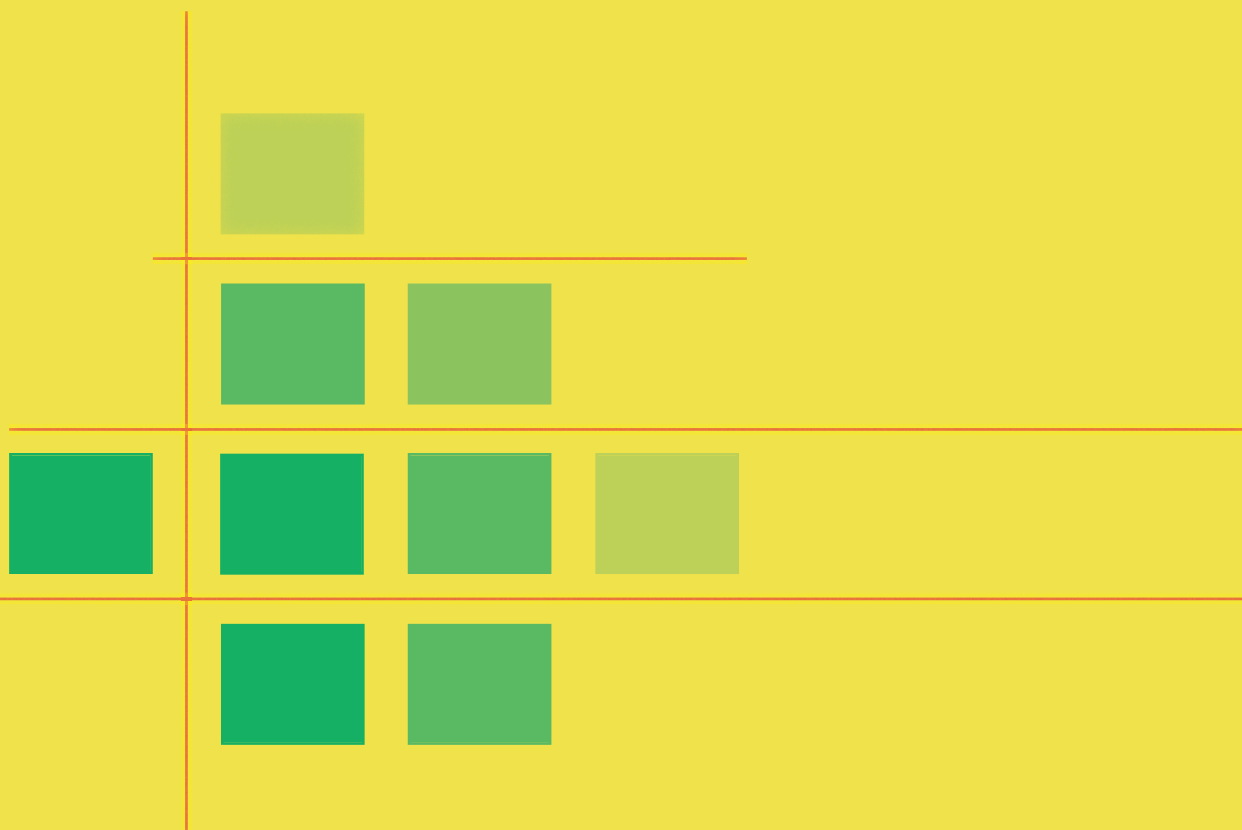St Patrick's College Drumcondra

A Report by the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education

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List of Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CHRCE	Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education
CoE	Council of Europe
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPRD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
DE	Development Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
HRE	Human Rights Education
ICE	Intercultural Education
IHRC	Irish Human Rights Commission
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCS	National Children's Strategy
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
OCO	Ombudsman for Children's Office
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RE	Religious Education
SESE	Social, Environmental and Scientific Education
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education

Report produced by:

Executive summary

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that education shall be directed towards "the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (United Nations, 1948, Art 26.2). This right to human rights education (HRE) is reiterated in all major human rights instruments which Ireland, along with most states in the world, has ratified. International programmes recognise the crucial role played by teachers in "bringing alive the spirit of human rights" in school practice (UNESCO, 2003, p.3) and request that states enable teachers to implement HRE in schools and classrooms (Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2006; OHCHR and UNESCO, 2006).

This study provides the first national baseline data in relation to primary teachers' understanding of human rights and HRE and contributes to the development of a research base on HRE in Ireland. The study aimed to ascertain the level of awareness of and attitudes towards human rights and HRE among primary school teachers in Ireland, to assess the extent to which HRE is implemented in primary schools, and to identify the challenges and opportunities for HRE in the primary system. The study was carried out by the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education (CHRCE), St Patrick's College, Dublin. The findings of the study help identify the needs of teachers and schools in relation to the delivery of HRE and also point to the level of compliance of the Irish state with regard to its commitment to implement HRE in primary schools.

The principal research tool was a structured questionnaire specifically designed for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions which were intended to produce quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was rigorously piloted to ensure that the format, question structure and sequence were unambiguous, accessible, unbiased and appropriate to the aims of the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Data collection took place in 2009. The questionnaire was distributed by post to 376 teachers in 188 primary schools (two teachers per school) throughout Ireland. 152 teachers from 110 schools returned the questionnaire. The sample was broadly representative of teachers in Irish primary schools in terms of gender, teaching experience and teaching role.

While the study's findings were positive in relation to respondents' attitudes and openness towards human rights and HRE, the results echo international concerns regarding the level of knowledge of human rights and human rights instruments amongst teachers (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Imber, 2008; Casas, Saporiti, Gonzalez, Figuer, Rostan, Sadurni, Alsinet, Gusó, Grignoli, Mancini, Ferrucci and Rago, 2006; Fritzsche, 2006; Tibbitts, 2002). What emerged from the survey are many examples of practices occurring in primary schools and classrooms which respond to human rights concerns and incorporate rights respecting approaches. However, these activities tend not to be connected explicitly to human rights language and principles. Furthermore, despite much of the literature reflecting the potential for HRE to provide transformative learning experiences and critique social injustices (Tibbitts and Kirscshlaeger, 2010; Magendzo, 2005; Tibbitts, 2002, 2005), respondents' conceptualisation of human rights tended to ignore hierarchical social structures, whilst their approach to HRE focused on improved social cohesion rather than empowerment.

Chapter One: Introduction

The relationship between human rights and education is multidimensional. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), along with a range of other international human rights instruments, defines education itself as a right (Article 26), interpreted in recent years as the right to quality education (UNICEF/UNESCO, 2007). Human rights instruments state both the entitlement to education and the direction of that education, providing that education itself should be rights-respecting. Most notably, Article 29 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides that education should be directed towards the development of children's full potential and towards respect for human rights, equality and for children's own cultural identities, along with those of others. In addition, it should develop in children respect for the environment and help them to live in peace with others. Moreover, education is also an enabling right and is generative of other rights. It can provide a vehicle through which other rights are realised, like the right to expression, the right to earn a livelihood and the right to equality. It can also ensure that people know about their rights, enabling rights to be claimed and enforced. While human rights instruments sustain the value and quality of education, so education bolsters the potency of human rights.

The idea that education should be directed towards "the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UNCRC, 1989, Article 29) makes HRE itself a right for which states are obliged to provide. Furthermore, the Council of Europe (CoE) Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, adopted by the Council of Ministers in May 2010, asks all member states to provide HRE and education for democratic citizenship in formal and informal education (CoE, 2010). Though non-binding, it provides an important reference point for educators and policy makers in relation to HRE.

The growing corpus of human rights and equality legislation has implications for schools and there are increasing obligations on schools to address human rights and equality issues in a more proactive manner than heretofore. While issues relating to the right to education (generally conceptualized in terms of equality of access and provision) have shaped the broader policy context and discourse on education in Ireland since the 1970s, the idea of education in, for and through human rights is of more recent provenance and has, to date, been less influential. The characteristics of HRE are subject to on-going debate, some of which is reviewed later in this report. However there is a general consensus that HRE cannot be reduced to the provision of information about rights, although this is an important element of it, but rather that it extends beyond knowledge to include dispositions, attitudes and skills and that it is action-oriented.

The rapid and fundamental changes that have characterised Irish society since the early 1990s have been paralleled by developments within education at primary and post-primary level. Demographic changes are reflected in the cultural heterogeneity of Irish classrooms while increased awareness of a diverse range of needs, both individual and societal, has led to developments in educational policy and provision relating to disability and disadvantage and to curricular reform at both levels. Much of Ireland's policy framework for education, developed over the course of the 1990s, aimed to promote equality through education (NCCA, 2005). The report of the National Convention on Education (Coolahan, 1993), the 1995 White Paper on Education, Charting our Educational Future (Department of Education and Skills (DES), 1995), and the Education Act (1998) indicate recognition of the need to respond to a changing Ireland. The Education Act (1998) states that some of its key objects are to give practical effect to the rights of all children as they relate to education, to provide a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities of those in educational settings, while promoting both equality of access to and participation in education. While there is ongoing criticism of the level and nature of state investment in equality in education, the past ten years has seen the implementation of a range of initiatives (such as the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative) aimed at reducing the impact of social and economic inequalities on educational outcomes and on meeting the needs of a diverse school population.

The international commitments of the Irish Government to human rights standards and to equality have been reflected in the development and enactment of national policy and legislation. These include legislation such as the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Acts (2000 – 2008), the Employment Equality Act (2000), the Disability Act (2005), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) and policies such as the National Children's Strategy (2000) and the National Action Plan Against Racism (2005). In addition, the enactment of the European Convention on Human Rights Act (2003) makes this Convention the first legally binding international human rights instrument in Ireland. The Act strengthens an individual's ability to seek domestic redress where their rights are infringed by state bodies.

The ratification of the UNCRC by the Irish Government in 1992 brought with it the obligation to develop structures whereby Irish children's rights to participation and consultation could be realised. Writing in a British context at the turn of the 21st century, Alderson located the failure to reconceptualise children as rights holders as a remnant of the historic struggle between feudal patriarchy and liberal democracy. Children, she argued, were "still partly stranded in a feudal time warp (before rights became central aspects of human relationships) with all its disadvantages but few of its advantages" (Alderson, 1999, p. 186). In Ireland, the response within education to the challenges and opportunities posed by the UNCRC has been patchy at best. In 2000, the National Children's Strategy (NCS) was published. Despite some gaps, the NCS was groundbreaking in many ways, incorporating discourses around diversity, anti-racism and child citizenship (Deegan, Devine and Lodge, 2004). A number of initiatives that emerged from it, such as the appointment of the first Ombudsman for Children in 2004 and the establishment of Dáil na nÓg (youth parliament), Dáil na bPáistí (children's parliament), Comhairle na nÓg (youth councils at local government level) and Comhairle na bPáistí (children's councils at local government level), have increased the opportunities for young people to have their voices heard. Much of the progress in children's participation, however, has been focused on children over twelve years of age and the extent to which the principles of the NCS have found a place within primary schools in the Republic remains to be seen (Morgan, 2006). While some primary schools have set up schools' councils (Collins, 2007; Sharkey, 2007), the 1998 Education Act provides a legislative mandate for their establishment at second level only (Education Act, 1998). This reluctance to conceptualise younger children as social actors can be seen also in the findings of the Task Force on Active Citizenship (2007) which gave limited support to the idea of children as citizens, confining its discussion and recommendations to children over the age of twelve (Task Force on Active Citizenship, 2007).

Moreover, while the new Primary Curriculum (NCCA and DES, 1999) displayed an awareness of the discourse on children's voice, children were not amongst the partners consulted in its development (Devine, 2004). The curriculum provides a framework for learning that is strongly intercultural and outward looking and an enabling environment for the development of human rights-based approaches to education. In its content, the curriculum reflects the diversity and pluralism of society in general, and provides an environment that is hospitable to the teaching of human rights and citizenship education. However, success is dependent on the willingness and capabilities of schools and teachers alike to make explicit and functional the opportunities that exist. The development of an enabling curriculum at primary level is no guarantee that it will realise its potential in relation to human rights and citizenship education. The lack of democratic structures within education, the persistence of didactic and textbook-based approaches to teaching, fuelled by the perception of curriculum overload (NCCA, 2008) militate against genuine systemic change.

There is little evidence of a coherent and integrated approach to human rights and citizenship education across the sector. Initiatives are, in many cases, small scale and local. Beyond the statutory commitment to School Councils at second level, which has been actualised to varying degrees, the idea of child participation in decision-making processes within education has made little impact (Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2006; Ó Cuanacháin, 2004; Devine, 2003) while problems relating to school discipline continue to be viewed publicly as issues of control. In its most recent report on Ireland, the Committee on the Rights of Child encouraged the government to strengthen its efforts to promote the Convention. These included a number of

issues pertinent to schools and the education system. The Committee called for targeted campaigns and training in human rights provisions for professionals working with and for children as well as measures to address racism, prejudice, stereotyping and xenophobia in children. It also called for more to be done, to ensure children's views in matters affecting them were given due weight, in particular, in families, schools and other educational institutions, the health sector and in communities (CRC, 2006).

There have been some welcome developments in the primary sector in relation to HRE. Educate Together schools, for example, are explicit in their commitment to a rights-based approach to education (Educate Together, 2010). Student Councils, while rare, are increasing in number. The presence of school councils, however, does not necessarily indicate increased participation by children (Alderson, 1999, p. 194). One of the most successful initiatives to support HRE in Irish primary schools has been the Lift Off initiative which resulted from a collaboration between Amnesty (Ireland), the teacher unions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Department of Education and Science (Republic of Ireland) and the Department of Education (Northern Ireland). An evaluation of that project found that while those teachers and schools involved in the initiative recognised the need for HRE, it was their considered opinion that this awareness was not shared by the broader educational community which had not experienced such programmes (Morgan and Kitching, 2006).

This report takes the view that there is a dynamic and constitutive relationship between education for democratic citizenship and HRE and that the promotion of a human rights based approach within education is consistent with a concern for participative democracy. In order to teach for human rights and democratic citizenship, schools as institutions must function as sites of human rights practice in themselves, a development that may require "a fundamental change in school cultures" (Carter and Osler, 2000, p. 353). Such schools perceive themselves as human rights communities. Their whole school policies and practices reflect the centrality of human rights to every facet of their practice, from enrolment to graduation and at every point of interaction in between.

Embedding HRE within primary education in Ireland is an on-going project. It requires, among other things, that knowledge of existing practices in schools and classrooms, and of teacher knowledge, attitudes and dispositions towards HRE be subjected to continued research. The plan of action for the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which is focused on higher education among other areas, identifies research as a key component of success and as part of the role of higher education in informing HRE policies and practice (OHCHR and UNESCO, 2006). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to contribute to developing a research base on HRE in Ireland by providing evidence-based knowledge and the first national baseline data in relation to primary teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards human rights and HRE. The study aims to ascertain the level of awareness of human rights and HRE among primary teachers, to assess the extent to which HRE is implemented in primary schools, to determine the areas of children's rights which concern Irish primary teachers and to identify the challenges and opportunities which teachers consider are relevant to HRE in the primary system.

Chapter Two: Human Rights Education

This literature review gives an overview of key texts in the area of human rights education (HRE) that are relevant to this report. It draws on research and scholarship in human rights and citizenship education, along with national and international policy documents/statements and human rights instruments. The review begins by addressing the growing interest in HRE since the mid 1990s and examines a range of definitions of HRE. It then outlines relevant national and international human rights instruments, policy initiatives and programmes that underpin current practice in HRE. The review then examines the relationship between HRE and evolving conceptualisations of childhood. It goes on to focus on the school as a context for HRE and asks whether the Irish primary curriculum provides a framework for embedding HRE in Irish primary education. In conclusion, it looks at the teacher as an agent of change in relation to HRE.

2.1   Why human rights education?

Since the inception of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) a considerable growth in interest and activity in HRE and related pedagogies has been noted (Tibbitts, 2008; Osler and Starkey, 2006; Tibbitts and Fritzsche, 2006). This growth in HRE is evident in: the number of related documents and resources generated; its increasing presence in formal and informal education; a growing focus within third level education programes and research and an increase in the HRE activities of the NGO sector. Some of this growth can be attributed to the obligation on states to provide HRE that accompanies the developing international framework of human rights laws and instruments. HRE is enshrined in international law as an enabling right to know rights. There is a corresponding obligation on governments to fulfil this right by providing education about and for human rights. The obligation on states to provide for HRE, however, does not sufficiently explain the evident growth in the sector. Indeed, much of the growth is in response to identified failures on the part of states to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard (see for example, in an Irish context, Children's Rights Alliance, 2006).

Osler and Starkey (2006) have identified some of the factors that help to explain the growth in interest in HRE and in related pedagogies such as citizenship education. There is, they argue, international recognition of the need to address through education the challenges presented by continuing injustice and inequality in the world. Furthermore, the process of globalisation and consequent migration has led to increasing diversity in local communities. Multicultural societies are faced with the problem of creating nation-states that recognise and incorporate the diversity of their citizens and embrace an overarching set of shared values and goals to which all citizens are committed (Banks, McGee Banks, Cortés, Hahn, Merryfield, Moodley and Osler, 2005). Recent decades have seen the emergence of new democracies throughout the world, but particularly in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America. These states have been faced with the challenge of building the capacity of institutions and of civil society in accordance with a democratic and publicly accountable framework. In common with long established democracies, there is a recognition that democracy is essentially fragile and that it depends on the active engagement of citizens, not just in voting, but in developing and participating in sustainable and cohesive communities. HRE, then, is increasingly seen as an essential and integral part of education for democratic citizenship in multicultural and post-conflict societies (Tibbitts, 2008; Covell and Howe, 2005; Osler and Starkey, 2006; Magendzo, 2005).

HRE is also a vital element in the democratisation of education, enabling people to understand, advocate for, and operationalise their rights and the rights of others in an educational context. Viewed as a process and embodied in the practice of education, HRE is linked with democratic ways of working and with the empowerment of individuals and groups (Magendzo, 2005). In a school context, it relates to governance, relations, classroom climate, pedagogy and curriculum content and has the capacity to transform educational relationships for children, parents and teachers.

Education, then, is seen as central to the realisation of human rights. It is the manner in which we can become aware of our rights and responsibilities and, simultaneously, engage in action that ensures that society functions according to those principles. In the context of child education, HRE is as concerned with how children learn as it is with what children learn and it has a generative role to play in school culture (CRC, 2001).

2.2   What is human rights education?

HRE is often described as an education in, for and about human rights, i.e., education in the epistemologies and philosophies of human rights, and in a mode consistent with the principles of human rights; it empowers learners to vindicate their rights at an individual and collective level in a way that recognises responsibilities and is respectful of the rights of others. In its Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, the Council of Europe defines it as follows:

> HRE means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (CoE, 2010).

Although HRE lacks an agreed theoretical basis or definition, there is considerable consensus between HRE activists as to what it entails. Flowers (2004) conducted an empirical study of over 50 HRE activists which resulted in the identification of four key areas encompassed by HRE. She found agreement that HRE should: be grounded in the principles of human rights treaties; use methods which reflect the principles of respect for individuals and cultural diversity; address skills and attitudes as well as knowledge and involve action at an individual, local or global level.

Flowers' (2004) analysis makes a significant contribution to the literature on HRE and helps to clarify the relationship between concepts of HRE, stated purposes and potential impacts. She identifies differences in emphasis between HRE activists based in governmental bodies (including UN agencies), non-governmental organisations and academic/educational thinkers. In the case of governmental bodies, definitions focus on goals and outcomes and prioritise learning about international and regional instruments. While they are less generalised and more detailed than they were in the past and include descriptions on meaning, content and methodologies, governmental definitions stress the role of HRE in promoting social order and peace. Flowers identifies the Proclamation of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, 1994, as the most comprehensive statement on HRE but argues that it is still focused on outcomes that locate the value of HRE in its "strategic instrumentality for social good" (Flowers, 2004, p. 110). HRE, then, as conceptualised in the definitions of governmental bodies, may support progress that is moderate and gradual but is unlikely to lead to radical or transformative change (Flowers, 2004).

Flowers argues that while non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also focus on outcomes, those outcomes are "transformative" rather than "preservative" (Flowers, 2004, p. 110). HRE is seen as a tool for social change, working towards the empowerment of individuals and of communities denied their rights. Influenced by Freirean philosophy, it can include analysis of the causes of inequality and oppression by oppressed groups (Flowers, 2004, p. 112). Flowers identifies the "huge aspirational burden of hope" that the work of NGOs can bring with it; it is positive particularly in anchoring HRE in lived experience. However, she argues that in this there is also a danger in that it can "promise more than it can produce" and argues for "balancing the inspirational and motivational with what is practical and achievable" (Flowers, 2004, p. 114).

Academic discourse on HRE is also influenced strongly by the work of Paulo Freire (1994) and other critical theorists and focuses primarily on the underpinning values of HRE rather than on its outcomes, thereby placing HRE within an ethical frame (Flowers, 2004). Flowers goes on to argue that there is a danger that HRE can become indistinguishable from ethics within academic discourse. Where professional educators are concerned, Flowers argues that much of the debate centres on the location of HRE and its relationship with other forms of education. Flowers herself sees HRE as "the context that unites and subsumes" other types of education such as citizenship education, development education, peace education, anti-racism education (Flowers, 2004, p. 118).

In seeking to articulate a theory of HRE, Flowers acknowledges the influence and contribution of Paulo Freire but argues that Freirean philosophy does not provide a sufficient theoretical foundation for HRE (Flowers, 2004). She questions the tendency for educators to see human rights as "self evident", accepting "the human rights vision on faith alone" (Flowers, 2004, p. 123). Her research has focused on whether there is an implicit theory in the practice of HRE which could be drawn out of practice and from this she establishes the areas of consensus set out above. Flowers, goes on to argue however, that the open-endedness of HRE may contribute to its creativity. Flowers suggests that a single definition of HRE may, in any case, be elusive and that different emphases and outcomes are stressed depending on the provenance of the definition.

In an earlier analysis that links models of HRE with their target groups rather than with their providers, Tibbitts (2002) identifies three emerging typologies "linked implicitly with particular target groups and a strategy for social change and human development, i.e., the values and awareness model; the accountability model and the transformational model" (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 163). The value and awareness model, which prioritises knowledge of human rights and the embedding of human rights values into public values, is the dominant model in public campaigns and in schools. While this model may support the development of a "critical human rights consciousness", the individual is "primed for advocacy" rather than for social action (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 164). Tibbitts' second model, the accountability model, is aimed at professionals, community workers and advocates whose remits include the monitoring of human rights violations and advocacy; its goals include the embedding of "structurally based and legally guaranteed, norms and practices related to human rights" (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 166). The transformational model, on the other hand, is focused on the empowerment of individuals and communities who may be victims of human rights violations, enabling them to recognise and seek to prevent human rights abuses. It may also include "leadership development, conflict-resolution training, vocational training, work and informal fellowship" (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 166). Moreover, Tibbitts highlights the importance of using interactive pedagogical approaches. Such approaches, she argues are both motivating and humanising. They are also, as she points out, "ultimately practical" in that they are more strongly linked with behavioural and attitudinal change (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 162).

While Tibbitts (2002) identifies the values and awareness model as the dominant model in schools, she suggests that the transformational model can also operate in a school setting where in depth case studies of human rights issues are conducted and where connections are made between school and the lives of children. She sees HRE as going beyond the ideas of valuing and respecting others, to include a commitment to advocacy, the fostering of leadership, and education for personal empowerment and social change. Tibbitts argues that reference to human rights law and constructs are central to HRE and it is this bedrock that distinguishes it from other fields of education such as peace education and global education. HRE, she argues, is "ultimately about building human rights cultures in our own communities" (Tibbitts, 2002, p. 161). Placing human rights law and constructs at the core of HRE provides it with a defining attribute. There is general recognition, however, that HRE is also attuned with other social justice pedagogies such as critical pedagogy and critical multiculturalism and would be compatible in terms of underlying philosophy, purpose and stance (Jennings, 2006, p. 289).

Fritzsche (2006) introduces yet another prism through which to characterise HRE. Human rights education, he argues, is difficult. On the one hand, this difficulty is a consequence of systemic obstacles such as teachers' lack of knowledge and skills relating to HRE topics, difficulty in gaining access to formal curricula, a lack of resources and a lack of political commitment. On the other hand, the controversial and critical nature of HRE, along with contrasting views of educators on its nature and implementation, makes it inherently difficult and complex. Fritzsche points out that human rights educators in general may not have a pedagogical background and can come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds. Emphases and priorities can depend on the disciplinary lens through which human rights and HRE is viewed, whether that be philosophical, legal, political and social scientific or pedagogical. Viewing human rights through a pedagogical lens, he suggests, may mean a focus on values, implicit HRE, individual behaviour, prevention of violations and human rights as a way of life (Fritzsche, 2006).

Tibbitts and Kirscshlaeger (2010) have recently reviewed research in relation to HRE and, in addition to Freire, have identified the influence of other theorists such as Mezirow whose work has contributed to the development of the transformational model of HRE. In their view this transformation is "achieved through a process by which oppressed and exploited people become sufficiently empowered to transform their circumstances for themselves and by themselves" (Tibbitts and Kirschlaeger, 2010, p. 10). In HRE, interactive, learner centered pedagogies are used to achieve this empowerment. They go on to identify some of these specific pedagogies as experiential and activity centred, problem posing, participative, dialectical, analytical, healing (promoting human rights in intra personal and inter personal relations) and goal and action oriented pedagogies.

Most recently, Osler and Starkey (2010) have identified pedagogic principles for HRE drawn directly from rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They identify the rights to dignity and security, (UNCRC Preamble and Articles 19, 23, 28.2 and 29), participation (UNCRC Articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 31), identity and inclusivity (UNCRC Preamble and Articles 2, 7, 8, 16, 23, 28, 29 and 31), freedom (UNCRC Article 12, 13, 14, 15), access to information (UNCRC Article 17) and privacy (UNCRC Article 16) as having particular significance for teaching pedagogy. These rights, they maintain, require teachers, amongst other things, to avoid abuse of power and provide opportunities for students to exercise choice and responsibility; permit maximum freedom of expression of thought, conscience and belief; ensure that a child has access to information and is able to critically interpret the information mediums they access and avoid situations where children may be asked to reveal personal information in public. They suggest these principles provide a tool for teacher self-evaluation (Osler and Starkey, 2010).

2.3   National, Global and European programmes for HRE

The legislative and quasi-legislative international framework for HRE stems directly from the Charter of the United Nations, which in its opening article commits itself to the promotion and encouragement of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all (United Nations, 1945). As noted in chapter one, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) identified education itself as fundamental to the promotion of human rights.[1] The centrality of HRE was highlighted at the United Nations' World Conference on Human Rights held in 1993 which resulted in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (UN, 2003, paragraph 33 of Section I) wherein it is stated that "human rights education, training and public information are essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace".

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[1] Article 26 asserts "Everyone has the right to education…Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendships among all nations, racial or religious groups".

The United Nations adopted 1995-2004 as the 'Decade for Human Rights Education' based upon the provisions of the international human rights instruments,[2] and in accordance with those provisions defined HRE as:

"…training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes and directed to: the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity; the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups; the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society; the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (United Nations, 1996).[3]

On 10 December 2004, the World Programme for Human Rights Education was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations with the aim of advancing the implementation of HRE across all sectors. The programme was structured in two consecutive phases, both of which are relevant to this report. The first phase of the programme (2005-2009) focused on HRE at first and second level education. In its plan of action, HRE is defined for the sector as promoting "a holistic, rights-based approach that includes human rights *through* education" (ensuring that all the components and processes of education – including curricula, materials, methods and training – are conducive to the learning of human rights) and "human rights *in* education" (ensuring that the human rights of all members of the school community are respected) (OHCHR and UNESCO, 2006, p. 3). Five key factors for success were identified: educational policies that promote a rights-based approach to education; strategies for the implementation of policies; the development of rights-based environments in schools that respect and promote human rights for all of the school community; a holistic approach to teaching and learning that includes rights-based content and objectives, democratic and participatory methodologies and teaching resources that reflect human rights values; professional development for school personnel that fosters "knowledge about, commitment to and motivation for human rights" (OHCHR and UNESCO, 2006, p. 4). The current phase of the programme (2010-2014) is focusing on HRE in higher education and training, including teacher education, civil servants, law enforcement and military personnel, while there is a continuing emphasis on the implementation of HRE in first and second level education. Although there was a focus on the education of teachers in the first phase of the programme, the second phase includes a renewed focus on teacher education colleges and institutes as part of the higher education sector. A similar range of factors for success are identified, with the addition of research as a key component for higher education.

While Ireland was not involved in the drafting of the UDHR, it was influential in the drafting of its European equivalent – the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – which was ratified by Ireland in 1953 (Schabas, 2006). Despite this early involvement, however, it was not until fifty years later that the ECHR was incorporated into domestic law. The European Convention on Human Rights was enacted into Irish Law with the European Convention on Human Rights Act, 2003. This Act requires all organs of state, including schools, to perform their functions in a manner compatible with the Convention and its protocols. Article 2 of the First Protocol provides for the right to education and that "in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions" (ECHR Protocol 1, Article 2). This provision has resulted in a variety of complaints concerning education being taken to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg. For example,

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[2] Particular reference was made to those provisions addressing human rights education, namely: Article 26 of the UDHR, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Vienna Declaration and paragraphs 78 to 82 of its Programme of Action.

[3] The UN Decade on Human Rights Education (1995-2004) saw the Irish government report on a number of initiatives which took place in that time including the integration of human rights in the national curricula particularly at post primary level with the introduction of CSPE.

the ECtHR heard complaints over: the display of the crucifix in the classroom (ECtHR, 2009); the obligation to attend religious instruction classes in schools (ECtHR, 2007) and suspension from school for refusal to accept corporal punishment (ECtHR, 1982). Under the 2003 Act, the Irish Courts are obliged to take notice of these decisions in their interpretation of the ECHR.

An explicit commitment to protect human rights and promote equality is also enshrined in the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement, an international agreement between the Irish and UK states which came into force on 2 December, 1999. The obligation towards human rights was collectively affirmed by the parties in relation to:

> "the mutual respect, the civil rights and the religious liberties of everyone in the community... in particular... the right of free political thought; the right to freedom and expression of religion; the right to pursue democratically national and political aspirations; the right to seek constitutional change by peaceful and legitimate means; the right to freely choose one's place of residence; the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of class, creed, disability, gender or ethnicity; the right to freedom from sectarian harassment; and the right of women to full and equal political participation" (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1999).

A concern for human rights is also embedded in a range of national instruments and institutions. The Irish Constitution in Articles 40-44 specifies a number of fundamental rights that include the right to education. In addition Article 45 refers to the obligation on the state to promote justice through its own institutions and by implication the institutions in which education is carried out (Government of Ireland, 1937).

Within a broad human rights framework, section 6 of the Education Act (1998) sets out the objects of the Act to include the following: to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of all children as they relate to education; to provide a level and quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities of those in educational settings and to promote equality of access to and participation in education and the means whereby students may benefit from such education. More specifically in the context of HRE, section 9 of the 1998 Act delineates that a core function of the school is *inter alia* to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of its students. In addition, section 27 provides for the establishment of student councils at post-primary level, thus providing a legislative footing for older children and youth as stakeholders to participate in decisions affecting their own education, a core tenet of HRE. The issue of inequality within the education system lies at the centre of section 32 of the Act as it pertains to provisions that seek to redress educational disadvantage.

The enactment of the Human Rights Commission Act (2000) provided for the establishment of a Human Rights Commission in Ireland, with Section 8 (e) of the Act outlining that one of the core functions of the Commission is to "promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights in the State and, for those purposes, to undertake, sponsor or commission, or provide financial or other assistance for research and educational activities" (Government of Ireland, 2000, Section 8 (e)). Indeed, the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) in its initial plan for 2003-2006 entitled 'Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in Irish Society' viewed this function as central to the Commission's objective to engender a culture of human rights while also expressing a wish to work in partnership with groups and bodies engaged in human rights education. In its most recent strategic plan for the period 2007-2011 education is again seen as central to its objective of promoting "a culture and ethos of respect for human rights in Irish society" (IHRC, 2007, p. 25).

Established in October 1999, the Equality Authority has a statutory mandate to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in matters covered by the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The provisions of the Equal Status Acts (2000- 2011) focus on all aspects of school life and are closely connected to three of the dimensions of the inclusive education process namely creating

inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies and evolving inclusive school practices. Barry (2004) argues that the provision of the legislation requires schools to be inclusive.

2.4   Conceptions of childhood and human rights education

Conceptions of childhood and adult perceptions of children's capacities, dispositions and abilities are important factors in determining the type, quality and regularity of the HRE which is practised in schools. This is particularly evident in relation to the idea of children's participation. Although childhood is defined and understood very differently across societies, all societies and cultures operate with certain assumptions about children's capacities. James and James (2008) describe how the traditional view of children as passive objects of adult shaping and direction has being challenged, particularly since the 1970s, by the sociological perspective of children as social agents with the capacity to act independently. This idea that children should be treated seriously as persons in their own right with a voice both to be expressed and to be heard has been given particular legitimacy by human rights documents, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Lansdown, 2006; Devine, 2005). The conceptualisation of children as social actors is consistent with socio-cultural theories of development. These post-structural views challenge more traditional theories of development by claiming that children's development is strongly influenced by participation in social processes rather than being simply a matter of linear progression in a predictable fashion from childhood to adulthood. Moreover, socio-cultural theories of development have strongly influenced curriculum change and education policy since the 1970s (Smith, 2002).

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child cannot be understood as a stand-alone document, given the influence and relevance of other declarations and conventions in human rights law, its adoption in 1989 reflected considerable change in conceptions of childhood. Increasingly it has been at the centre of debates and initiatives regarding the extent to which children should be protected, empowered and enabled to participate in society (Osler and Starkey, 2010). In ratifying Article 12 of the Convention, states have acknowledged children's rights to express their views in matters which affect them and to receive appropriate information and education to enable them to participate in decisions about their own lives and futures (Osler and Starkey, 2005). In this sense, the children's rights project, and emerging demands for child citizenship, involve a redrawing of what it is to be an adult and a child (Roche, 1999). However, adult perceptions of children's capacities and their interest in maintaining their own position with respect to children have been identified as significant barriers to children's participation (Lansdown, 2006; Hill, Davis, Prout and Tisdall, 2004). The realisation of Article 12 has proved to be problematic and the extent to which it has resulted in meaningful participation for children is questioned (Lundy, 2007; Roche, 1999). Roche (1999), for example, points towards the ease with which adults interpret children's right to a voice. Hill, Davis, Prout and Tisdall (2004) make a distinction between consultation and participation, defining participation as the direct involvement of children in decision making about matters that affect their lives, thus reflecting the language of the Convention. Consultation, on the other hand, is about seeking views and a consultative model can result in decisions being made without the direct involvement of children. Sinclair (2004) adds that in practice the term participation is often used simply to mean being listened to or consulted. In this sense the term itself takes on a very passive connotation.

The relationship between HRE and education for democratic citizenship is strongly present in the literature (see, for example, Osler and Starkey, 2010; Covell, 2010; Howe and Covell, 2006; Banks et al., 2005; Osler and Starkey, 2005). The Council of Europe, for example, sees education for democratic citizenship and HRE as closely inter-related and mutually supportive, arguing that they differ in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices (CoE, 2010). Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while HRE is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives (CoE, 2010).

Much of the literature on citizenship education focuses on the concept of participation. Biesta and Lawy (2006) propose a model of citizenship as practice which acknowledges that people have a right to participate and that through meaningful participation, people's citizenship is realised and enhanced. For them, learning about democracy should be a primary goal of citizenship education. This is not achieved through *learning about* democratic structures and practices but through *participation in* democratic structures and practices relevant to the context of the learner. They argue that it is how children and young people are seen as citizens that will determine the nature of the participation and the quality of the citizenship education which will ensue. In a similar vein, Banks et al. (2005) see experience and participation as fundamental principles of education for citizenship in a global context. As well as learning about democracy, students need to engage in decision-making through deliberative processes which provide them with the experience of meaningful participation (Banks et al., 2005, pp. 13-14). Westheimer and Kahne (2004), in their examination of a range of citizenship education programmes in the USA, found that the content and outcomes of the programme in relation to participation were a function of the concept of citizenship held by the programme designers. Most programmes they surveyed saw children engaged in community related activities consistent with a conception of the effective citizen as being a participatory citizen (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Westheimer and Kahne's 2004 model is reinforced by the work of Haste and Hunt (2006) who identified three similar domains of participation in citizenship education programmes in England - voting and behaviour, helping in the community and making one's voice heard. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) relate this third dimension of "making one's voice heard" to the development of justice-oriented citizens and argue that it is the least prevalent dimension of citizenship education in schools.

The concept of child citizenship is strongly supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the participation rights of children endorsed by the UNCRC enhance and assert the citizenship status of children (Lansdown, 2006). Howe and Covell (2005, p. 7) posit a strong connection between HRE and children's understanding of their role as citizens and see HRE as "a pathway to effective democratic citizenship", arguing the need to have democratic behaviours and values embedded throughout the school. "The goal of children's rights education" they argue,

> "… is to provide the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills that people need if they are going to build, sustain, or rebuild a society that is democratic and respects human rights…children's rights education is important as a pathway to citizenship and to citizenship education and as a vehicle for the development of the values and practices of a global citizenship" (Howe and Covell, 2005, pp. 7- 8).

Thus, the argument for HRE as a whole school approach is strengthened by its links with citizenship education and by the conceptualisation of children as citizens rather than as citizens-in-the-making (Osler and Starkey, 2005).

2.5   Schools and human rights education

There is general consensus in the literature that HRE has an important skills, attitudinal and knowledge base that needs to be embedded in school curricula and practice if children are to understand their rights and respect the rights of others. Research into student knowledge of and attitudes towards human rights in Northern Ireland, which found a low level of knowledge and only moderate levels of interest, suggests the need for HRE to be explicitly provided for within school curricula (Niens, Reilly and McLaughlin, 2006). Skills relating to critical thinking, conflict resolution, empathy and understanding perspective are important components of HRE, along with knowledge and understanding of human rights instruments at international and regional level and in local and global contexts (Jennings, 2006). Although skills and knowledge are a central part of any HRE programme, however, HRE cannot be reduced to these elements alone. Values, dispositions

and attitudes are best embodied in and developed through lived experience, becoming part of the whole school experience of children in the present, avoiding future-oriented, not-yet approaches (Alderson, 1999) to children's rights education. Jennings (2006) argues that "neither an exclusively instrument-based, nor a character based, approach [is] sufficient to fully embody HRE" (Jennings, 2006, p. 291). Rather it should be integrated across the curriculum, informing all areas of school life and culture, including methodologies, classroom management, school governance and relations (Jennings, 2006).

This idea that HRE should permeate all aspects of school life is well established. There is agreement also that embedding rights-based approaches within the everyday life and structures of the school needs to address existing relations of power. Devine (2002), for example, argues that the nature and extent of children's participation will be determined by the power structures embedded in school practice. Developing school structures and practices that are rights-based involves, among other aspects, approaches to classroom management that are respectful of children's rights and perspectives, children's participation in decision-making and school governance, and relations which respect the rights of children, school staff and parents as members of the school community. It also includes the creation of learning environments that are participatory and that empower children as learners. Increasingly, research into rights-respecting schools is suggesting that such practice brings with it benefits in terms of children's wider educational experience. There is evidence, for example, that rights-respecting schools may promote children's engagement with school, which in turn is linked to increased academic and social efficacy (Covell, 2010; Covell and Howe, 2008). Children who attend rights-respecting schools are more likely to make positive comments about their schools and about school climate than their peers in traditional schools (Covell, 2010). Moreover, teachers in rights-respecting schools may be less prone to burn-out and show increased motivation (Covell, McNeil and Howe, 2009).

2.6   Human rights education and the Irish primary curriculum

The ideological perspectives underpinning curricula can be simplified, according to Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall and Pell (1999), into two broad perspectives - the traditional and the child centred. They contrast the child centred emphasis on the process of learning, the interests and the experiences of the child and the holistic approach to knowledge with the traditional emphasis on subject-divided curricula and learning outcomes which are focused on content rather than skills (Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall and Pell, 1999). These contrasting ideological approaches are both manifest in the Irish primary sector, exemplifying one of a number of contradictions within the system. The Primary Curriculum, for example, defines itself as child centred but it is presented as a subject-based curriculum which runs contrary to the holism at the heart of the child-centred approach. This inherent contradiction has allowed it to be interpreted in a variety of contrasting ways (Ruane, Horgan and Cremin, 1999), exhibiting what has been referred to as "ideological elasticity" (Waldron, 2004, p. 212). Moreover, traditional practices relating to textbook-led teaching and teacher-directed tasks are still common in Irish education at both primary and second level (NCCA, 2008; Eivers, Shiel and Cheevers, 2006).

The current Primary Curriculum (NCCA and DES, 1999) is ostensibly a revision of the Primary Curriculum (Department of Education, 1971) which was introduced in 1971 (Sugrue, 2004). A comparison of both curricula with regard to citizenship reveals a changing perspective on children and citizenship which parallels to some extent developments in the same period in relation to conceptions of childhood. The 1971 Primary Curriculum featured Civics as a subject in its own right. Informed by a concept of citizenship that draws primarily from the idea of civic responsibility, and a values orientation described by Kiwan (2008) as a moral concept of citizenship, the 1971 Civics syllabus focuses "on the rights and duties of citizenship and the development of acceptable social and moral attitudes" (DES, 1971, p. 115), and emphasises the role of the teacher in "influencing the good habits of the children" (DES, 1971, p. 116). Despite the overarching commitment to child

centred education, which includes a concern with children as agents of their own learning, there is nothing in the syllabus to suggest any recognition of the social agency of the child.

In 1999, Civics was the only discrete subject to lose this status in the Curriculum. The new subject Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was introduced in its place. SPHE is organised in three strands - *Myself*, *Myself and Others* and *Myself and the Wider World*, with the unit 'Development Citizenship' placed in the third strand. While there is a new focus on the idea of active and participative citizenship within the SPHE syllabus, the frame remains largely one of civic responsibility; the idea of rights is always modified by its coupling with responsibility and there is no recognition of the reciprocity inherent in the concept of human rights itself. In the aims of the SPHE curriculum, for example, there is no mention of children as rights holders or of rights as an element of citizenship. Instead, teachers are exhorted to "develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life" (NCCA and DES, 1999a, p. 9). While rights are mentioned in the objectives of the curriculum, the reference is articulated in a way that distances it from both the child and the school context. Thus, children should be enabled to "become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy" (NCCA and DES, 1999a, p. 10).

The UNCRC is not part of the content of the curriculum. Apart from the inclusion of Article 29 of the Convention in the Teacher Guidelines (NCCA and DES, 1999b, p.4), there is no reference to any rights instrument in the curriculum documents. Indeed, the word 'right' features fewer than 10 times in the curriculum for third, fourth, fifth and sixth classes; where rights are mentioned, they are generally non-specific, referring to "asserting his/her rights" as part of growing more confident and autonomous, or exploring "the duties, rights and responsibilities of both adults and children" as part of living in a community (NCCA and DES, 1999b, p. 54, 64). Where specific rights are mentioned, they are not identified as belonging to a broader framework of human rights; in the strand unit 'Developing Citizenship', for example, children are to be enabled to "explore and recognise the rights and responsibilities of both adults and children in the school community" (NCCA and DES, 1999b, p. 64). Children, it is noted, "have the right to feel safe and to take action" and "they should not infringe on the rights of others" (NCCA and DES, 1999b, p. 49).

Despite these limitations, the SPHE curriculum does provide children with opportunities to participate in rule-making and decision-making and to experience democratic practice; it teaches skills concerning collaboration, sharing and relating well to others and it endorses teaching strategies that are active and participative and that allow children to give voice to their ideas and feelings. It could be seen, therefore, as a hospitable context for HRE in terms of both its content and processes. As was noted by the European Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, in his Observation Report on Ireland (2007), while human rights terminology is not used in the SPHE curriculum, "the programme aims at developing an awareness of how to interact fairly with others, learning to treat others with dignity and respect and to appreciate differences" (Hammarberg, 2007, p. 10). Yet, its failure to address human rights explicitly and its weak conceptualisation of the reciprocal nature of human rights could be seen to undermine the embedding of HRE within the primary sector.

Hammarberg also noted that many of the initatives introducing human rights into school life were being driven by agencies from outside the formal education sector (Hammarberg, 2007). While, as already noted in chapter one, the Lift Off initiative has been one of the most successful initiatives in terms of HRE in Ireland, a number of others are worth noting. The Green Flag scheme, run by a non-governmental organization, An Taisce, in association with local councils, is perhaps the most widespread example of children's democratic participation in schools. The scheme requires schools to set up and facilitate democratic structures in which children, teachers and others in the school community work together to develop implement a programme of environmental activities in the school (An Taisce, 2010). In 2007, over 60,000 children in hundreds of primary schools in the Republic of Ireland participated in a national consultation campaign – The Big Ballot – run by the

Office of the Ombudsman for Children. While this was a very successful consultation project, there has not been any follow-up programme to date.

2.7   Teachers and human rights education

Fullan (1993) argued that teaching at its core is a moral profession and posits an agentic role for teachers in systemic change. A number of studies have focused on the role of teachers as human rights educators who understand the issues, create learning environments premised on human rights principles, serve as role models for students and encourage them to act in ways that recognise the principles of human rights (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Jennings, 2006; Flowers and Shiman, 1997; Osler and Starkey, 1996). Indeed, Harper and Dunkerly (2009) argue that UNESCO articulates a view of the teacher as having a cosmopolitan identity. Their analysis of UNESCO documents suggests that the teacher is conceptualised as "purveyor of human rights, centrally involved in teaching about global poverty, human rights, climate change and gender-based issues" (Harper and Dunkerly, 2009, pp. 60, 61).

Article 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that "State Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike", thus supporting the right to human rights education set out in the UNCRC Article 29 and the UDHR Article 26 (United Nations, 1989, Article 42). As Osler and Starkey point out, these provisions require that teachers in particular are educated in children's human rights as part of their professional studies (Osler and Starkey, 2010). Despite this obligation however, teachers and other education professionals in many of the contracting nation states are often unfamiliar with human rights instruments and unclear about the right to HRE and what it precisely means (Osler and Starkey, 2010).

As yet there is no evidence within an Irish context to suggest whether or not teachers are knowledgeable about, or supportive of rights-based approaches to education. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that, while teachers may be committed to values and principles that accord with a rights-based approach, there may still be a deficit among teachers in relation to knowledge of human rights instruments (Osler and Starkey, 1994). HRE forms part of some initial teacher education programmes in Ireland (Dillon and O'Shea, 2009). However, the limited life experience of student teachers in relation to diversity and gaps in their understanding of rights-related issues (Leavy, 2005) suggests that initial teacher education programmes need to target HRE as a priority area within initial teacher education.

In conclusion, if HRE is to become embedded within the Irish education system, teachers need to be supportive of and knowledgeable about human rights, skilled in the processes of HRE and willing to recognise children as rights holders within a school context. Moreover, HRE is best realised in a whole school context; it should be articulated in school policy and curriculum and implemented through school structures and relations. This study presents a snap shot of the current status of HRE within the Irish primary sector with a view to informing policy and practice for the future.

Chapter Three: Research Process

This chapter describes the design of the study and the research methods and instrument employed. The sampling approach used for the study is described in detail. The development, piloting and analysis of the research instrument are outlined and issues relating to reliability are addressed.

The study set out to collect data relating to Irish primary teachers' knowledge and understanding of human rights and human rights education (HRE) with a view to informing policy and practice in teacher education at initial teacher education level and in terms of continuing professional development. It aimed to examine the following questions:

1. What are Irish primary teachers' attitudes towards and understanding of human rights and HRE?
2. What is the level of knowledge of human rights instruments, institutions and programmes amongst Irish primary teachers?
3. How is HRE conceptualised at the level of classroom practice?
4. Is school policy informed by HRE? If so, how is this evident in practice?
5. What do teachers see as the barriers to the integration of HRE at primary level?
6. What supports do teachers see as necessary for successful integration?

3.1   Research design

A survey was chosen as the best approach to gathering the necessary data for this study as "typically surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 169). The primary research tool was the Human Rights and Human Rights Education Questionnaire, a structured questionnaire format specifically designed for the purpose of this study. This self-administered questionnaire was an efficient method of collecting standardised information from a large number of respondents in a short period of time (Robson, 2002). The questionnaire included both closed and open questions. Closed questions included dichotomous questions (yes/no, male/female) and rating scales which gathered a wide range of data relating to teachers' characteristics, experience, areas of knowledge and understanding, along with attitudes and perceptions. Open questions allowed for contextual information, explanations, experiences and understandings to be gathered.

3.1.1   Design of the questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to gather data relating to individual understanding, attitudes and practice and in relation to school policy and practice. It was divided into six sections. Section A gathered demographic data relating to respondents' characteristics (gender, position within school, teaching experience, country of origin, experience overseas and experience of HRE). Section B gathered data relating to respondents' knowledge and understanding of human rights instruments, programmes and institutions. Section C asked respondents to identify priority human rights issues relating to adults and children at local, national and global level, and to identify the appropriate age at which HRE should commence. Section D of the questionnaire gathered data on HRE at whole-school and class level in relation to policy and practice. In Section E, respondents were asked to identify barriers to HRE and the supports needed in order to embed it in a primary education context. In Section F, data was gathered on respondents' attitudes toward human rights and HRE by means of responses to statements using a five point Likert scale. Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to make additional comments.

Attention to validity and reliability is key to effective research (Cohen et al., 2000). The validity and reliability of the study is supported by careful construction and piloting of the questionnaire, careful sampling and use of the appropriate statistical tests and by the efforts made to maximize the response rate as outlined below.

3.2 Piloting the survey instrument

The questionnaire was piloted in Autumn/Winter 2008 in a range of schools to increase the reliability and validity of the instrument (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Czaja and Blair, 1996). A post-questionnaire interview was conducted with the ten participating teachers to check clarity, eliminate ambiguities, identify omissions and irrelevant items, and to gain feedback in relation to layout, time taken to complete and overall design. The feedback interview allowed the researchers to check the appropriateness of questions and their fitness for purpose (Cohen et al., 2000; Bryman, 2008). The questionnaire was also subjected to critique by experienced human rights and HRE experts, and by experts in the field of quantitative research who gave feedback to the research team on the content and construction of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was subsequently adjusted to take account of the findings of the pilot and the critique. The final questionnaire consisted of 146 questions in total, including both open and closed questions – thus producing both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.3 Survey implementation

Schools in the study were selected by stratified random sampling which involves dividing the population into a number of groups where members share particular characteristics (Robson, 2002). The questionnaire was distributed by post to 376 teachers in 188 primary schools (two teachers per school) throughout Ireland in Spring 2009. This represents a sample size of circa one school in 16 nationally. A detailed account of the procedure involved in the sample selection may be found in Box 1. The sample was stratified so as to ensure that the following characteristics were represented proportionately: school size; patronage; gender; Gaelscoil; disadvantaged status; geographical location; class level. Each participating school and teacher was given a pseudonym/code to ensure anonymity.

Several strategies for maximising the response rate to postal questionnaires are suggested in the research literature (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2000) and a number of these were employed in this study. Maximising the response rate was deemed preferable to increasing the sample size arbitrarily since to do so would admit the possibility of significant non-response bias. The following measures were implemented to achieve maximum response:

1. Good questionnaire design (with attention to clarity and length);
2. Inclusion of a covering letter which articulated the purpose and importance of the survey and the expected benefit to the respondents;
3. Inclusion of a school identifier on each questionnaire sheet (to be used to identify non-respondents and to encourage them to respond);
4. Follow-up of non-respondents by personal contact with schools;
5. The sample size was kept to the minimum to achieve the desired margin of error (see Box 1).

Non-respondents are inevitable and their number is unpredictable in advance. In total, 152 teachers responded out of 376 (188×2), yielding an individual response rate of 40% and a school response rate of 59% (110 schools out of 188 surveyed). Box 1 – 5 below outline in more detail sampling procedure.

Box 1. Selection of Schools

Total Sample Information
According to the latest DES statistics available in September 2008 when the sample of schools was chosen, there were M = 469193 children enrolled in 3292 primary schools (2006-7). Of these schools, 36 were empty, thus N = 3256 was taken as the number of functioning schools. For the purposes of this study attention was paid to schools distinguished according to the following categories: region (5), Gaeltacht (3), gender (3), denomination (4) and DEIS status (3), where the number in parentheses indicates how many classes are in each category.

Selecting Schools
Thus, a sample of n schools can be chosen as follows. First, the categories are ranked in order of importance (as appropriate to the survey), as follows: DEIS, county, denomination, gender, Gaeltacht. The entire list of N schools is ordered (by numerical code) for each of these categories in this order. A number, K is calculated by $K = M/n$ (rounded), and a number, r, is chosen at random between 1 and K (each equally likely). The cumulative enrolments are calculated for the N schools, so that the cumulative enrolment for the last (that is the Nth) school is M. This allows choosing the school of the children labelled with the following n numbers: $r, r+K, r+2K, r+3K, …, r+(n-1)K$. Then, hypothetically, all the children are listed (ordered according to the schools, as outlined) and a child is chosen at random in the first block of K children. Once this 'anchor' child is chosen, the other children (making up n in total) are chosen at regular intervals (in steps of length K) throughout the list. The n schools attended by these n children are then selected.

Selecting Teachers
The next task was to choose teachers from the n schools. To do this, principals were asked to select <u>two</u> teachers from two of the following pre-assigned and randomly selected categories. The categories included the following: Junior and Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd Classes, 3rd and 4th Classes, 5th and 6th Classes, and Resource/Support Teachers.

Sample Size
The question of the choice of sample size was addressed as follows. Supposing a maximum choice of five teachers in each of 3256 schools, the effective population of teachers is 16280. It was assumed that the intra-cluster correlation coefficient [4] is small, in other words, the fact that two (out of five) teachers are selected from each of the schools in the sample was not expected to reduce the effectiveness of the sampling due to homogeneity (similarity) <u>within</u> schools. Therefore, the number of schools required is 188 to achieve a margin of error of 5%, 289 for a margin of error of 4%, or 501 to achieve a margin of error of 3%. Based on these numbers, a decision was taken to target n = 188 schools.

Strengths and Limitations of the Sample as Selected
The sampling procedure as described has three desirable properties, namely:
- A school is chosen with probability proportional to its relative size; thus if one school is twice the size of another it is twice as likely to be chosen.
- The systematic sampling described effectively stratifies the sampling frame by category (in order of the agreed ranking), so that the probability that any class of school is chosen is proportional to the size of that class (within the given category).
- Finally, although the whole process requires some care in its implementation, it is, essentially, not difficult to execute in Excel, right down to the generation of the list of schools.

3.4   Coding and analysis

Responses to the 146 questions were separated into those involving a numerical response (including Likert scales and a small number of clearly-defined options) and those involving a textual response.

To prepare closed questions for data entry and analysis, a coding scheme (Oppenheim, 1992) was devised to allocate variable numbers to each question or item on the questionnaire. Each variable was allocated a shortened name and a variable label. Arbitrary values were then allocated to the variable labels depending on the type of response. This coded data was first entered into Excel with numerous checks and cross-checks by researchers. Once all pre-coded numerical data had been entered the whole data set was then imported into the software package SPSS 14 which was then employed for the purpose of quantitative analysis. The data were cleaned by running a range-check for each variable (Robson, 2002; Oppenheim, 1992).

Qualitative research is often a process of sorting, categorizing, and synthesising, multiple and conflicting voices, and differing interacting interpretations (Bryman, 2008). Coding is the process of breaking down, classifying, comparing and conceptualising the data contained therein (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Responses to open-ended questions were analysed using the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Glasser, 1965). The constant comparative method is a procedure of joint coding and analysis which allows generation of theory in an explicit and transparent manner.

Qualitative data were entered into a Microsoft Excel database to facilitate coding. The process began with a familiarisation process, which was achieved by reading the responses several times and making observational notes. Descriptive analysis was then conducted which identified differences and similarities in participants' responses to each question. Following this process, the descriptive analysis was viewed in the context of the research questions, human rights instruments and human rights education literature. This produced a number of conceptual themes which are discussed in the analysis. To ensure a robust analysis this process was undertaken by two teams of researchers. Their results were compared and a consensus reached on conceptual themes through a number of meetings of the project team. During team meetings, categories were compared and discussed and extensive memoranda were compiled to track the emerging categories. An important part of the process was the growing familiarity of the researchers with the detail of the data, as the categorisation proceeded. In this way, an organised and traceable approach to working with open-ended textual responses was ensured. Extracts from teachers' responses are provided in chapter four for illustrative purposes.

The profiles in chapter five were developed in order to promote the integration of quantitative and qualitative data and to provide greater insight into the data, illustrating key points and providing an insight into the 'rich descriptions' of respondents' experiences (Geertz, 1993). The profiles take account of the context in which individuals construct and operationalise their understandings of human rights and human rights education in classrooms and schools. The profiles also attend to the role of institutions, and therefore provide a nuanced and contextualised picture of the main findings. Maintaining an emphasis on context in this sense draws on the work of Geertz (1993) who calls for generalisation through the identification of connections and general patterns that are characteristic of a certain context. The respondents on which the profiles are based were selected to illustrate key findings gleaned from quantitative and qualitative data. External validity has been built into the process of profile selection through the constant comparative method of analysis, which is predicated on an understanding of the differences and similarities between cases, through paying attention to the role and influence of context, and the quantitative and qualitative research findings.

Chapter Four: Main Findings

The main findings arising from each of the six (A through F) sections of the questionnaire are presented below. Each section includes an outline of the questions pursued, the main findings and a short summary. The final section in this chapter discusses the key findings. In some cases the order of the findings is not identical to the order of the questions in the questionnaire. As indicated in chapter three, the order of questions was decided with reference to a range of criteria which included variety of question type and non-prompting of answers as well as meaning and coherence. All percentages given in this chapter are rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.1   Demographic information

The findings presented in this section relate to Section A of the questionnaire which gathered demographic data pertaining to the respondents' gender, current position, level of teaching experience, country of origin, overseas teaching experience, and exposure to HRE in their own teacher education.

In total, 110 schools and 152 teachers responded, yielding response rates of 59% and 40% respectively. As indicated in chapter three, two questionnaires were sent to each school. Of the 110 schools, 42 schools returned both questionnaires. Thus, for 38% of the schools we have data from two respondents. As will be obvious from data presented later in the chapter, this has provided an interesting perspective on conceptualisations of HRE and of school policy and practice. Of the total sample of teachers 85% were female and 14% were male (one respondent did not indicate gender). This breakdown can be seen as broadly representative of the female to male teacher ratio in Irish primary schools. The substantial majority of respondents 82% were mainstream class teachers, while 16% of respondents, were engaged in Resource and Learning Support positions within their school structure. In terms of number of years teaching experience, just over half of respondents (51%) had between two and ten years with 36% having over 20 years' experience (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Teaching experience of respondents (N=152)

Years Teaching	Percentage %
0-1 Years	1
2-5 Years	28
6-10 Years	23
11-15 Years	5
16-20 Years	6
21-25 Years	10
Over 26 Years	26
No response	1

The majority of the sample (87% of respondents) indicated that they were born in Ireland. Just under one third (32%) had lived overseas, with 26% of respondents having taught overseas at some juncture in their professional lives. Thirteen per cent of respondents had done so in the context of their initial teacher education in a UK college while 5% had experience of teaching in the developing world.

Respondents were asked whether they had received HRE and/or intercultural education (ICE) and development education (DE) at initial teacher education (ITE) level, at postgraduate level or as part of continuing professional development (CPD). As may be seen from Table 4.2, the number of respondents who indicated that they had participated in HRE at ITE, CPD or postgraduate level was low. However, if one looks across the three areas (HRE, ICE and DE), a more positive picture emerges; 36% of respondents identified HRE (9%), DE

(15%) or ICE (26%) as part of their initial teacher education. As is evident from these figures, there was some overlap between these groups, with five per cent of respondents indicating that they had participated in all three areas while others reported a combination of two areas.

A similar picture emerged with regard to continuing professional development in HRE, DE and/or ICE. Five per cent of respondents indicated that they had received HRE in the context of CPD, while the percentages for ICE and DE were 14 and 9 respectively. Again, these groups were not discrete; of the 33 who responded positively to this question, two of them identified all three areas, two of them identified DE and HRE while one identified ICE and HRE.

With regard to post-graduate study, fourteen respondents indicated that they had attended postgraduate courses that included HRE, DE or ICE. As Table 4.2 indicates, nine respondents reported that they had studied ICE at postgraduate level, while the numbers for HRE and DE were seven and three respectively. Again, as the figures suggest, these were not discrete groups. All but two of these respondents had indicated prior engagement with the areas at either ITE or CPD levels, indicating some on-going engagement with these areas. Finally, while 25 respondents reported that they had postgraduate qualifications in a relevant area, however, none of the qualifications named were directly related to HRE, DE or ICE.

Table 4.2 Percentage of respondents who received input in HRE (N=152).

Level	HRE	DE	ICE
ITE	9	15	26
CPD	5	9	14
PG Course	5	2	6
PG Qualification*	16		

*In relevant area

While the number of respondents who reported that they had participated in HRE at ITE, CPD or postgraduate levels was low, if all three areas (HRE, DE and ICE) are taken together 52% of respondents indicated some engagement with one or more of the three areas. Thus, slightly over half of the respondents could be said to have had some engagement with HRE in either dedicated or integrated contexts as part of teacher education. However, this presumes that both DE and ICE are conceptualised as inclusive of a rights-based focus; it is surprising, then, that only one in four of those who reported that they had received ICE as part of their initial teacher education and less than half of those who had received DE indicated that they had participated in HRE. A similar picture emerges in relation to CPD. This suggests one of two possibilities, either the DE or ICE with which the respondents engaged did *not* include an explicit focus on human rights or the respondents failed to recognise its presence.

4.1.1   Summary

152 teachers from 110 schools returned the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 40% and 59% respectively. In terms of gender, the sample was broadly representative of the existing gender breakdown in Irish primary schools. The majority of respondents were mainstream class teachers. A little over half of the sample had up to ten years' experience, while one third had 20 years or more. Almost one third of the sample had lived overseas, while a little over a quarter indicated that they had taught outside Ireland at some stage in their careers. For at least 13% of the sample, this was in the context of their initial teacher education, which took place outside Ireland. Fewer than one in seven respondents had received input in HRE as part of ITE or CPD. Nonetheless, if one takes a broader view of HRE to include DE and ICE, over half of the respondents had some exposure to the ideas, arguments and approaches associated with HRE. This finding must be viewed with some caution as it is unclear if courses related to DE and ICE had a rights-based focus. This suggests that there may be some conceptual confusion with regard to what constitutes HRE and its relationship to DE and ICE.

4.2 Background in human rights

Findings presented here are drawn from Section B of the questionnaire, which pertains to respondents' self-reported ratings of their knowledge and understanding of human rights institutions, programmes and instruments. Respondents also indicated their membership of organisations that promote human rights, along with personal estimates of their understanding of human rights and HRE.

Respondents indicated their level of knowledge of human rights institutions and programmes, using a four point scale. Table 4.3 collapses the responses into two groups. As may be seen from this table, the majority of respondents reported that they had little or no knowledge of international HRE programmes and organisations. Fewer than one in five respondents agreed that they were familiar or very familiar with the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) while a little over 30% indicated that they were familiar or very familiar with the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO). The responses in relation to familiarity with the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the UN Decade for Human Rights Education indicated that fewer than one in ten respondents were familiar with the World Programme, while the UN Decade fared a little better with 13% of respondents claiming familiarity.

Table 4.3 Knowledge and understanding of human rights institutions and programmes (N=152)

Awareness of:	Little and/or no knowledge of:	Familiar with and/or very familiar:
% selecting		
Ombudsman for Children	68	30
Irish Human Rights Commission	80	18
World Programme for Human Rights Education	88	10
UN Decade for Human Rights Education	85	13

As is evident from Table 4.4 below, respondents reported higher levels of knowledge of human rights instruments than of the programmes and institutions. Unsurprisingly, respondents indicated the greatest familiarity with the Irish Constitution with over half (56%) reporting familiarity with or knowledge of the instrument. Fewer respondents however, indicated familiarity with European and international instruments. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents reported that they were familiar with or very familiar with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example, while the percentages for the UDHR and the ECHR were 34% and 31% respectively.

Of the international documents included in this question, respondents were most familiar with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Human rights instruments relating to other groups of people were rated as less familiar. Sixteen per cent of respondents, for example, indicated that they were familiar with or very familiar with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) while the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) were familiar or very familiar to 3% and 5% respectively.

Table 4.4 Knowledge and understanding of human rights instruments (N=152)

Awareness of:	Little and/or no knowledge of:	Familiar with and/or very familiar:
% selecting		
Constitution of Ireland	42	56
ECHR	67	31
Convention on the Rights of the Child	59	38
UDHR	64	34

Respondents were also asked to indicate membership of organisations that had a human rights remit. A total of eleven respondents, representing 7% of the total sample, reported such membership, citing Amnesty International (n=7) and a range of development charities (n=4).

Finally, using a five-point rating scale (Table 4.5 below), respondents were asked to estimate their personal understanding of human rights and HRE - just over 30% of respondents reported that their understanding of human rights was high or very high. Twenty per cent rated their understanding as low or very low, while almost 50% of respondents chose the mid option. With regard to HRE, while nearly 15% of the sample indicated high or very high levels of understanding, almost 30% rated themselves as having a low or very low understanding of HRE. Fifty-four per cent saw their understanding as neither high nor low.

Table 4.5 Personal estimates of level of understanding of human rights and of human rights education (N=152)

	Very Low	Low	Neither	High	Very High
% selecting					
Human Rights	5	15	49	28	3
Human Rights Education*	8	22	54	14	<1

* Three respondents did not respond to this item and were categorised as missing data.

4.2.1   Summary

In summary, the data indicates that approximately one third of the respondents rate themselves as knowledgeable about human rights. There was less familiarity with national human rights institutions and with international programmes and initiatives. The Ombudsman for Children's Office attracted the highest level of familiarity at 30%. Given that this office had engaged in a high profile activity (the Big Ballot) targeted at primary schools in the year preceding the survey, this is perhaps not surprising. Almost half the respondents rated their understanding of human rights and HRE as neither high nor low. HRE fares least well, with 15% of respondents claiming a high or very high level of understanding, while 30% see their understanding as low or very low.

4.3   Attitudes towards human rights and human rights education

This section of the report is based on data collected from questions relating to attitudes towards human rights and HRE. Section C of the questionnaire asked respondents about the age at which they thought children should be made aware of their rights and asked them to identify the main human rights issues for all people and for children, globally, nationally and locally. In Section D of the questionnaire a Likert scale was used to ascertain responses to fourteen statements relating to human rights and HRE. As this scale gathered data relating to attitudes, the findings are included here to present a more complete picture.

4.3.1   At what age should children be made aware that they have human rights?

Respondents were asked to consider the age at which children should be made aware that they have human rights (Table 4.6). Four categories were presented, the first of which, in the context of education, represents the pre-school child; the middle two conform to the primary school years and the final category to post-primary. As is evident from Table 4.6, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that children should be made aware of their rights by the age of 11 (97%), with 64% locating it in the 0 – 7 years age group. Only 3% of respondents saw it as appropriate that children should be introduced to their rights in a post-primary context. This identifies the primary sector as the key context for HRE.

Table 4.6 Age at which should children be made aware of their rights (N=152)

Age	0-3	4-7	8-11	12 +
% selecting				
Respondents	13	51	33	3

When asked why they had chosen this age respondents emphasised children's capacities for understanding. The quotes below are indicative of the justifications given by respondents for their choice of age category; one quote is provided for each age category.

Age 0-3

At this stage they could understand that nobody has the right to inflict pain on somebody else.

Age 4-7

Because I think that children are able to spot injustices at a very young age and would be able to understand they have human rights at this age.

Age 8-11

I am of the opinion that at this age children begin to appreciate more their own independence and opinion and have greater understanding of the world outside their own lives.

Age 12+

At this age they have a maturity and understanding in which to learn about human rights and are at an age to make a decision if so required.

Of the 51% who considered the age range 4-7 years as appropriate for awareness of human rights, almost one in three (25respondents) emphasised the importance of such awareness being encouraged from the time children start school. One respondent stressed the significance of children's entry into the public sphere, as the following extract illustrates:

They are starting their public education - they will be interacting with other people and other children, they need to be aware of their own rights and the rights of others.

In summary, the majority of respondents indicated that children should be made aware of their rights while still of primary school age, with the balance of opinion suggesting that this should begin before the age of

seven years. While almost one in three respondents favoured the 8-11 years age category i.e. the later stages of primary education, 97% of respondents located the appropriate age at which children should engage in HRE before the age of 12 years, thus placing it firmly within the context of primary education. Indeed, 13% argued for an even earlier starting point, suggesting that HRE should begin in a pre-school context.

4.3.2   Attitudes towards human rights and human rights education

Using a Likert scale, participants were invited to respond to both positive and negative statements relating to teaching children about human rights (see Table 4.7 below). These statements related to the nature of human rights, the need for HRE, HRE and children, the place of HRE in the primary school and perceptions of support for HRE. It is evident from the responses that there is strong support for HRE amongst primary school teachers and that HRE is seen as having a positive influence on children's experiences. The vast majority of respondents (86%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that there is no need to teach children their rights in the primary school, echoing the findings of the previous section with regard to the most appropriate age at which children should be made aware of their rights. Moreover, statements asserting that children have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised and that HRE has a positive impact on children's learning were supported by 81% and 79% respectively.

Table 4.7 Attitudes of teachers towards human rights and human rights education

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding human rights and human rights education in Ireland?	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No Response
			% selecting				
There is no need to teach children their rights in the primary school.	1	3	5	41	45	0	3
Children have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised.	19	62	10	3	0	3	3
There is too much emphasis on human rights and not enough on responsibilities.	4	27	40	24	0	1	3
The primary curriculum supports human rights education.	3	47	25	14	<1	5	5
Human rights education has a positive impact on children's learning experiences at school.	16	63	12	<1	0	5	5
Human Rights are aspirational. It is unrealistic to expect them to be achieved for all.	<1	16	15	53	8	3	4
The curriculum is too crowded for human rights education.	11	24	19	36	5	0	6
There is a high level of support for human rights education in the education system generally.	<1	30	27	28	1	9	6
There is a high level of support for human rights education in my school.	2	30	36	15	3	9	5

Other statements attracted a more varied response. Sixty-one per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that human rights are aspirational and human rights for all people is an unrealistic expectation. There was less unanimity with regard to the statement that there was too much emphasis on human rights and not enough on responsibilities. More respondents agreed or strongly agreed (31%) with the statement than disagreed (24%), while 40% selected the option of neither agreeing nor disagreeing, indicating, perhaps, some uncertainty and division.

The status of HRE in schools and in the primary system in general also attracted a range of responses. While 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the primary curriculum is too crowded for HRE, 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Given that the overcrowded nature of the Irish primary curriculum has been identified as a significant issue, this response is more positive than one might expect (NCCA, 2010). With regard to the level of support afforded to HRE by the primary curriculum, half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was supportive, while 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Opinions were more evenly split with regard to system level support. While almost 31% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was a high level of support for HRE in the system generally, the percentage disagreeing or strongly disagreeing was comparable (29%). Support within schools was seen as slightly more favourable, with 32% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that there is a high level of support for HRE in their schools. Almost one in five respondents, however, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

4.3.3   What are the main human rights issues?

Respondents were asked to identify what they considered the main global, national and local human rights issues both for all people and for children. Respondents approached the question in different ways, some offering just one response for each category, others offering a range of suggestions. Some participants did not offer a response for all categories while eighteen participants did not offer an answer to any of the categories. Having analysed responses through constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), it became apparent that the themes which emerged could be further contextualised, and theory developed, through categorisation within the international human rights framework. This enabled the analysis to categorise data from the open ended questions into meaningful themes which are both consistent with the experiences and understandings of the respondents, and can also be contextualised with reference to a wider theoretical framework.

Five categories were developed from the data, as Table 4.8 below outlines. The first category of civil and political rights included references to freedom and fairness; for example: freedom of expression, freedom of speech and opinion, right to due process and freedom from oppressive Government. With reference to the wider theoretical framework of human rights instruments, these principles are strongly articulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The second category, equality and non-discrimination, included references to the need for equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, ethnic background or race. These principles are articulated, for example, in Article 2 of the UDHR. Categories which relate to the right to food and water, shelter, health, education, work and poverty were seen as corresponding to rights identified in the third category, socio-economic rights (see for example the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights). The fourth category, safety and protection issues, included specific references to safety and the right to live without danger of harassment, and the right to live protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Safety and protection rights are recognised as an important category of rights in human rights documents, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A fifth category of no response is included in the table, this category illustrates the number of respondents who did not include any answer.

There were very few responses (approximately ten) that could not be coded according to the final agreed categories and have not been included in the table. For example, in a small number of instances, in relation to local and national issues, observations specific to the perspective of the teacher in their own context were made, as the following quote illustrates:

> *Parents that aren't educated themselves aren't as supportive of it…some are scared of approaching teachers and staff.*

The other small number of responses that did not fall neatly into the finally agreed categories were those relating to sustainability and future generations. These statements included the following:

The right to a future for our planet probably is the pressing issue but isn't a human right per se.

It was notable also that while the majority of responses named human rights issues of generic concern, a significant number indicated concern for the rights of specific groups including women, travellers, people with disability and ethnic minorities. This concern for specific groups was most apparent in relation to the national context.

When asked to identify what were the main human rights issues, responses varied considerably depending on whether the issues applied to all people or just to children, and depending on how 'far away' the people or children were – global, national or local.

Table 4.8 Human rights issues identified by respondents (N=152)

HR issues	For all			For children		
	Global	National	Local	Global	National	Local
% of respondents who identified a human rights issue(s) relating to each category						
Civil/Political	41	26	17	29	16	11
Equality/discrimination	39	44	36	15	24	24
Socio -economic	49	51	43	65	48	46
Safety and Protection	8	9	7	29	32	29
No Response	14	18	31	18	26	30

A review of Table 4.8 raises a number of interesting points. There are significant differences across global, national and local contexts in relation to the number of respondents who identified civil and political rights issues. For example, 41% of respondents identified a civil and political rights issue for all people at global level, 26% did so at national level and just 17% named a civil and political rights issue at local level. A similar pattern is also evident in relation to children's rights with just 11% naming civil and political rights as a key issue for children at local level. This indicates that civil and political rights are perceived as more of a concern in places outside Ireland than in Ireland or indeed in respondents' local communities.

The second significant point pertains to the difference in outcomes for children's rights issues and issues relating to all people's rights. While safety and protection rights were named by relatively few respondents in relation to rights issues affecting all people, they emerge as a significant category of concern for respondents in relation to children. By far the category which received fewest answers in relation to "all people" across global, national and local contexts, it received the second highest percentages in all contexts in relation to children's rights issues. The following extracts are illustrative of respondents' views of safety and protection rights relating to children: *Right to have somewhere safe to play; Right to protection from abuse and exploitation; Right to be free from fear of being harmed in anyway.*

A third key trend can be identified in the data through analysis of the 'no response' category which affords an interesting perspective. While 14% of respondents did not name a human rights issue at a global level for all people, 31% of respondents did not name one at local level. A significant difference between the number of no responses at global and local levels is also apparent in relation to children's rights issues. This suggests that respondents generally found it easier to name human rights issues at a global level than at a local level, and were not as likely to recognise issues that occur nationally or locally as human rights concerns.

Lastly, issues relating to socio-economic rights such as food, education, poverty and health were identified most by respondents in all contexts and categories. Sixty-five percent of respondents included socio-economic rights amongst the human rights issues they identified as affecting children globally. There is an emphasis in these responses on care and protection in relation to children, while conceptions of children as autonomous individuals, embodied in civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and opinion, are much less apparent. Indeed, while 29% of respondents identified civil and political rights issues affecting children at a global level, just 16% and 11% were able to do so in a national and local context respectively. This finding is somewhat surprising given the increasing focus on children's participation in local and national campaigns such as the Big Ballot run by the Office of the Ombudsman for the Children.

4.3.4   Summary

Attitudes towards human rights and HRE revealed in the survey are broadly positive. The vast majority of respondents believe that children should engage in HRE in primary school and that HRE has a positive influence on children's experience of school and of learning. Six out of ten respondents saw human rights as achievable. There was less agreement about the balance between rights and responsibilities, with almost one in three respondents agreeing that there was too much emphasis on rights and not enough on responsibilities, while one in four disagreed with the statement. Teachers' perceptions of whether HRE was supported by the curriculum, the primary system and their own schools also produced divided responses. While half of all respondents saw the primary curriculum as supportive of HRE and four in every ten did not agree that overcrowding was an issue, fewer saw the system itself (31%) or their own schools (32%) as supportive. On the other hand, while only 15% did not see the curriculum itself as supportive, 35% believed it to be too crowded for HRE. Moreover, the percentages who disagreed with the view that the system (29%) and their own schools (18%) were supportive of HRE were substantial. Overall, therefore, while respondents were very positively disposed towards the potential of HRE to make a positive contribution to children's lives, they were less sanguine with regard to the level of support for it at systemic and local level. The positive attitudes displayed towards HRE in the context of child education were evident also in respondents' views on the appropriate age at which children should be made aware of their rights. All but 3% of respondents indicated that such awareness should begin before the age of 12 years i.e. in a primary or pre-primary context. Indeed, over half of the respondents identified 4 -7 years as the most appropriate age category, while 64% argued for HRE by or before the age of 7 years. It is interesting also to note that the capacity of children to understand rights-related discourse in an age appropriate way was the defining reason given by most respondents when explaining their choices. While respondents were positive about the inclusion of HRE in primary education, they tended to associate human rights with socio-economic concerns and to differentiate between human rights issues for adults and human rights issues for children. In general, more respondents were able to identify human rights issues at a global level than at a local level.

4.4   Understanding human rights education

This section of the report looks in more detail at teachers' understanding of what constitutes HRE. Using open questions, respondents were asked to outline their understanding of HRE in terms of its content, processes and aims. The response rates to these questions varied. 97 (64%) respondents outlined their understanding of the aims of HRE; 78 (51%) respondents wrote about the content and processes of HRE, with a small number of respondents indicating that they lacked the knowledge to answer the question.

4.4.1   Aims of HRE

Participants in the study were asked for their views on the aims of HRE. There were 97 responses to this question, summarised in Table 4.9. Themes which arose include: increasing awareness and understanding of human rights; an emphasis on children's responsibilities to others; a concern with less advantaged people/children; an association with equality; HRE's role in enabling people to enforce their rights; a

framework for improving the wellbeing of the classroom; local and global communities, an association with the development of a child's sense of self, social, analytical, reflective skills and the association with citizenship.

Table 4.9 Aims of HRE

Aim of HRE	% of total responses (N=97)	Illustrative Quote
Awareness/ understanding/ respect for human rights generally	42	Provide children with awareness of human rights globally and within their own life.
Learn about rights and responsibilities/ behaviour towards others	31	To inform people of their rights and responsibilities to each other as human rights.
Equality/ inclusion and respect for difference	18	Respect for all. Access to equal opportunities in Education / work housing. To promote equality, inclusion.
Being able to vindicate their rights	10	To inform children of rights, to ensure children know how to react/who to contact if their rights are being exploited.
Being aware of "those less fortunate"	10	To make the child aware of how fortunate they are in this world compared to other less fortunate children.
Creating a more fair, peaceful or just society	9	A good sense of self, independence and confidence.
Development of self, social, analytical, reflective skills	8	Peace for all, where people of all nations - local to global can live and work side by side each looking out for the good of the other.
Being and/or becoming citizens/ participating	5	Children become active and responsible citizens.
Improving the classroom environment	3	To provide a calm, positive, encouraging environment for all who wish to have an education.

Of the 97 responses, 42% referred to raising awareness, understanding or respect for human rights generally. These responses, are very general and do not indicate any particular perception or understanding of HRE. Almost one third of respondents who responded to this question indicated that, for them, an aim of HRE was for children to be aware of their responsibilities towards others. One in ten of those who responded indicated a view of HRE as being about raising awareness of people and children who are less well-off while nine per cent

indicated that the aim of HRE was to contribute to the creation of a more peaceful, fair and just community, globally (five per cent) or locally (four per cent). Eighteen per cent of those who responded indicated that the aim of HRE was related to equality, inclusion and respect for diversity. One in ten indicated that they felt that the purpose of HRE was to enable children to claim their human rights. There were also references to the role of HRE in developing different skills and attributes in the participating children including: decision making; independence; confidence; communication; critical thinking and sense of justice. There were five references to children's participation and citizenship both now and in the future. Three respondents referred to the aim of HRE being to create an improved classroom environment.

4.4.2   Understanding of the content and process of HRE

Participants were asked to describe their understanding of the content of HRE. This question prompted an array of responses from 78 participants which are presented in tabular form in Table 4.10 below. References arising most frequently related to knowledge of rights instruments such as the UDHR and the UNCRC. Respondents also considered that an awareness of human rights problems, of basic needs and rights and an understanding of their rights as children should be included in the content of HRE. The following extracts are illustrative of this perspective:

> *Development of skills and attitudes necessary to promote life and protect our rights and the rights of others together with responsibilities. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

> *A means of making children aware of their rights as children and human beings.*

> *A. development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their full potential. B. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. C. Respect for parents , their own cultural identity, language and values. D. preparation for responsible life in society and respect for the natural environment.*

Some respondents referred to specific rights such as the right to education, while others referred in more general terms to ideas such as respect, equality and tolerance.

> *Understanding of all basic rights – food, shelter, work, education, freedom of speech.*

> *Respect for each individual. Tolerance of difference. Equality of rights across all areas.*

Lack of knowledge to describe the content of HRE was also expressed by respondents. One respondent wrote:

> *I really don't have a big understanding of this area. I feel it is very NB but I would need resources and assistance to teach it properly.*

Table 4.10 Content of human rights education

Content	No. of references
Knowledge of rights instruments	28
Awareness of human rights problems	24
Knowledge of basic needs and rights	13
The rights of children	14
The right to education	15
The right to respect	14
Equality and rights	13
Diversity and rights	10

When considering the process of HRE, respondents emphasised how HRE was organised structurally within the curriculum: whether it was taught as a discrete subject (33 references) through *"structured lessons"* and *"actual teaching"* or *"integrated across school day and across subjects – drama, art, ICT"* as the topic arises (10 references).

> *Mainly through discussion especially dealing with issues as they arise either in school or in the media*

> *Through SPHE lessons. Designing posters with human rights messages. An integrated approach.*

A range of teaching methodologies was referred to by respondents including discussion and debate (20), facilitation, Circle Time, discovery methods and activities, co-operative games, reflection, use of posters, art, story (nine references), drama-based activities and play, use of ICT in the form of videos, short films, internet and DVDs, use of guest speakers and use of relevant materials and resources. Respondents also mentioned the NGOs whose resources they used:

> *Avail of programmes such as Trócaire, Oxfam, Fairtrade, Samaritan's Purse "shoebox" appeal.*

There was specific reference to the participation of children (17 references) and the use of positive example by adults as *"children practise what they see adults do".* The importance of bringing HRE to *"a concrete level of understanding for the children"* was expressed by one participant. The perception of the comprehensive nature of HRE was evident in the following response:

> *Human rights ed [sic: education] is a lifelong process addressing not only children in formal education systems. It is a comprehensive process which involves all members of society. It is an empowering process that enables people to take control of their lives by identifying violations and learning how to use existing mechanisms.*

Others recognised the need to critique information and to include children in the decision-making structures of the school.

> *Class discussion, drama, debate, exploring struggles for human rights. Involving children on school decisions.*

> *Unfolding" and "unpacking" of information through the use of discussion / think/ pair/ share strategies, stories and drama - in a developmentally appropriate way.*

4.4.3   Summary

The aims of HRE as reported by participants in the study related to knowledge, awareness and understanding of rights. The promotion of equality and inclusion of diversity was also strongly associated with HRE. There was some tendency to pair children's rights and responsibilities and to emphasise the value of HRE in improving the way children and people relate to each other. Some responses located human rights abuses outside of the immediate context of the child, and saw raising awareness of local and global poverty as an aim of HRE. Understanding of the content of HRE included developing children's knowledge of human rights instruments, their awareness of human rights problems and understanding of basic needs and the rights of children. Respondents conceptualised HRE as a discrete area of the curriculum as well as one that could be integrated with other subjects. Their responses prioritised teaching methodologies that were premised on the active participation of children.

4.5 Human rights education in schools and classrooms

Section 4.5 presents findings in relation to HRE at whole-school and class level. Respondents were asked to indicate whether their schools implemented any form of HRE and whether HRE was explicitly named in policy documents. Respondents were also asked to report on their own classroom practice with regard to HRE. As outlined in chapter three, two questionnaires were sent to each school with the intention of gathering data across a number of areas – teachers of senior and junior classes, mainstream and resource teachers. The findings below are presented from the perspective of the individual teacher and from a school perspective where appropriate. Data for this section of the report are drawn from responses to Section D of the questionnaire.

4.5.1 The school and HRE

When asked whether their school implemented any form of HRE, 57% of respondents indicated that their schools did so, while 20% indicated a no response with an almost equivalent number - some 18% - indicating that they did not know. However, when this data is looked at from a school perspective, some interesting anomalies arise. Of the 86 teachers who responded positively, 15 pairs of respondents (two teachers from the same school) were identified, indicating that 65% of schools were identified as having HRE as part of their practice.

Interestingly, in the case of schools where two teachers responded to the questionnaires, differences of opinion emerged between the respondents. In nine schools one respondent reported that there was HRE in the school and one respondent indicated that there was not. In six cases one respondent indicated yes while the second gave a 'don't know' answer. While it was evident in two cases that there was an element of individual choice involved i.e. that the particular respondent had chosen to incorporate or not to incorporate HRE into his/her teaching, in the case of the remaining 13 schools, it was evident that respondents had different interpretations of what constitutes HRE, with many of the positive responses indicating that the school had HRE through SPHE, RE or SESE, while several of the 'no' and 'don't know' reported that they did SPHE which perhaps meant that they did HRE in an 'incidental' rather than a planned way.

Respondents who responded positively were asked to describe the HRE that was implemented in their schools. It is evident that SPHE is seen by the majority of those respondents (51 references) as the main mediator of HRE in the primary context, with Religion (14 references) and SESE (seven references) also featuring.

> *Children learn through SPHE, geography, English and history about human rights issues at home at throughout the world.*

A few respondents identified general policies relating to inclusion (two mentions), intercultural education (two mentions) and school codes of behaviour (five mentions) as characterising their schools' approach to HRE, while school ethos was focused on in a single response, which noted that *"there is an ethos of respect for human rights promoted".* Another described the school context in the following way:

> *Children are encouraged to become aware of themselves as valued members of the school and wider community. They are given an opportunity to voice opinions on committees. They are encouraged to share with children in less developed countries and with locals.*

However, only a handful of respondents identified areas that were explicitly focused on human rights i.e. use of Lift Off materials (three mentions); participation in the Big Ballot (six mentions); teaching of units specifically focused on rights (two); use of a charter of children's rights (three) and focusing on the Millennium Development Goals (one). Moreover, a number of respondents identified a fundraising or charity focus as exemplifying the approach to HRE in their schools.

SPHE, Trócaire and Concern. Xmas box appeal

Bearing in mind the emphasis found in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 on knowledge and understanding of human rights and human rights instruments in both the aims and content of HRE, the lack of an explicit focus on human rights in school practice is notable.

4.5.2   School motivation for HRE

Those who reported that their school practised some form of HRE were asked to consider the reasons why their school engaged in HRE. As outlined in section 4.4.1, when considering the *aims* of HRE knowledge, understanding and awareness of human rights emerged as the key themes, however, they were less evident here when considering school motivation. Of the twenty responses, almost half emphasised making children aware of human rights abuses in other countries.

> *Because we feel it is important to make our children aware of the terrible violations of human rights in other countries.*

> *It is seen as extremely important to raise awareness of the situation for children in other less fortunate countries.*

Fifteen respondents related the presence of HRE directly to the curriculum; it was *"part of the curriculum"*, specifically SPHE and Religious Education, while two respondents referred to HRE being *"formally recognised"* in school policy and, as one respondent noted, the *"school's vibrant staff/management implement HRE policy"*. In two responses, the Christian ethos of the school was credited with the presence of HRE in school practice.

> *Based on the Christian ethos that we are all equal in the eyes of God.*

The motivation to teach HRE is some cases arose from schools' perceptions of the need to respond to the diverse backgrounds of their pupils, in terms of disadvantage, different nationalities and disability (14 references).

> *Due to large influx of foreign nationals and the obvious special regard we all should have for the rights of our precious children, also due to some pupils with disabilities.*

> *Because it's part of the approved curriculum and we have a mixed ethnic school population which brings it into more focus.*

> *We are a DEIS school with Band 1 status. A lot of the children in the school are from disadvantaged backgrounds and we feel it important that each child should have basic human rights.*

Some respondents justified the place of HRE in their school as due to its importance (eight references) or because it was an *"integral part of the education of every child"* (two references), while a small number of responses located the motivation in the rights of children to be safe (two), to encourage respectful behaviour towards others (three) and to enable children *"become better citizens"* (two references).

4.5.3   HRE in school policy

The questionnaire sought to gather data which would indicate whether HRE was explicitly referred to in school policy and whether schools had designated post holders with responsibility for HRE. On a school basis, the data suggests that 15 schools (14%) have a post that is dedicated to HRE or a related area. However, of those 15

schools, there were four instances where the two teachers who had responded from their school disagreed, with one teacher answering the question positively and the other negatively. This continues the pattern identified earlier and suggests once again the lack of a shared understanding with regard to HRE. Moreover, none of those posts were explicitly dedicated to HRE and most were either SPHE posts or posts with responsibility for intercultural education and/or pastoral care. One was a resource teacher for Travellers, another was a Green Schools position, while one respondent described the position as including the responsibility *"to organise collections for various International Aid groups"*.

While 31% of respondents indicated that HRE was identified in school policy documents, 40% indicated 'don't know' and 18% answered no. Again, as with the inclusion of HRE in school practice, and with the allocation of posts, a number of those responses were from two teachers in the same school. When a school perspective is taken, therefore, 37% of schools were identified as having HRE at policy level within the school, with 24% identified as not having it and a further 44% of schools for which the respondents were unsure. However, there is again some evidence of opposing viewpoints. Of the schools where HRE was identified at policy level, four schools had respondents answering no to the same question; in a further six schools, respondents answered both yes and don't know, while in three schools respondents answered both no and don't know. Given that 38% of schools overall returned two questionnaires, it is interesting to note that there was agreement between respondents in only half of those schools. It must be acknowledged that a similar level of disagreement could exist in those schools that returned a single questionnaire.

Participants who responded positively in relation to policy were asked to elaborate here on where HRE was located within school policy. In the majority of responses it was located within school planning documents relating to SPHE and other areas (SESE, Religion, English and Music).

> *Rights are dealt with comprehensively in SPHE. The child's right to care and respect and protection and education....*

School policy areas where HRE are also identified include the code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy, equality policy, enrolment policy, admissions policy, child protection policy, intercultural policy and only in one case was there a specific reference to a human rights policy. HRE was also perceived by teachers to be identified in the school plan (four references) and in the school ethos/mission (seven references).

> *Mission statement – all children are entitled to education and all differences will be accepted and respected.*

Respondents who identified HRE as part of school policy were asked to name any rights of the child that they felt were actively promoted through the school plan or other policies. Table 4.11 below indicates the range of rights identified. It is evident that the rights identified by the respondents as part of their schools' policies are informed particularly by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Table 4.11 below identifies the relevant articles in the UNCRC. As the table indicates, the dominant cluster of rights evident in the data relates to children's right to have a voice, to express their views freely, to have those views listened to and to participate in decision-making in matters that affect them. Rights associated with education, with fairness and equality and with freedom from fear and intimidation were also strongly present in the data. Respondents also focused on the rights of children to express their cultural identity, to have a name and be recognised as an individual and to feel a sense of belonging. In addition, respondents identified a range of other rights including the right to live in a clean and healthy environment, the right to love and care and the right to have their basic needs met. The following quotes are illustrative of the range of rights mentioned by respondents:

> *The right to have a say and be heard when decisions are being made that affect them....*

Children have a right to free education. Children have the right to be kept safe and not to be hurt or neglected. Children are allowed to speak their own language and practise their own religion and culture...

Right not to be bullied. Right not to be targeted due to ethnicity/creed/race....

Right to express views freely and to respect the opinions of others. Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Right to education and development of the child's personality, talent, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Development of respect for human right and fundamental freedoms.

Table 4.11 Rights promoted through school policies

Human rights promoted through school policies	No of references by school	Articles in the UNCRC
Right to have a voice, to freely express their views, to be listened to and to participate in decision-making	24	12, 13, 14
Right to education	19	28, 29
Right to equal and fair treatment, inclusion and protection against discrimination	16	2, 23
Right to a safe environment free from intimidation	13	19
Right to respect and dignity	10	Preamble
Right to belong to a community and to free expression of culture	7	30
Right to be loved and cared for and for basic needs to be met	5	25, 26, 27
Right to play	4	31
Right to a healthy environment	4	6, 24
Right to have a name and be treated as an individual	2	7, 8
Right to learn about their rights	2	42
Right to peace	1	38

4.5.4   *School structures that support children's participation*

As noted in the previous section, 24 schools reported that their school policy documents promoted children's participation rights, however, when asked whether their schools had committees or structures in which children participate, 66% of respondents from 70% of schools answered yes. These responses are summarized in Table 4.12 below. As with earlier questions, respondents from the same schools did not always agree. In the case of four schools, one respondent answered yes and the other no, in three schools respondents answered yes and don't know while in a further three schools one respondent answered yes while the second gave no answer to this question. In each case, the positive answer was taken as indicative of school practice, which may result in a greater representation of children's participation in the data than is warranted. Even so, it is clear that children's participation rights are perceived to be more evident in school structures than in school policy documents.

Respondents provided information on the nature of children's participation. The vast majority of those who responded to this item cited children's involvement in the Green Schools initiative as illustrative of children's participation in school committees/structures. On the other hand, 9% of schools that identified participative structures, identified school councils as part of school structures. Participation by children in structures around discipline and classroom rules was higher at 7% of the overall sample and 10% of schools that reported children's participation. Among the other structures named were internet committees, sports committees, book clubs, healthy lunch committees and breakfast clubs. Respondents were also invited to give examples of

decisions taken by children that were implemented in the school. Unsurprisingly, the majority related to the Green Schools programme in schools where children are involved in "*recycling, water conservation, reducing energy usage in school*".

Table 4.12 Children's participation in school committees/structures (n=103)

Committee/Structure	No. of schools	% of schools who identified participative structures (n=77)	% of total sample of schools (n=110)
Green Schools	63	82	57
Student Council	7	9	6
Fundraising/NGO Projects	3	4	3
Behaviour Strategies/class rules	8	10	7
Other	13	17	12

Respondents gave examples of ways in which children have input into decision-making processes in schools as part of the Green Schools movement. One participant reported that *"children decided possible steps and strategies required in order for the school to become a green school".* There were a few references to children being involved in *"meetings"* and *"committees"* to plan for the Green Schools programme. Children have *"worked as a team in devising ways/rules for the school as a whole which was awarded the Green Flag as a result".*

A few respondents commented on the student council as a forum for involving children in decision-making. One participant commented that *"children decided to get a jacket as part of the school uniform which was implemented".* Teachers also commented on children's involvement in the discipline policy, *"compiling class rules (to be included in school behaviour and discipline policy ratified by the BOM* [sic Board of Management]*)".* Children also have input into decision-making by involvement in school activities such as monitoring the healthy lunch programme, organising group games with younger children and involvement in fundraising activities. Involvement in national programmes and NGO projects such as Bóthar, Christmas Child, Goal, fair trade fortnight was also cited by respondents as a way of involving children in decision-making in schools.

4.5.5   HRE related posters in schools

As illustrated in Table 4.13 a minority of respondents indicated that posters on human rights standards were displayed in their schools. The Convention on the Rights of the Child attracted the most positive response, with teachers in 16% of schools reporting on its display. In contrast, few schools (5%) were reported as displaying the UDHR. Respondents from 7% of schools indicated that their schools displayed school and/or adult designed charters. Similarly, seven per cent of schools were reported as displaying charters designed by children.

Table 4.13 Resources/posters on HR standards on display in the school and in classroom/teaching area

Resources and posters on display	% of schools N=110	% of respondents (N=152)
UNCRC	16	8
UDHR	5	2
Adult designed charter	5	4
School community designed charter	4	4
Charter designed by children	7	7

4.5.6   The classroom and HRE

When respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they taught HRE, the vast majority reported that they taught HRE, principally as an integrated approach. Twenty three respondents, (15% of all respondents) indicated that they did not teach HRE and five respondents did not answer this question. Five respondents indicated that they taught HRE as both an integrated approach and a stand-alone subject. One respondent out of the total sample of 152 taught HRE as a stand-alone subject only. For respondents who indicated a cross-curricular approach to HRE, Table 4.14 represents the breakdown by curricular subject. It corroborates the data generated by previous questions in relation to the dominance of SPHE and Religious/Moral Education. When asked to consider their own practice, however, respondents identified a range of other curricular areas where HRE was integrated, such as Drama, Geography, English and History.

Table 4.14 Percentage breakdown by curricular subject through which HRE is taught (N=152)

Curricular Subject	%
SPHE	81
Religious/Moral Education	76
Drama	51
Geography	45
English	43
History	38
HRE as stand-alone subject	< 1
Did not teach HRE	15
No response	3

The questionnaire sought data regarding respondents' familiarity with resources in HRE and whether or not posters relating to human rights were displayed in their classrooms.. In respect of respondents' awareness of HRE resources currently used in Irish primary schools, 31% indicated some awareness. Educational materials produced by Amnesty International and Trocáire were those predominantly cited. Nine per cent made specific reference to the Lift Off dedicated HRE programme and a further 1% made more general reference to Amnesty International resources. A similar amount of respondents made reference to Trocáire (a leading development NGO in Ireland) with 11% citing Trocáire education materials or website. The other references given were to a wide range of programmes, resources and organisations including: SPHE related programmes (4%), development education resources (excluding Trocáire's) (3%), intercultural education resources and guidelines (2%) and environmental education resources (1%). These references would again suggest an understanding of HRE as being predominantly to do with development education and global poverty.

Thirty seven participants outlined how they used the HRE resources cited. The majority of these referred to class activities, such as promoting discussion, following lesson plans from the resources and using the suggested activities *"as part of the SPHE programme and incidentally when the need arises".* A small number referred to specific packs used at particular times, such as the *"use of Trócaire packs in Lent. Use of Fair Trade resources in Fair Trade Week".* There were references providing a more specific indication of use. For example, one respondent stated that "*Lift Off, The Right Start, Earthlink where topics covered, e.g. Me and my family/ My name is important, are integrated with art/drama".* There were five references to being aware of but not using the HRE resources cited.

As was the case with posters displayed in schools, only a minority of respondents indicated that posters on human rights standards were displayed in their classrooms (see Table 4.13). In classrooms, as in schools, the

UNCRC was the most displayed convention with 8% of respondents indicating that it was displayed in their classrooms, Most of these respondents had also indicated that it was displayed in their schools. Few classrooms (2%) were reported as displaying the UDHR. Fewer than 4% of respondents indicated that their classroom displayed an adult-designed charter and the same percentage indicated their classroom displayed a school-designed charter. Less than 1% of respondents indicated that their classroom displayed both. Seven per cent of respondents indicated that their classroom displayed a charter designed by children in the school.

Respondents were also invited to name the human rights events in their classroom. Of the 42 teachers who responded positively, 18 referred to charity campaigns and projects. There were references also to: the SPHE curriculum; cross-curricular activities; discussion and debate; intercultural events; the Green Schools initiative and Citizenship as human rights events in the classroom. The following quotes illustrate the range of classroom events:

> *Drama activities based on different situations involving human rights. Groups formed to decide class rules at the start of the year. Circle Time-issues relating to human rights discussed.*

> *We sell Hope chocolates for street children in Calcutta. Workshops from One World Development Centre. We sell Friendship bracelets for Friendship Day for Amnesty. We take part actively in Fair Trade fortnight. We have taken part in Irish Aid Project (2008). We do Christmas boxes for Samaritan's Purse. We take part in the Cradle Charity food collection.*

> *Anti-bullying, Stay Safe, Healthy eating, showing respect, clean environment.*

4.5.7   Summary

Over half of respondents reported that their schools implemented some form of HRE. The majority of these respondents reported that SPHE was the main mediator of HRE implemented in their schools. When asked to identify *why* the school implemented HRE, children's awareness of human rights abuses in other countries, its presence in the curriculum and diversity in schools emerged as key themes. Fourteen per cent schools were reported as having a HRE related post; however none of these posts were specifically HRE and most were either SPHE or posts with responsibility for intercultural education and/or pastoral care. Thirty seven per cent of schools were reported as having HRE identified in school policy documents. In the majority of these cases HRE was identified as being located in school planning documents relating to SPHE. Expression and participation rights and the right to education were the rights most identified by respondents as actively promoted in school policies. Seven in every ten schools were reported to have committees and structures in which children participate, with the Green Schools initiative being the main programme cited. Only a minority of schools were reported as displaying human rights posters.

In relation to HRE in the classroom, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they taught HRE as an integrated approach. Nearly all of these respondents reported that it was integrated into SPHE with a large number also citing Religion or Moral education and Drama. About a third of respondents indicated some awareness of HRE resources. Of the resources referenced respondents cited development education materials relating to developing countries more often than HRE materials with a local focus. Nearly half of those who cited classroom HRE events, referenced development-oriented charity campaigns. Relatively few classrooms displayed any human rights related posters, but, as with the schools, the most displayed convention was the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4.6   Barriers and supports

Respondents were asked to identify the barriers inhibiting HRE and the supports needed to facilitate HRE in primary schools. They were also invited to contribute additional comments.

4.6.1   What are the barriers to human rights education in primary schools?

Of the 152 questionnaires returned, 126 responded to this question. Table 4.15 below lays out the main themes that emerged and presents the data as a percentage of the overall number of respondents (N=152) and as percentage of those who responded to the question (n=126). The majority of respondents identified at least one barrier to implementation.

Table 4.15 Barriers to human rights education in primary schools

Category	% of respondents to question (n=126)	% of overall respondents (n=152)
Time constraints	47	39
Overloaded curriculum	40	34
Inadequate resources	25	20
Inadequate training	11	9
Inadequate knowledge	14	12
Negative perceptions	7	6
There are no barriers	7	6

The most serious barriers perceived by respondents were time constraints and curriculum overload, as illustrated in the following quotes:

> The Primary School Curriculum is already very full, but there is no reason why Human Rights Education cannot be incorporated included in and with other subject areas, it's all about life.

> Time constraints. Planning and preparation in accordance with the curriculum - no room for human rights education only in conjunction with SPHE but not stand alone.

These findings resonate with previous analysis which indicated that that 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the curriculum was too crowded for HRE. It is worth noting, as indicated in the quotes above, that those who viewed curriculum overload and lack of time as barriers to HRE in many cases suggested an integrated approach as a solution to this, thus perceiving the overcrowded curriculum as a constraint rather than a barrier.

Respondents also identified inadequate resources, professional development or knowledge as significant barriers. The strongest response concerned access to adequate resources to support HRE, followed by concerns regarding knowledge deficits and professional development:

> Lack of teacher training…teachers just do not know enough about this area and are not confident or comfortable enough to try. Lack of resources in the area of HRE.

> One of the largest barriers to Human Rights Education in the primary school is a lack of understanding and information on the part of the teachers and also a lack of resources.

Negative perceptions or conflicting views on human rights in the wider environment were seen by some to constitute a barrier:

Perceptions learned in home environment may be in conflict.

4.7   Survey results summary

The survey provided a comprehensive picture of the respondents' knowledge and understanding of human rights and HRE and the implementation of HRE in the respondents' schools and classrooms. It also provided an indication of the way in which respondents conceptualise human rights and human rights instruments. The results of the survey can be summarised as follows:

- 152 teachers from 110 schools returned the questionnaire. The sample was broadly representative of teachers in Irish Primary Schools in terms of gender, teaching experience and teaching role.
- Fewer than one in seven respondents had received input in HRE as part of initial teacher education or continuing professional development, however over half (52%) of respondents have had some exposure to HRE, development education or intercultural education.
- Approximately one third of respondents who were surveyed rated themselves as knowledgeable about human rights and about human rights instruments, with fewer still being knowledgeable about national human rights institutions, international programmes and initiatives.
- Respondents indicated that their understanding of HRE was lower than their understanding of human rights. Only 15% of respondents claimed a high or very high level of understanding of HRE, while 30% see their understanding as low or very low.
- The vast majority of respondents believed that children should engage in HRE in primary school and that HRE has a positive influence on children's experience of school and of learning.
- Teachers' perceptions of whether HRE was supported by the curriculum, the primary system and their own schools produced divided responses.
- When asked to identify the main human rights issues for adults and children in local, national and global contexts more respondents identified socio economic rights than other classes of rights.
- The survey suggested a tendency, amongst respondents, to associate children with safety and protection rights and to associate civil and political rights more with all people than with children.
- Respondents illustrated a tendency to pair children's rights and responsibilities and to emphasis the value of HRE in improving the way children and people relate to each other.
- Some responses located human rights abuses outside of the immediate context of the child, and saw an aim of HRE to be raising awareness of poverty, locally and globally.
- The majority of respondents indicated that HRE took place in their classrooms and in their schools. Both at whole-school and classroom level, HRE was reported as taking place predominantly through SPHE although Religious or Moral education as well as other curriculum areas were also cited in this regard.
- Where questionnaires were returned by two respondents from the same school, there was often discrepancy between their answers relating to whole school practice.
- Respondents identified time constraints, curriculum overload, inadequate resources and knowledge as constraints inhibiting HRE in primary schools.

Chapter Five: Profiles

The profiles in this chapter were developed in order to promote the integration of quantitative and qualitative data and to provide greater insight into the data. The profiles pay attention to the context at play which informs individuals' understanding and practice of human rights and human rights education (HRE) in the classroom and school, providing a nuanced and contextualised picture of the main findings. Each case has been selected to illustrate key points previously discussed in chapter four, but also, to provide a 'rich description' of respondents experiences (Geertz, 1993). Maintaining an emphasis on context, these profiles draw on the work of Geertz (1993) who calls for the identification of connections and general patterns that are characteristic of a certain context. External validity has been built in to the process of profile selection through the process of constant comparison, which develops from understanding the differences and similarities between cases, but also, paying attention to the role and influence of context, and the quantitative and qualitative research findings.

5.1   About Helen

Helen has been a teacher for 27 years. She attended a college in the Republic of Ireland for initial teacher education and graduated with a B.Ed. Through initial teacher education, continuing professional development and a post-graduate qualification in education, Helen has prior knowledge of HRE, development education, global justice and intercultural education. She suggests that she is familiar with the organisations involved in human rights in Ireland, such as the Ombudsman for Children's Office and the Irish Human Rights Commission and very familiar with the instruments relating to human rights, such as the Constitution of Ireland, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Helen considers her personal understanding of human rights and HRE as very high. She is not a member of an organisation which promotes human rights.

With regard to the age at which children should be introduced to human rights and HRE, Helen suggests the age group of 4 – 7 years because she believes that promotion of human rights should take place early in a child's learning, and that this age is appropriate. She strongly supports the idea that children have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised and that HRE has a positive impact on a child's learning experience.

Helen feels that social and economic rights are as important as civil and political rights. This is reflected in her views regarding the key human rights issues. Helen considers a range of different rights to be important for all people at global and local scales; these include the right to vote and the right to individual freedom of expression. For children specifically, Helen suggests that the key human rights issues at the local level are the promotion of human rights to children to enable them enact, defend and promote their rights. Helen cites issues of freedom of expression, freedom from fear and war, and the right to be safe as key issues for children at the global level. She strongly disagrees with the idea that human rights for all is an aspirational goal and neither agrees nor disagrees that there is too much emphasis on human rights and not enough on responsibilities.

Helen strongly disagrees that the primary curriculum is too crowded for HRE and suggests that there is a degree of support within the education system. She feels that HRE is strongly supported in her school. Helen expanded upon her reasons for thinking that HRE is strongly supported in her school. She indicates that the school implements HRE through school policy, a school council and classroom committees, and through integration of HRE into curricula teaching. So, while the school does not have a dedicated post for HRE, Helen teaches HRE through SESE, Drama, English, SPHE and Religious education. Helen also noted events that take place in the school around human rights, for example, school participation in the Big Ballot and regular events in the classroom every term. She uses resources dedicated to HRE, such as Amnesty International Ireland's

resources *Lift Off, The Right Start and Me You Everyone,* once every term and states that there are posters on the Convention on the Rights of the Child both in the school and the classroom. In terms of the content and process of her classes, Helen gives examples of teaching about identity and the UDHR, conflict dialogue and child labour. Her aim in teaching about human rights is to engender a positive healthy attitude to human rights and an understanding of the UDHR and the UNCRC. Helen also states that human rights are integrated into the standards of the class and school planning system, for example, the UNCRC and the UDHR are specifically mentioned in the school and class plan. Also HRE is mentioned specifically in the SPHE class plan. Helen would be interested in participating in CPD on HRE and suggests that more resources should be made available on human rights for primary schools at a range of age levels.

5.2   About Paula

Paula has been a teacher for 13 years. She graduated from a college in the Republic of Ireland with a B.Ed. Her initial teacher education incorporated development education/global justice. Like Helen, Paula has attended in-service on human rights and development education, and also has a masters level post-graduate qualification which incorporated HRE. Paula is not familiar with the organisations and programmes involved in human rights, such as the OCO and the IHRC, but indicated that she is familiar with the instruments related to human rights, such as the Irish Constitution, the ECHR, the UNCRC and the UDHR. She rates her knowledge of Human Rights and HRE as neither low nor high. Paula is a member of Amnesty International.

Like Helen, Paula, believes that human rights and HRE can be introduced to children between the ages of 4-7 years. Paula thinks strongly that children have a more positive experience of school and have a more positive learning experience if their rights are recognised. She disagrees that the goal of human rights for all is aspirational and neither agrees nor disagrees that there is too much emphasis on human rights and not on responsibilities in school.

With regard to support for HRE, Paula feels that the primary curriculum, the education system and her school are supportive of HRE. She indicates that the basis for school support is the fact that the religious order, patronising the school, is involved in overseas development work. Paula believes that social and economic rights are more important than civil and political rights. She thinks that it is very important to raise children's awareness of the conditions and lives of 'less fortunate' children in developing countries. Paula and her school are regularly involved in fundraising and charity initiatives. Paula has also used a range of resources on specific countries such as Nigeria and Brazil in her teaching of human rights. The human rights issues of key concern to Paula at the global and local level are education and health care, particularly for those with special needs.

Paula indicates that her school implements HRE within its policies, ethos and charters. She says that HRE can be identified in whole school policy documents, such as the school plan, and that the school has student involvement in committees. Paula takes an integrated approach to teaching HRE, through the visual arts, drama, English, SESE, SPHE, Religious/Moral Education curricula and feels that the curriculum is not too crowded for HRE integration. Paula also mentions that a poster on the UDHR is on display in the school, but not in the classroom. The human rights standards are not referenced as part of the school or class plan, but HR is mentioned through SPHE. Paula suggests that she would be interested in participating in CPD on HRE.

5.3   About Elise

Elise has been a teacher for 18 years. She attended a college in the Republic of Ireland and graduated with a B.Ed. Unlike Helen and Paula, Elise has had no experience of HRE, development education or intercultural education at initial teacher education stage, in-service or at post-graduate level. Elise reports to have very low awareness or knowledge of the programmes and bodies with responsibility for human rights, or the instruments through which human rights operate. She rates her knowledge of human rights and HRE as very low. Like Helen, Elise is not a member of a human rights organisation.

Elise also suggests that human rights and HRE can be introduced to children between the ages of 4-7 years and agrees that a positive experience can be gained if children's human rights are recognised in the school context. Elise is not sure if human rights for all is an aspirational goal and agrees that there is too much emphasis on human rights rather than responsibilities. She indicates that civil and political rights are more important than social and economic rights. Elise does not feel supported with regard to teaching human rights, suggesting that the primary curriculum, the education system and her school do not support HRE.

Elise indicates that the school does not have any mechanism to implement HRE; it is not mentioned specifically in class plans and she is unaware of any school policy related to HRE. She does suggest that HRE can be supported in the curriculum, primarily through SPHE and Religious/Moral education. She is not aware of any human rights related events or posters in the school or the classroom, but does mention that some students participate in the Green Schools Committee. Elise suggests that she would be interested in participating in CPD on HRE.

5.4   About Jacqui and Aoife

Two teachers from the same school in Dublin, Jacqui and Aoife, responded to the survey. Jacqui has been a teacher for 14 years and Aoife for three. Jacqui and Aoife attended two different colleges in the Republic of Ireland for initial teacher education. Neither consider that they have had any exposure to human rights, development/global justice education. Both teachers report to having very low awareness and knowledge of the programmes and organisations associated with human rights, but are a little more familiar with the instruments through which human rights operate. Jacqui rates her knowledge of human rights as neither high nor low, but her understanding of HRE as low. Aoife rates her understanding of human rights and HRE as very low. Neither is a member of a human rights organisation. Jacqui and Aoife neither agree nor disagree that if children's rights are realised they have a more positive experience in school. Both agree that there is too much emphasis on human rights and not enough on responsibilities.

Jacqui thinks that attaining human rights for all is an aspirational goal, while Aoife is not sure. Jacqui is not sure if civil and political rights are more important than social and economic rights, while Aoife thinks that social and economic rights are more important. In terms of human rights issues of concern for Jacqui, she lists food, water, safety, housing, medicine education and equality, whereas Aoife points to specific issues of concern for her, such as uneducated parents and the difficulties they face with the education system. In addition she points out the lack of support that children in disadvantaged areas receive in the home as a key issue.

While Jacqui feels that the curriculum supports human rights, she feels that the education system and the school do not. Aoife is unsure of the extent to which HRE is supported across the education system and in the school. Jacqui and Aoife's responses differ in relation to the implementation of HRE in the school. Jacqui says that the school has policy around human rights and HRE in the context of SPHE and Religious/Moral education, but that the instruments, such as the UNCRC or UDHR, are not specifically mentioned in this policy. Aoife says that she does not know if the school has any policy on human rights and HRE. Both Aoife and Jacqui mention

that students help with Green Schools activities, such as judging colouring competitions, and communicating messages and information with other classes, but neither indicate that children are involved in Green Schools committees. Jacqui says that she teaches HRE through SPHE and RE, while Aoife says that she does not teach HRE. Jacqui also indicates that human rights events take place in the school and gives the example of charity campaigns, whereas Aoife says that the school does not participate in HRE events. Jacqui does not answer the question as to whether there are human rights related posters in the school, whereas Aoife says that there are none. Neither are aware of any HRE resources and are not interested in participating in CPD for HRE.

Chapter Six: Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore Irish primary teachers' understanding of human rights and their current practice in relation to human rights education HRE. In particular the study aimed to:

1. ascertain the level of awareness of human rights and HRE among primary teachers;
2. ascertain teachers' conceptualisation and approach to human rights and HRE and children's rights;
3. assess the extent to which HRE is implemented in primary schools;
4. identify the challenges and opportunities which teachers consider are relevant to HRE in the primary system.

This chapter is structured around each of the research questions, which will be addressed in turn. The final section then provides a summary of key findings and of the discussion that together inform the recommendations at the end of the chapter.

6.1   Awareness of human rights and human rights education

While there are positive findings in relation to respondents' attitudes and openness towards human rights and HRE, the results of the survey support concerns regarding the level of knowledge of human rights and human rights instruments amongst teachers (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Imber, 2008; Casas et al., 2006; Fritzsche, 2006; Tibbitts, 2002). Only about a third of respondents self-reported that they were familiar with the ECHR, the UNCRC and UDHR and few respondents reported familiarity with other human rights instruments such as CERD, CEDAW and the CRPD. The limited familiarity with the ECHR is perhaps particularly striking given its recent enactment into Irish law and the media coverage of cases and judgements relating to it. While self-reported knowledge of the Irish Constitution was relatively high, there is no indication from the survey that this familiarity related to its relevance as part of a human rights framework. Indeed, the limited reference to the Constitution in the responses to qualitative questions suggests that it was not. Awareness of national agencies supporting the promotion and enforcement of human rights and the rights of the child in Ireland was lower still, indicating respondents' limited awareness of how human rights are realised and promoted at local and national level.

Respondents' self-reported awareness of HRE was lower than their awareness of human rights. While about 30% of respondents claimed high or very high levels of understanding of human rights, just 15% claimed high or very high levels of understanding of HRE. This suggests that even where respondents have a good knowledge of human rights in a general context they are not confident in recognising its application to their school and teaching circumstances. Similarly, respondents' familiarity with HRE related initiatives, specifically HRE dedicated resources, was low. The limited awareness of HRE found in the study brings into question current teacher capability in realising the role, often attributed to them, in promoting awareness of and respect for human rights (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Jennings, 2006; Flowers and Shiman, 1997).

The findings of the survey suggest why respondents demonstrate a low awareness of HRE in that they indicate little structural support for HRE in the education sector. While the study supports previous findings that HRE is included in some initial teacher education programmes (Dillon and O'Shea, 2009), it is still clear that respondents had had very limited experience of HRE courses as part of teacher education or as an explicit component of school policy or practice. Only 24 respondents in total had participated in any HRE courses at ITE, CPD or post-graduate level. Only one respondent school indicated that there was a specific human rights policy within the school and HRE was identified as being included in school policy in only a third of schools. Moreover, there is little explicit reference to human rights in the Primary Curriculum (Ruane et al., 1999). With such limited participation in HRE at ITE, CPD, and post graduate level, with little reference to HR and HRE in

school policy documents and with almost no explicit mention of human rights in the Curriculum, it should not be surprising that respondents indicate a low level of awareness of HRE.

These findings suggest that the recommendation of the Committee of the Rights of the Child (2006), that more efforts be made to increase knowledge of the UNCRC, particularly amongst professionals working with children, is still valid. Respondents very limited familiarity with conventions ratified by Ireland, including the ECHR, CEDAW, CERD and CRPD, would suggest there is little recognition amongst teachers in Ireland of the State's obligations under these conventions or of the significant implications which these conventions have for educational institutions.

Respondents lack of awareness of human rights instruments also raises concerns regarding children's access to information on their rights and consequent ability to vindicate their rights. Knowledge of human rights instruments and institutions is necessary for individuals to be able to claim their rights and seek redress if their rights are infringed (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Fritzsche, 2004). Consequently there is a requirement on State parties to raise awareness of human rights generally and amongst children (CRC, 2001; UN, 1989; UN, 1948). The education sector has been identified as a vehicle through which governments can ensure that individuals are aware of and able to defend their rights (CoE, 2010). Respondents own lack of familiarity with human rights instruments suggests schools are not fulfilling this awareness-raising role. With respondents indicating limited confidence in their knowledge of HRE and limited awareness of support programmes and materials, the survey calls into question the degree to which teachers are directly exploring human rights instruments and principles in their classrooms.

6.2   Conceptualising human rights, human rights education and children's rights

A number of key issues were raised around teachers' conceptualisations of human rights, HRE and children's rights, such as the lack of conceptual clarity around the terms, the prevalence of non-transformative or participatory teaching practices, and the notable absence of a recognition of children as rights holders.

6.2.1   Lack of conceptual clarity

Strikingly, respondents' knowledge of human rights instruments did not correspond with how they rated their level of understanding of human rights and HRE. Many of the respondents who rated their understanding of human rights or HRE highly had little or no knowledge of most if not all of the conventions, including the UDHR, the UNCRC and the ECHR. As knowledge of human rights instruments is central to any understanding of human rights and HRE (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Jennings, 2006; Flowers, 2004; Tibbitts, 2002) this draws into question respondents' conceptualisation of human rights and HRE.

The discrepancy between respondents' knowledge of human rights instruments and self-reported understanding of human rights might be indicative of a tendency to divorce the concept of human rights from the founding human rights instruments. This suggests perhaps, that respondents approach and interpret the term human rights differently to how it is conceived in academic or legal discourse. That is to say, the discrepancy suggests that some respondents may be using the term informally, as a signifier, divorced from meaning and without recognition of the historical, legal, political and global contexts of human rights. These findings support observations made by Osler and Starkey (2010) that the term human rights has increasingly become a slogan in need of definition and that despite the growth in use of human rights rhetoric there is a widespread lack of familiarity with human rights instruments among educators.

Furthermore, nearly a half of respondents reported that their level of understanding of human rights was neither low nor high. Bearing in mind the lack of awareness of key human rights documents and the further findings discussed below, this result might be understood as suggesting respondents' difficulty in evaluating their own understanding. This response, 'neither low nor high', could be regarded not only as being a middle

level of knowledge but as being equivocal. Its popularity might be seen therefore, as indicative of a lack of certainly as to what is encompassed at this level of understanding of human rights.

This lack of conceptual clarity is evident too in the level of discrepancy between questionnaires returned by pairs of respondents from the same schools. These anomalies suggest a lack of common understanding of what HRE encompasses. Where, for example, one respondent might consider a person responsible for SPHE in the school to be a dedicated post for HRE, another respondent does not recognise this position as such. The confusion and inconsistencies evident in the responses support concerns over a deficit in teachers' understanding of human rights and HRE and that the lack of a shared definition of HRE can result in vagueness (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Fritzsche, 2006; Flowers, 2004; Tibbitts, 2002).

6.2.2   A Preservative Model

Despite much of the literature reflecting the potential for HRE to provide transformative learning experiences and to denaturalise social injustices (Tibbitts and Kirscshlaeger, 2010; Magendzo, 2005; Tibbitts, 2005; Tibbitts, 2002), respondents' conceptualisation of human rights tended to ignore hierarchical social structures, whilst their approach to HRE focused on improved social cohesion rather than empowerment.

Flowers (2004) and Tibbitts (2002) analysis that schools tend to take a preservative approach to HRE, was clearly reflected in this study. In general, respondents showed a tendency to perceive HRE as concerned with encouraging social responsibility and improving social cohesion. Respondents emphasised the value of HRE: in improving classroom discipline, in encouraging children to recognise their duties and obligations to others, in promoting charity towards the global poor, respect for diversity and respect for the environment. While respondents emphasise the responsibilities and social order associated with HRE, there are relatively few references to the value of HRE as a tool for empowerment or critical reflection or social reform.

Respondents' apolitical and uncritical approach was particularly evident in their association, apparent in the study, between HRE and global poverty. A significant number of respondents indicated that a main aim of HRE was to raise concern for those who were less fortunate. Others referred to the aim of raising awareness of human rights and human rights abuses. When asked to consider the reasons for their school engaging in HRE, half of the responses to this question emphasised making children aware of global human rights abuses. Nearly half of the classroom HRE events cited by respondents were charity campaigns. A majority of the HRE resources cited were concerned with global poverty. When respondents were asked to identify what they considered the main global, national and local human rights issues respondents found it easier to identify global issues than they did national or local issues. These findings suggest a tendency amongst respondents to locate human rights and HRE education outside of their immediate context, perceiving its relevance more to developing countries than to the classroom, school or even the local and national community.

This association made between HRE and global poverty is indicative not only of a dislocation of HRE from the immediate classroom context, but also of an apolitical approach to human rights, a preservative model of education and a lack of conceptual clarity concerning HRE. That human rights is regarded as a key theme of development education, is accepted internationally within HRE; however, in this context it is seen as providing a justice, rather than a charity, approach to global poverty (Osler and Starkey, 2010). Applying a human rights framework to global poverty requires consideration of the structures which fail to vindicate the rights of many living in the developing world. It is empowering and transformative as it demands that poverty be addressed as a matter of right (Osler and Starkey, 2010). It is doubtful however, that respondents' association between HRE and global poverty recognises the inherent contradiction between a rights based approach and a charity approach to development. The fact that fundraising campaigns were identified as key HRE events suggests instead that respondents regarded raising awareness of global poverty and charitable responses as in themselves HRE. These references suggest an understanding that equates acts of charity with protection of

human rights and that does not recognise that the concept of *rights* requires structural provision based on entitlement rather than *adhoc* provision based on generosity. It encourages children to look directly at socio-economic need and to attempt to meet those needs themselves rather than to engage with the structural causes of that poverty. In this way, it focuses on children's direct relationship with others, in this case impoverished people living in the developing world, ignoring the political, legal and social structures in which the children, and 'others', are located. It ignores the particular responsibility, placed by human rights instruments, on state bodies and in doing so separates the term human rights from its legal, political and philosophical context.

Respondents' tendency to negate social structures and social hierarchy is evident too in their non-application of human rights instruments to themselves as teachers. Respondents' emphasis on child responsibility and improved social cohesion is indicative of what Imber (2008), in a US context, observes as a failure amongst teachers' to recognise themselves as duty bearers. Respondents emphasised the role of HRE in improving relationships between the child and other children or between the child and the wider society. There is a marked lack of emphasis on the significance of HR and HRE in the relationship between the respondents as teachers, and agents of the state, and children. There was little if any recognition of the particular application of the conventions to teachers and schools as part of the state apparatus. The findings suggest a failure on the part of teachers to recognise (and a failure on the part of the wider education sector to promote) the particular application of human rights instruments, whose main concern is the relationship between state and individual, to schools as state institutions. These results suggest a need for the explicit application of human rights instruments to pedagogical principles and school structures and practice (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Devine, 2002).

Thus, the dominant conceptualisation of human rights and HRE inherent in the responses could be characterised as uncritical and apolitical. It does not call into question power relations or locate actors, teachers, children, human rights defenders or victims, in their social contexts. In common with the literature (e.g. Tibbitts, 2002), respondents linked HRE with related educations, development education, citizenship education and SPHE, recognising an association between HRE and global poverty, democracy and personal development. However, these associations were not founded on a transformational approach, either personal or social. On a global level respondents' perception of HRE focussed on charity rather than structural analysis, on a local level there was little perception of using HRE to challenge power structures or to enforce entitlement. Unlike its characterisation by activists therefore (Jennings, 2006; Tibbitts, 2002) HRE, as reflected by respondents in the study, was weakly attuned with social justice pedagogies.

6.2.3   Children as rights bearers

While aspects of the findings of this study might be seen to present a critical picture regarding the teachers' understanding of human rights in Ireland, there are also positive findings which offer significant starting points for growth and development. Responses to several questions indicate that teachers have positive dispositions towards human rights and children's rights and see a place for them in the context of their teaching. The overwhelmingly positive responses to the propositions that children should be made aware of their rights before the age of 12 and that children have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised indicate that teachers as a body are well disposed to the concept of children's rights. However, while ostensibly such support for children's rights is positive, there is evidence in this study that adult conceptions of children's rights continue to be dominated by traditional and limited assumptions of children's capacities and abilities. Alderson's (1999) observation, that the development of adult awareness of children as rights holders is still ongoing, continues to be relevant given the type of responses that teachers offered in relation to the children's rights issues that most concerned them. Almost a third of respondents did not offer a response in relation to

naming a children's right that concerned them locally while it is apparent that respondents more readily identified issues of concern to all people than human rights issues of specific concern to children.

Despite the advancement of theories which support conceptions of children as active agents in their own learning and development, the concern that children continue to be seen as passive objects requiring the protection and shaping of adults (James and James, 2008; Lansdown, 2006) is reinforced here. There is a clear difference between the categories of 'all people' and 'children' in relation to teachers' human rights concerns. While issues of safety and protection barely arise for all people, they are regularly nominated in relation to children. Social and economic rights, particularly the right to food, education and health were also readily identified by teachers. In contrast, issues of children's rights such as freedom of belief and opinion which embody conceptions of children as social actors (Lansdown, 2006; Devine, 2005) were of less concern. Despite the dominance in educational and curriculum policy of theories which support children's active participation in learning contexts, the evidence would suggest a continued ambiguity towards children's status as social actors on the part of teachers (Deegan et al., 2004). While the Convention on the Rights of the Child has had an impact on educational policy in Ireland (Sinclair, 2004), Lundy's (2007) assertion that the important principle of children's voice enshrined in Article 12 may be passively interpreted by adults who work with children is echoed in this report's findings.

The broad findings of this report would suggest that there is a connection between teachers' conceptualisations of childhood and their knowledge and practice in relation to children's rights. Teachers' understandings, perceptions and conceptions are central to the realisation of HRE in schools (Osler and Starkey, 2010; Flowers, 2004) as they influence what rights are taught, how they are taught and how they are experienced by children in the wider school. These research findings would point to the need to broaden teachers' understanding of children's rights beyond issues of safety, care and protection to issues of power relationships, voice and meaningful participation.

6.3   Human rights implementation in primary schools

Over 70% of respondents reported that they teach HRE. This might seem surprising given respondents' self-reported lack of familiarity with human rights instruments and self-reported lack of understanding of HRE. However what emerges from the survey are many examples of practices occurring in primary schools and classroom which respond to human rights concerns and incorporate rights respecting approaches. However these activities tend to be inexplicit in their relationship with human rights and, in line with teachers' conceptions of HRE set out above, to be preservative rather than transformative.

In line with the recommendations in the literature and in international programmes (United Nations, 2006; UNESCO, 2003; Ruane, Horgan and Cremin, 1999) most respondents reported that they integrate HRE into pre-existing areas of the curriculum. If respondents are actively integrating HRE into classroom teaching, one might expect much higher responses in this study regarding familiarity with and the visibility of human rights documents and resources in schools and classrooms. The evidence from this study is that human rights documents such as the UNCRC and the UDHR were not part of the physical learning environment of most Irish children. Respondents were not familiar with human rights instruments and therefore cannot be explicitly teaching about them. Neither were they aware of or using human rights education resources to inform lessons, as might be expected if HRE was being explicitly integrated. In addition, few respondents were aware of national programmes in HRE (Government of Ireland, 2005). These contradictions suggest that rather than finding opportunities to explore human rights explicitly in the curriculum, the integration reported by respondents signifies recognition of areas of correlation between the curriculum and human rights principles. Respondents were not actively integrating HRE into the curriculum but instead perceived HRE *within* the

curriculum. In this way the survey results reflect concerns that HRE is often regarded as subordinate to other education areas (Tibbitts, 2002).

SPHE, was recognised by respondents, as it is in government literature, as being the most hospitable context for HRE in the curriculum (Hammarberg, 2008; Government of Ireland, 2005) with the majority of respondents reporting that they integrated HRE into this subject area. SPHE provides children with opportunities to participate in rule-making and decision-making and to experience democratic practice; it teaches skills concerning collaboration, sharing and relating well to others; it endorses teaching strategies that are active and participative and that allow children to give voice to their ideas and feelings; it aims at developing an awareness of how to treat others with dignity and respect and to appreciate differences (CoE, 2007). However, the SPHE curriculum does not use human rights terminology or make specific reference to children as rights holders. Like respondents' conceptualisation of human rights discussed above, the SPHE curriculum emphasises social responsibility rather than empowerment and entitlement. This survey suggests that respondents' teaching of HRE is incidental to the curriculum rather than proactively integrated into it. Moreover, it indicates that SPHE is the dominant curriculum area providing opportunities for HRE. This study suggests, therefore, that limitations in the SPHE curriculum concerning HRE translate into limitations in the implementation of HRE in the primary school classroom.

Within the context of SPHE and elsewhere, respondents reported many instances of practices which promote the inherent human dignity of children and contribute to a wider culture of mutual respect and participation. However, explicit human rights focused events were more occasional. Using Heater's (1984) model of HRE as pertaining to education about, in and through human rights, respondents' approaches can be viewed as aspects of education consistent with human rights principles, although they may not specifically explore human rights instruments and their implications.

Respondents referenced their use of participative teaching methodologies and recognised the correlation, addressed in the literature, between these and HRE principles (Tibbitts and Kirschlaeger, 2010; Flowers, 2004). Similarly respondents emphasised the importance of equality and, in line with the literature, identified the value of human rights in an increasingly diverse society (Osler and Starkey 2006; Banks et al., 2005). While the use of active methodologies and inclusive responses to diversity may not have been located in a HRE context, they undoubtedly contribute towards the creation of a culture of respect for human rights in and beyond the education sector.

Children's participation in school life, recognised as key to the realisation of the children's democratic and expression rights (Covell, 2010; Covell and Howe, 2008) was also evident from the results of the survey. However, the principle mechanism indicated by respondents, which facilitated participatory engagement in decision making, was the Green Schools programme, with far fewer individuals mentioning school councils. While the Green Schools programme provides an opportunity for children to make decisions and coordinate whole school practice, its limitations as a model of child participation must be recognised. The programme is adult initiated and restricted to environmental concerns and therefore translates into limited realisation of children's citizenship rights (Te One, 2011; Hill, Davis, Prout and Tisdall, 2004; Hart, 1992). The predominance of the Green Schools programme in child participation practices reported in the survey supports concerns that responses to children's right are often tokenistic.

The significance of the Green schools programme, as indicated by the results of the survey, is also reflective of the importance of non-governmental agencies in promoting HRE in primary schools. A significant proportion of events and resources, cited by respondents in the survey were produced or initiated by non-governmental organisations. This finding supports the observation made by the European Commissioner for Human Rights that children's experience of HRE in Ireland is being driven by policy and practice outside the education context (Hammarberg, 2008).

The survey supports concerns that HRE is often subordinate to other forms of education (Tibbitts, 2002). It suggests that HRE is implemented in a manner which is incidental to the curriculum and inexplicit. It supports the finding from studies in Northern Ireland which suggest a need for HRE to be explicitly provided for in the school curricula (Niens, Reilly and McLaughlin, 2006). It suggests that there is little education specifically *about* human rights and human rights instruments. Furthermore as might be expected, it suggests that the HRE implemented reflects respondents' conceptualisation of HRE and the approach of the SPHE curriculum, in that it emphasises responsibility and does not challenge social structures. Interactive methodologies are used but not to explore justice issues. Participative projects are limited in their scope and influence.

Nonetheless, respondents' recognition of the value of humanising participative pedagogy, of the need to respond inclusively to diversity; the social and personal development encouraged in the SPHE programme and the popularity of citizenship initiative like the Green Schools programme provides evidence of an increasing rights respecting approach in primary schools. To this extent respondents are directing education towards respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as the state has obligated to do through ratification of the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989).

6.4   Challenges and opportunities

The study gives some cause to be optimistic about the possibilities for HRE in Irish primary schools. Respondents' positive disposition towards the application of human rights to primary education is clearly evident in the study as is their recognition of the benefits that HRE has been found to bring to schools and classroom (Covell, 2010; Covell and Howe, 2008). The vast majority of respondents indicated that they believe that children should participate in HRE whilst at primary school and that children will have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised and if their education includes HRE. Relatively few respondents felt that human rights were aspirational and their realisation unrealistic. These finding suggest an acceptance amongst teachers of the values encompassed in human rights and a willingness to apply those rights to their educational settings.

In line with recommendations in the literature and in national and international government documents (UNESCO, 2003; Ruane et al., 1999), respondents recognised the opportunities for integrating HRE into the curriculum. More respondents than not felt that the primary curriculum supported HRE and that overcrowding of the curriculum presented no barrier. The survey also highlighted the opportunities for non-governmental organisations to work with and promote social initiatives in schools. It reflects a high level of school engagement with non-governmental programmes promoting children's participation and global consciousness.

The positive disposition towards HRE amongst respondents and the perceived opportunities for integration within the curriculum present opportunities for developing the implementation of HRE in schools and classrooms. Howerver, the limited reference to human rights instruments in the Curriculum leaves the onus on teachers to create the space for HRE. Significantly, this study provides further evidence of a deficit in teacher knowledge about human rights and about human rights education. Furthermore the study presents an approach to HRE which emphases social responsibility over social critique and justice. This presents a considerable challenge to the possibility of transformative HRE taking place on any scale in the primary classroom.

Despite respondents' belief in the value and possibilities for HRE in primary schools, the survey highlights the relatively low profile currently occupied by human rights and HRE in the primary education sector, in terms of school policies and practices. Instead, this study supports concerns that HRE has been subsumed into other education and policy areas (Tibbitts, 2002). Contrary to recommendations (Jennings, 2006; Osler and Starkey, 2006; Tibbitts, 2002) the HRE characterised by respondents and their schools does not appear to be founded

on the conventions, and is not therefore distinguishable from other forms of social educations. Respondents' characterisation of HRE in this sense can be seen as a reflection of the limitations of the Primary Curriculum (NCCA, 2008). While the SPHE curriculum promotes the child's personal and social development there is little explicit reference to rights. Without HRE being specifically provided for, the impetus for HRE's integration has to come from elsewhere.

The survey presents a challenge if that impetus is to come from teachers, as it supports previous findings regarding the deficit in teacher knowledge in relation to human rights instruments and HRE (Osler and Starkey, 1994). Furthermore, the study supports concerns that the lack of an agreed definition of HRE is resulting in conceptual vagueness and a tendency towards a more general value-led approach (Flowers, 2004; Fritzsche, 2004; Tibbitts, 2002). In this regard, the research suggests the need for teacher education programmes that focus on social justice, such programmes having been found to effect change in teacher belief relating to education and justice issues (Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow and Mitescu, 2008).

6.5   Recommendations

This report has implications for teachers, schools, the NCCA, initial teacher education institutions, non-governmental organisation involved in formal education, the Department of Education and Skills as well as other government departments and bodies concerned with children and the formal education sector. This concluding section provides recommendations arising from the study directed towards these primary education stakeholders.

1. While there is evidence of positive attitudes towards human rights education and children's rights, it is also evident that there is a deficit in teacher awareness of human rights instruments. It is recommended that teacher education incorporate human rights education as a matter of priority. This includes dedicated HRE modules in initial teacher education and post-graduate teaching programmes as well as focused continuing professional development courses. In addition, it is recommended that HRE content, principles and pedagogies, be integrated across all teacher education and curriculum areas with integration models drawing explicitly from human rights instruments and HRE literature.

2. This study suggests limited recognition, within the education system, of children as rights holders and teachers as duty bearers with regards to children's rights. It is therefore recommended that there be clear and consistent promotion of this understanding of the teacher/child relationship in relation to human rights instruments. State departments, accountable for the implementation of human rights conventions, assume a position of prime responsibility in this regards. However, initial teacher education institutions and schools can all contribute towards this re-conceptualisation of children's and human rights.

3. It is acknowledged that the primary curriculum is implicitly supportive of HRE. It is clear from this study, however, that many teachers do not recognise the Curriculum as offering direction to teach human rights standards and principles. The study highlights the need for more explicit inclusion of human rights content knowledge, as well as HRE principles and pedagogies, in the Curriculum across different subject areas. The recent *Aistear* curriculum framework is more demonstrably rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in both its framework and content. It is recommended therefore, that any future revision of the Primary Curriculum adopt the approach to content and framework regarding children's rights underpinning *Aistear*.

4. Given teachers' limited confidence in delivering HRE, as suggested by the study, and the high use made of independently produced materials, it is recommended that teachers receive increased support in

delivering education with a human rights focus. This support includes: the ongoing development and promotion of HRE teaching materials; the development of support programmes which use and apply human rights to the immediate school and community context; inclusion of HRE in materials for different curriculum areas and adoption of a human rights based approach to global justice and intercultural issues in support materials addressing these concerns. Building teacher and school capacity to incorporate and deliver HRE programme and perspectives should be a priority of support programmes.

5. The study highlights the need for greater recognition of children's participation rights. This need is reflected in the limited opportunities for children to participate in decision making in their schools and teachers' limited acknowledgement of children's civil and political rights. Responding to this deficit, it is recommended that the Education Act 1998 be amended to promote child participation in school councils at Primary level and that schools be pro-active in establishing school structures to facilitate child participation. It is further recommended, that all state policies and documents be proofed to ensure that they fully realise the rights of the child and reflect a conceptualisation of children, including younger children, as social actors and rights holders.

6. This study reflects a lack of conceptual clarity with regard to HRE both in policy and practice among teachers and education policy makers. This uncertainty suggests a need to raise public awareness of the Conventions so that the rhetoric of human rights is rooted in its political, historical and legal context. It is also suggests a need for a clear and common understanding of human rights education to be reflected in government policy, the Curriculum and wider related discourse.

7. This study highlights some examples of good practice in the teaching of HRE in primary schools in Ireland. However, it suggests that this good practice is not replicated consistently throughout the country. It is recommended therefore, that the primary education sector be audited to identify good practice in the delivery of HRE. Examples of good practice can then be showcased and contribute to the mainstreaming of HRE in primary level classrooms and schools.

This study suggests that much remains to be done to ensure that front line professionals in Ireland, such as teachers, are made aware of relevant human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and are enabled to implement the relevant provisions in their work with children in schools and classrooms. Increasing the visibility of human rights and HRE in initial teacher education, in schools and amongst the general public will support an understanding of human rights grounded on its legal, political and historical framework. However, the study reflects a broader need for attitudinal change towards acknowledging and challenging social structures. This change requires recognition of children, locally and globally, as rights holders and social actors. It requires state institutions, educational and otherwise, to consistently embrace and promote this conceptualisation of the child.

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Human Rights and Human Rights Education

IHRC
IRISH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
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Section A: About you

Please tick / circle / complete as appropriate

My current teaching role is:	Class teacher ☐	Resource Teacher ☐	Learning Support ☐
	Class(es):	Classes:	Classes:

If you are teaching a class

In my class there are ____ boys and ____ girls

I am:	Female ☐	Male ☐

I have been a teacher for:	0-1 years ☐	2-5 years ☐	6-10 years ☐	11-15 years ☐
	16-20 years ☐	21-25 years ☐	Over 26 years ☐	

I qualified as a teacher from: (e.g. Mary Immaculate College)	My initial teacher education course was: (e.g. B.Ed.

	Human Rights Education	Development Education / Global Justice	Intercultural Education	None of these
My initial teacher education course included:	Human Rights Education	Development Education / Global Justice	Intercultural Education	None of these
I have attended in-service courses on:	Human Rights Education	Development Education / Global Justice	Intercultural Education	None of these
I have attended post graduate courses that included:	Human Rights Education	Development Education / Global Justice	Intercultural Education	None of these
I have a post-graduate qualification in a relevant area: Yes ☐ No ☐	Please name your qualification:			

I have lived overseas	Yes ☐ No ☐	I was born overseas	Yes ☐ No ☐	I have taught overseas	Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have answered 'yes' to the above, please provide details:				
Where did you live?	e.g. UK			
What length of time(s) did you live abroad?	e.g. 10 years			
If working, what type of work did you do?	e.g. Teacher			
Was it in a professional or voluntary capacity?	e.g. Professional			

Section B: Your background in human rights

What is your knowledge and understanding of the following Human Rights institutions and programmes?

Please tick the response that you feel corresponds to your level of knowledge and understanding

	Know about it and am <u>very</u> familiar with it	Have heard about it and am familiar with it	Have heard of it, but don't know much about it	Have never heard of it
The Ombudsman for Children's Office				
The Irish Human Rights Commission				
The World Programme for Human Rights Education				
The UN Decade for Human Rights Education				
Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, St. Patrick's College				

What is your knowledge and understanding of the following Human Rights instruments? *Please tick the response that you feel corresponds to your level of knowledge and understanding*	Know about it and am <u>very</u> familiar with it	Have heard about it and am familiar with it	Have heard of it, but don't know much about it	Have never heard of it
Constitution of Ireland				
European Convention on Human Rights				
The Convention on the Rights of the Child				
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights				
The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities				
The European Social Charter				
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights				
The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights				
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women				
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination				

Are you a member of any organisation(s) which promote(s) Human Rights?	
Yes ☐ No ☐	*Please name the organisation(s):*

How would you rate the following?

Please circle the response that you feel corresponds to your level of understanding:

My personal understanding of Human Rights	*Very high*	*High*	*Neither low nor high*	*Low*	*Very low*	*Do not know*
My personal understanding of Human Rights Education	*Very high*	*High*	*Neither low nor high*	*Low*	*Very low*	*Do not know*

Section C: Your opinions on Human Rights and Human Rights Education

At what age do you think children should be made aware that they have human rights? Please circle	0-3 years	4-7 years	8-11 years	12+ years

Why have you chosen this age?

What, in your opinion, are the main Human Rights issues: *Please complete the table with your opinions*	
	For all people	For children
Global		
National		
Local		

Section D: Your school and Human Rights Education

Does your school implement any form of Human Rights Education?	
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐	*If yes, please describe:*
If you have answered yes above Why does your school practise Human Rights Education?	

Is Human Rights Education identified any of your whole school policy documents, such as your school plan?	
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐	*If yes, please elaborate:*
If you have answered yes above Please name any rights of the child that you feel are actively promoted through your school plan or other policies:	

Does your school have committees / structures in which children participate?	
Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐	If yes, please name the committees/ structures:
If you have answered yes above If possible, please give examples of decisions taken by children that were implemented in the school:	

Does your school have a post dedicated to Human Rights Education, or related educations?	
Yes □ No □	If yes, please name the post:

Do you teach Human Rights Education? *Please tick all that apply*					
Yes as an integrated approach □		Yes as a stand alone subject □			No □
If you are using an integrated approach, in which curricular subjects is Human Rights Education included in your teaching? *Please circle all that apply*					
Visual Arts	Drama	PE	Music	Geography	SPHE
Gaelige	English	History	Science	Mathematics	Religious / Moral Education

Please describe your understanding of the content and process of Human Rights Education:	
Content	Process
What do you think the aims of Human Rights Education are?	

Are there Human Rights events in your school / classroom: *Please tick*			
School	Yes □	No □	Don't Know □
If so, please name them:			
Classroom	Yes □	No □	Don't Know □
If so, please name them:			

If you do so, approximately how often do you hold such events? *Please circle*					
Classroom	Yearly	Termly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
School	Yearly	Termly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily

Are posters on Human Rights standards on display in your school or classroom?					
Please circle as appropriate					
Your school	*Convention on the Rights of the Child*	*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*	*Charter designed by adults in the school*	*Charter designed by the school community*	*Charter designed by children in the school*
Your classroom	*Convention on the Rights of the Child*	*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*	*Charter designed by adults in the school*	*Charter designed by the school community*	*Charter designed by children in the school*

Are you aware of any Human Rights Education resource(s) currently in use in Irish primary schools?					
Yes ☐ No ☐	*Please name it / them:*				
If you are aware of such resources, how do you use them?					
How often do you use them?	Yearly	Termly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Never

Are the following international Human Rights standards referenced in any part of your school or class plan?		
	Referenced in school plan	*Referenced in class plan*
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

If you have never received training in Human Rights Education would you be interested in receiving such training?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐
If you have already received training in human rights, would you like more?	Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Section E: Further thoughts

In your opinion, what are the barriers, if any, to Human Rights Education in primary education?
What supports could be put in place to facilitate Human Rights Education in primary schools?

Here is a selection of possible comments regarding Human Rights and Human Rights Education in Ireland.
For each one please circle the view that corresponds with your own opinion.

There is no need to teach children their rights in the primary school.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Children are already aware of their rights.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Children have a more positive experience of school if their rights are recognised.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is too much emphasis on Human Rights and not enough on responsibilities.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The primary curriculum supports Human Rights Education.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I do not have time to plan for Human Rights Education.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
We can overcome all barriers to the right to education.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Human rights education has a positive impact on children's learning experiences at school.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Human Rights are aspirational. It is unrealistic to expect them to be achieved for all.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The curriculum is too crowded for Human Rights Education.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Civil and political rights are more important than social and economic rights.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is a high level of support for Human Rights Education in the education system generally.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
You need to be a lawyer to understand Human Rights.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is a high level of support for Human Rights Education in my school.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

Please write any additional comments or observations you may have here

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire

Please return to:

Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, St. Patrick's College, Dublin 9 using the SAE.