

Editorial Introduction: Human Rights in Comparative and International Education

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Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. Human rights are inalienable because they cannot be taken away, interdependent because all rights are interrelated, and indivisible because they are equally important. This Declaration recognizes the right to education under Article 26, a right that has historically informed the field of Comparative and International Education (CIE). This special issue explores the past, present, and future of human rights in CIE.

Our call for manuscripts posed questions for contributors to push the boundaries about research on human rights in CIE. *How have different motivations for and conceptualizations of human rights operated at the levels of policy, curriculum, and pedagogy? What is the legacy of human rights in CIE and how is this legacy shaping research and education reform today? How can human rights education be reimaged and recreated to meet the needs of current and future generations?* From exploring the Colombian National Plan for Human Rights Education to discussing a curriculum where learners can engage in discussions about artificial intelligence (AI) and human rights literacy, this special issue creatively tackles our initial questions. We curated six publications that invite readers to interrogate the universal nature of human rights and the connections between international human rights law, education policy, and sustainable development.

The first section includes four articles focused on the complex and evolving landscape of human rights in education. **Tebeje Molla and Sally Baker** discuss refugees' right to education in Australia. Applying an interpretive policy analysis, the authors examine Australian education policies for refugees vis-à-vis international agreements the country has signed and ratified. Their article highlights to what extent these national policies align with international commitments. The authors shed light on areas where the government has not protected nor fulfilled refugees' right to education.

Naivedya Parakkal explores the dangers of ignoring Indigenous knowledge systems in human rights-based approaches and sustainable development. The author focuses on the Adivasi Indigenous Peoples in Attappady, India. Contrasting Adivasi narratives with a thematic analysis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) recommendations to advance human rights education, the article reveals a disconnect between top-down policies and the daily realities Adivasi Peoples face. Through interviews with Adivasi interlocutors, the article stresses the significance of paying close attention to Indigenous knowledge systems in human rights education. Similarly, **Angela Sánchez Rojas** applies the Colombian National Plan for

Human Rights Education as a case study to illustrate how Western views have shaped human rights education. Her analysis provides policy recommendations for a more holistic approach through the lens of Pluriversal Rights Education. The articles by Parakkal and Sánchez Rojas emphasize the importance of opening up spaces within human rights education to a pluriversal framework in which local communities—especially in the Global South—are treated as “possibilities and not as things or problems to be solved” (Williams & Bermeo, 2020, p. 14). The fourth article in this special issue engages in a theoretical discussion about emotional engagement in human rights education through the notion of affective justice. **Michalinos Zembylas** discusses the risks of exposing learners to knowledge about human rights violations without providing adequate tools to critically reflect on what they learn.

The second section of the special issue is made of two essays. **Saah Agyemang-Badu, Felisa Tibbitts, and Sage Phillips** write about AI in human rights literacy. The authors shed light on the urgent need for educators and learners to understand the broader ethical implications of AI in their lives. The analysis proposes a series of curricular lessons to raise awareness about such implications. The second essay by **Whitney Hough** evaluates the PeaceJam Foundation’s work. Hough looks at the PeaceJam Foundation Ambassadors Curriculum, assessing to what extent the project aligns with the Transformative Human Rights Education (THRE) framework. THRE aims to promote social change among youth and to cultivate awareness about global injustices. The author considers the curriculum's strengths and limitations, concluding that community engagement and youth participation are essential elements in the design and implementation of human rights education. From a wide range of perspectives, these six publications share the spirit of critical thinking, academic creativity, and hopeful reimagination that CICE actively seeks to enhance.

I take the opportunity in this editorial introduction to celebrate that CICE’s [website](#) is now fully available in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. We envision a journal where voices and ideas in multiple languages are welcomed and distributed. We invite our community of readers to share our calls with educators, administrators, graduate students, policymakers, and specialists from government, non-governmental organizations, and academia who may want to publish their work in Portuguese or Spanish. We hope that future editorial boards will consider integrating other languages into the journal. Aiming to ensure that CICE’s work reaches diverse audiences, this year we will become certified by the [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#). This is a key milestone in the process of expanding our journal’s accessibility and outreach initiatives.

Since its first issue in 1998, CICE has been a space for critical thinking, dialogue, and plurality of ideas. CICE would not be possible without the contributions of people representing diverse backgrounds. In times of divisiveness and fear of the other, CICE stands for respect and dignity. This special issue reiterates our commitment to showcase

analyses that critically engage with the current state of education worldwide through context-specific discussions.

The Special Issue on Climate Change, Migration, and Conflict: Lessons in Education will be published in the Summer of 2025 and will follow the same commitment that informed this Special Issue on Human Rights in Comparative and International Education. The two issues for the 2024-2025 academic year exemplify CICE's tradition of creating bridges between the field of CIE and other disciplines. CICE is dedicated to advancing knowledge and rigorous research on the intersection between education and ongoing global social, legal, environmental, and economic challenges.

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