

THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

SDG TARGET 4.7 AND
HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION IN
AFRICA

Assessments and follow-up
initiatives of five African National
Human Rights Institutions

November 2021



SDG TARGET 4.7 AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN AFRICA: Assessments and follow-up initiatives of five African National Human Rights Institutions

Authors: Zainab Soomar and Sille Stidsen, with input from Hanna Mroczka

e-ISBN: 978-87-7570-043-1

Layout: Semin Alekic

Cover photo: [Emmanuel Ikwuegbu](#) on Unsplash

© 2021 The Danish Institute for Human Rights
Wilders Plads 8K
DK-1403 Copenhagen K
Phone +45 3269 8888
www.humanrights.dk

Provided such reproduction is for non-commercial use, this publication, or parts of it, may be reproduced if author and source are quoted.

At the Danish Institute for Human Rights we aim to make our publications as accessible as possible. We use large font size, short (hyphen-free) lines, left-aligned text and strong contrast for maximum legibility. For further information about accessibility please click www.humanrights.dk/accessibility

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
Purpose of this briefing note	5
Background	6
Content	6
1. THE SDG 4.7 / HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION MONITORING TOOL	7
A tool for policy dialogue	7
2. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN AFRICA	8
Good practices and gaps identified with the tool	9
3. TAKING ACTION: NHRIS' FOLLOW UP ON ASSESSMENTS	12
Policy initiatives	12
Curriculum initiatives	12
Teacher education initiatives	13
Multi-stakeholder cooperation with SDG 4.7 as leverage	14
ANNEX: BACKGROUND ON THE TOOL	15
International standards on human rights education	15
How does the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool measure achievements?	16
Why use the Tool?	17
The five domains	18
ENDNOTES	20

INTRODUCTION

With the 2030 Agenda's common framework for sustainable development that guides States across the world in their efforts towards building stronger and more just and equitable societies, the role of human rights education has gained renewed recognition and attention.

The 2030 Agenda calls for ambitious transformations towards more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable societies that foster prosperity, peace and inclusion for all. SDG target 4.7 is key to achieving this transformation, given that it commits to building knowledge and skills on human rights, gender equality and 'a culture of peace and non-violence'. Such knowledge and skills essential to sustainable development resonate strongly with provisions under international human rights treaties. Target 4.7 has thus given new impetus for promoting human rights education as an integral element of schooling – everywhere and at all levels.

SDG TARGET 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.



The Covid-19 crisis has only made the need for human rights education more acute, with its profound effects on human well-being caused by the pandemic itself, as well as its implications for economy and society in a broader sense, including tensions and distress. In many parts of the world, the COVID crisis has exacerbated existing patterns of discrimination, fostered increased levels of violence, and stigmatized certain population groups, sometimes resulting in a growth in hate speech and violence. On top of that, we have seen too many examples of governmental emergency measures evolving into excessive and disproportional use of force, and fundamental freedoms have been neglected or violated.

These developments call for operational responses in societies at large, and human rights education must be prioritized, as an accelerator for achieving peaceful and sustainable societies and realizing the human rights of all:

” In the current climate in which serious challenges are undermining the basic fabric and social cohesion of our societies, advancing human rights education is a particularly crucial undertaking. By fostering inclusion and participation, promoting solidarity and preventing violence and conflict, human rights education constitutes a powerful strategic investment for building a just, peaceful and equitable future for all. It also makes an important contribution to ensuring a rights-based response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and should be seen as a critical element of any strategy to build back better in the aftermath of the health crisis.¹

OHCHR 2020

PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING NOTE

This Briefing Note provides an overview of the assessments of five African National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of the implementation of human rights education in their respective countries, namely Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya. The assessments have been conducted through the online 'SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool'.² The NHRIs' findings are presented with visual representations of their data as well as short narrative descriptions of the human rights education efforts in primary and secondary schools in their respective countries, assessed against international human rights obligations. The briefing note also presents examples of how they have followed up on their assessments with new initiatives, aimed at addressing some of the identified gaps in human rights education in primary and secondary schools, or in teacher education. The Briefing Note thus seeks to serve a double purpose of:

- sharing information on the current human rights education situation in the African countries involved in this initiative – highlighting gaps as well as good practices, and at the same time
- showcasing how systematic assessments of the situation, based on the application of the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool, generates insights that enable NHRIs to devise new strategies for promoting human rights education in their respective countries.

It is our hope that the Briefing Note will feed into dialogues on the inclusion of human rights education across countries and regions, which the 2030 Agenda and international human rights standards call for. We also hope that more NHRIs and other stakeholders in the education and human rights communities in all regions, will find inspiration for embarking upon their own assessment processes. The SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool is available online and can be used at no cost – and allows users to identify achievements and gaps with regard to human rights education in primary and secondary school systems in their countries.

CONTENT

Section 1 introduces the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool.

Section 2 provides a brief presentation of the human rights education situation in the primary and secondary school systems in five of the African countries involved in this initiative, namely Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, and Ethiopia. Based on data generated with the Tool, we present graphic overviews of the level of alignment between national educational systems and relevant human rights education provisions of international human rights conventions. The overviews are complemented with narrative descriptions of key findings from across the countries. These include examples of good practices as well as gaps identified with the tool.

Section 3 presents examples of how some of the NHRIs have taken strategic action based on their assessments – striving to alert stakeholders in the education sector to address the shortcomings in the implementation of human rights education in primary and secondary school systems. Some have coordinated stakeholder dialogues, others have engaged in policy or curriculum reform processes. One NHRI has gained access to a national body mandated to monitor and evaluate the education sector.

Finally, readers interested in a more detailed presentation of the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool will find this in the **Annex**.

BACKGROUND

Over the course of 2020, nine National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from Africa engaged in a peer-learning and monitoring initiative focusing on their human rights education mandate. The process was facilitated by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), in cooperation with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI).

Prior to starting this initiative, DIHR had developed a set of indicators for assessing States' efforts towards delivering human rights education as an integral part of primary and secondary schooling. The indicator framework was developed in consultation with OHCHR and with inputs from UNESCO. This effort has resulted in the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool. The indicators included in the tool reflect obligations enshrined in international human rights conventions, wherefore the assessment serves as a good basis upon which to build new strategies for enhancing human rights education aligned with international standards.

1. THE SDG 4.7 / HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION MONITORING TOOL

The tool comprises 23 indicators that systematically reflect international standards on human rights education. The indicators are structured under the five thematic domains of Policy, Curricula, Teacher training, Student assessment and Learning environment. These thematic domains are based on the World Programme for Human Rights Education as well as global SDG Indicator 4.7.1 (refer to Annex 1 for more details) – thereby also reflecting the international human rights standards that underpin both of these frameworks.

Policy

Indicators under the policy domain measure how well international standards on human rights education are reflected in national policies and institutional frameworks

Teacher education

Indicators under the Teacher Education domain measure whether aspiring teachers gain knowledge on human rights as part of their training - and whether they are taught human rights-based teaching methodologies

Curriculum

Indicators in the Curricula domain measure whether human rights are adequately integrated into curricula; whether teaching materials on human rights are available - and whether the teaching on human rights is adequately contextualized to the national context.

Student assessment

Indicators in the Student Assessment domain measure whether students' knowledge on human rights is measured, and whether student assessment is carried out in a human rights-respecting way.

Learning environment

Indicators in the Learning Environment domain measure whether national policies include requirements for schools to secure that learning environments are rights-respecting.

A TOOL FOR POLICY DIALOGUE

One of the overall ideas behind the creation of the tool has been to nurture dialogue on what it takes to enhance human rights education in national school systems. As a door opener for such dialogues, the tool generates graphic visualizations of the data entered into the system, based on index values assigned to the responses to the indicator questions.³ The data visualizations of countries' index scores under the different domains are thus meant to spark curiosity regarding what lies behind the scores – and nurture dialogue, peer learning and policy and programming developments.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool has been applied by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across nine countries in Africa.⁴ Their work with the tool was followed by regional webinars in which staff from these institutions met virtually and discussed experiences and insights from their assessments. Five of the participating NHRIs made thorough reviews of their data and included sources and comments to validate their responses to the indicator questions. In the following we will take a closer look at the data from these five countries, namely Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya.

According to the five African NHRIs' responses to the Tool's indicator questions, the average overall score in their assessments was 50, on a scale where the maximum possible score would be 100. The score illustrates the countries' fulfilment of treaty-based obligations on human rights education, indicating that some measures are in place, but more efforts are needed. In other words, the structural framework for securing adequate inclusion of human rights education content and methodologies in the primary and secondary school systems is emerging. But the score also indicates that more efforts are needed to fully align primary and secondary school systems in these countries with international human rights standards.⁵

Fig. 1 Average overall score for the five countries

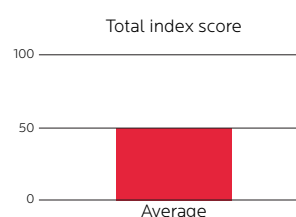
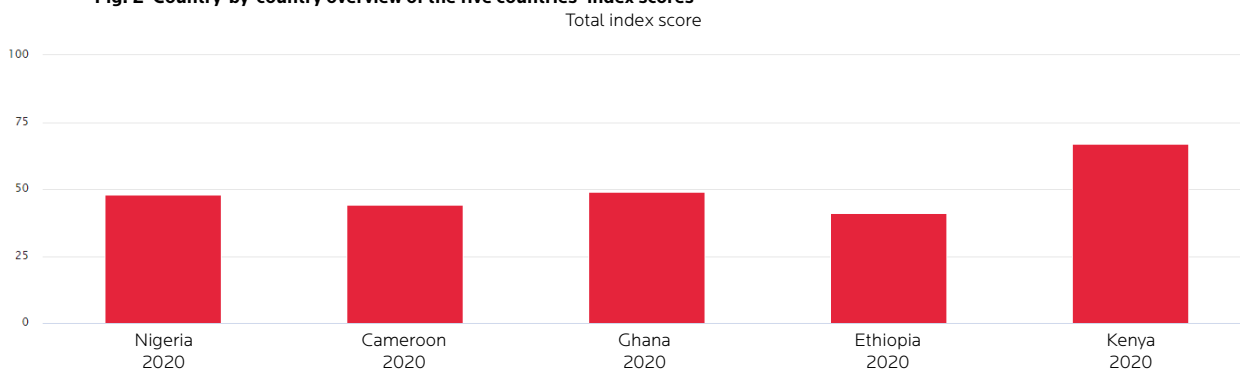
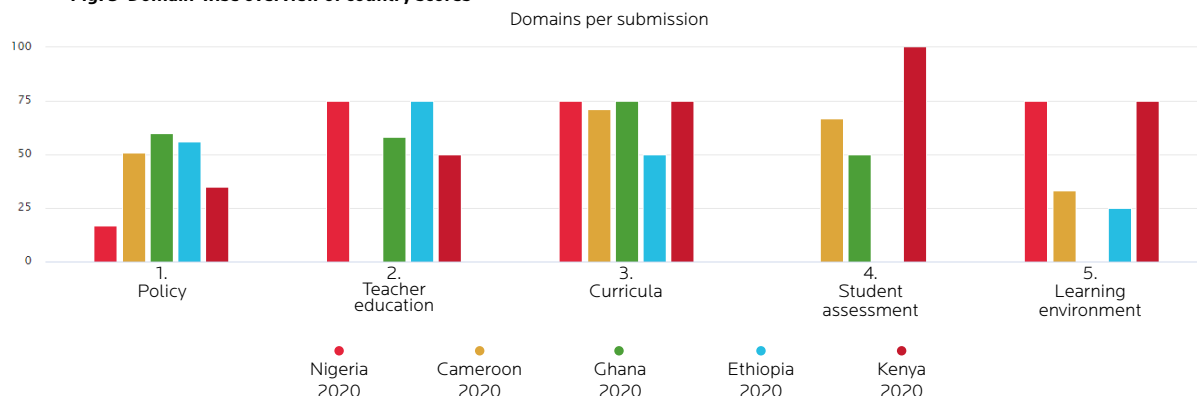


Fig. 2 Country-by-country overview of the five countries' index scores



If we look at the country responses domain by domain, we can see that it varies considerably from country to country how well the school systems are aligned with international standards for human rights education:

Fig. 3 Domain-wise overview of country scores

Most countries have a relatively good inclusion of human rights content in their curricula in both primary and secondary schools, but when it comes to other domains, the score varies more from country to country. A closer look at the data allows us to identify gaps in implementation that need to be addressed via policy and programming developments. Equally important, the data repository also allows us to identify good practices that can inspire policy dialogue and positive change across countries and regions, by taking a closer look at the data behind the index scores and exploring the sources for verification uploaded by respondents. In the following, we present some examples of gaps and good practices identified with the tool.

GOOD PRACTICES AND GAPS IDENTIFIED WITH THE TOOL

Policy

In the overall policy domain, indicators measure the extent to which national policies and institutional frameworks are aligned with international standards on human rights education. The five countries' score under this domain are generally a bit weak, with an average domain score of less than 50. While most countries have ratified all international human rights treaties that specifically include provisions on states' duty to implement human rights education in their school systems,⁶ very few of them report on these achievements in their periodic reporting to the international human rights system. This may indicate that human rights education is not perceived by the States as a top priority when it comes to implementing human rights obligations, and thus not something they need to report on. It could also be caused by operational challenges when it comes to governments' collection of data on human rights education implementation in schools.

Teacher education

Most countries show a medium to high score on the teacher education domain, measured against indicators that assess the level of integration of human rights content and methodology in teacher education programmes. One country stands out, and has indicated no alignment with international standards in this regard.

Nigeria and Ghana both score high under the teacher education domain. A closer look at the data for **Nigeria** shows that Citizenship Education is a compulsory subject in teacher education,⁷ and the course involves human rights-related components such as Rights and Obligations, including “fundamental rights”, as well as studies of the Nigerian constitution.⁸ Social studies is a core subject in the basic education year 1 to 9. In order to obtain a Certificate of Education in Social Studies and be able to teach social studies in schools, future teachers are also obliged to complete an extended version of the Citizenship Education course. Citizenship Education includes explicit references to human rights, such as: “Fundamental Human Rights”, “ways in which human rights are violated”, and “ways of protecting human rights”. Furthermore, for a double major in Social Studies Education, aside from the mandatory Citizenship Education, other courses with direct and broader references to human rights are compulsory too. These are, for example, Contemporary Public Issues (here “human rights” and “peace education” are components), and Social Institutions (where “conflict and tolerance” is one component).⁹

In **Ghana** too, the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework for primary and secondary school contains human rights-related themes.¹⁰ The Framework is an inspiring example of how to integrate a wide range of international human rights standards into the curricula for teacher education.¹¹ The Framework, and anchors the training of teachers in the respect for and protection of human rights, including principles of non-discrimination, inclusion, and gender equality. To provide a few examples, teacher students are expected to “take into account and respect learners’ cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and educational backgrounds in their planning and teaching”, “pay attention to all learners, especially girls and students with Special Educational Needs, ensuring their progress”, and “overcome their biases, experience-related beliefs, and develop professional capacities to focus on the diverse characteristics of the individual learner(s), and provide opportunities that will ensure equity and inclusivity.”¹²

Student assessment

In the student assessment domain, the spectrum of scores is broad, with two countries showing big gaps in their alignment with international human rights standards, one country showing a remarkable level of alignment – and two countries showing medium levels of alignment. The indicators under this domain serve to measure whether national student assessment frameworks include a focus on students’ knowledge on human rights, and whether the assessments themselves are carried out in a human rights-respecting way, free from discrimination, bias and abuse.¹³ A closer look at the data from Ghana and Kenya uncovers some good practices:

In **Ghana**, human rights are included in the national assessment framework for primary and secondary schools, known as the National Pre-Tertiary Learning Assessment Framework, developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA).¹⁴ One of the guiding principles of the framework is “fair and ethical” assessment, where “good assessment should be inclusive and promote

equity principles. It should ensure that tasks and procedures do not disadvantage any group or individual".¹⁵ The assessment framework also covers issues of diversity and inclusivity for children with special needs, allowing for alternative modes of assessment for learners based on their unique learning needs or abilities.

In **Kenya**, the good practice worth highlighting is the provisions for adjusting student assessment practices towards children with special needs or disabilities.¹⁶ These adjustments include allowing more time for exams; providing information in an accessible format such as braille and magnified prints and fonts for the visually impaired; and eliminating visual observation and/or listening assessments for students with blindness and/or deafness.

Learning environment

The learning environment domain too shows a wide spectrum of scores, with large gaps in some countries – and two countries, Kenya and Nigeria, showing a high index score. Indicators under this domain seek to measure the extent to which mechanisms to secure a human rights-based learning environment are mandatory – including a requirement for schools to adopt anti-bullying policies, establish complaint mechanisms for reporting of abuse – and securing adequate opportunities for students to express themselves and participate in decision-making. A closer look at the data from **Kenya** shows tangible measures put in place for schools to secure a human rights-based learning environment for students and teachers: :

In **Kenya**, various policy guidelines exist to ensure an adequate learning environment. The Kenyan Basic Education Act of 2013 includes, among others, elimination of gender discrimination, elimination of any form of physical or mental punishment, and promotes tolerance and non-discrimination of the marginalised and persons with disabilities.¹⁷ There are also rules and regulations in place to secure schools' implementation of the policy guidelines. As outlined in the Act, education must be guided by "democratic decision making within the institutions of basic education". Schools are thus responsible for providing a democratic environment with existence of students' council and feedback boxes placed in the school for students to leave their complaints and suggestions. It is the responsibility of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers¹⁸ under the Ministry of Education to assess the learning environment in schools using tools designed for inspection and assessment. There are also institutions at the school level, such as a Board of Management and Management Committee, Parent-Teacher associations and teachers and students themselves, which can also contribute to assessing the learning environment as defined in Kenya's Basic Education Act of 2013.

3. TAKING ACTION: NHRIS' FOLLOW UP ON ASSESSMENTS

The NHRIs that have worked with our SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool have generally observed that it helped them build a systematic overview of the human rights education situation in the primary and secondary school systems in their respective countries. Such overviews have enabled them to identify new strategies for promoting human rights education in their national contexts. In some countries, this has led to **enhanced strategic engagement in reform of the education sector** in the form of policy reforms or curriculum development – in others it has led to **enhanced stakeholder cooperation** around promoting alignment of national school systems with international standards for human rights education. Finally, in some countries, it has opened the doors for the NHRI to have **dialogues with national SDG coordination mechanisms** on the implementation of the human rights education element of SDG target 4.7. In the following, we look at some examples of actions that NHRIs have taken after working with the tool, and what they have achieved.

POLICY INITIATIVES

After their work with the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool, Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) concluded that developing a human rights education policy should be an utmost priority. In October 2020, the Commission invited relevant stakeholders to discuss their plans. A 13-member committee was formed (including representatives from Ministry of Education bodies, a representative from the National Development Planning Commission responsible for SDG implementation, and four CHRAJ members) with the aim to **develop a national plan on human rights education**. As a first step in the process, a subcommittee was constituted with the overall responsibility for developing an initial draft. The draft will be vetted and finalized through review and the incorporation of amendments received from the wider committee.

In August 2020, while working with the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool, the **Ethiopian** Human Rights Commission became aware that the government was drafting a General Education Proclamation. Hence, the Commission decided to advocate for the inclusion of human rights education content in this law. The Commission subsequently formulated 15 key recommendations on human rights education and forwarded these to the Ministry of Education.

In **Nigeria**, the Human Rights Commission included recommendations on human rights education in their input the "National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria 2021-2025". Their use of the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool gave them a substantive point of departure, allowing for timely, evidence based and strategic recommendations on national gaps and areas for future prioritization in relation to policy, curriculum, teacher

education, student assessment and enhancement of the learning environment. It is also interesting to note that the commission decided to situate their input on human rights education within the chapter on Sustainable Development, in order to ensure that it would be looked at holistically, both from the standpoint of international legal obligations, but also with a view to enhancing national reporting on both SDG target 4.7, and the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

In **Ghana**, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, became aware of a reform to the Standard Based Curriculum as they were gathering input to the curricula domain of the SDG 4.7 / HRE Monitoring Tool. This finding provided them with the opportunity to give strategic input to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the Ministry of Education. The Commission developed a National Action Plan for implementation and integration of human rights education aspects of the curriculum. As of July 2021, the Commission together with the National HRE Committee **developed the content for the curriculum for basic schools**.

In **Nigeria**, the Human Rights Commission became aware of the human rights gaps in national curricula while working with the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool. Based on these findings, they have decided **to engage in national curricula development and revision**, promoting the inclusion of human rights themes as well as knowledge on human rights standards and mechanisms.

The **Kenya** National Commission on Human Rights identified human rights education gaps in the national school engaged in dialogue with relevant national stakeholders, including the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development, on the status of human rights education. As a result, in November 2020, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development invited the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights to **propose measures to fill the human rights gaps** in the Senior School Matrice (curriculum) for Citizenship Education, and the draft Citizenship Education Guidelines. The school matrices for citizenship education and the citizenship education guidelines are key national implementation tools for mainstreaming human rights education in the Kenyan school curricula, thereby furthering human rights education at the national level and national progress against SDG 4.7.

Furthermore, in June 2021, as a result of working on SDG target 4.7 together with the Ministry of Education, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has been **included in the Technical Working Committee** on the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) System for the education sector in Kenya in line with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25).

TEACHER EDUCATION INITIATIVES

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) of **Cameroon** plans to build upon their previous work with teacher education. During the 4-year programme financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the NCHRF collaborated with the Cameroonian Ministry of Education and developed manuals for teachers in 80 primary and secondary schools across the country on how to teach human rights. The project stopped in 2012 due to budgetary reasons. Since the tool revealed that human rights education is still weakly represented in most teacher education in the country, the NCHRF decided to **revise and update the manuals**, ensuring that they reflect international human rights standards as well as the current educational context of Cameroon.¹⁹ The SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool will be a helpful guiding instrument for the Commission and an important reference point while introducing the plans to the Ministry of Education.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION WITH SDG 4.7 AS LEVERAGE

In December 2020, the **Ethiopian** Human Rights Commission organized a workshop entitled “the Status of Human Rights Education in Ethiopian Primary and Secondary Schools”. At the workshop, national state actors, including the Ministry of Education, regional education bureaus, human rights NGOs and academic institutions, agreed to work together on a number of measures to further national implementation of the human rights education elements of SDG 4.7. . Prior to this, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission had very little engagement with state actors on jointly reviewing national human rights education frameworks.

Similarly, in **Nigeria**, the National Human Rights Commission formulated strategic partnerships, through a working group with the Federal Ministry of Education and the Office of the Special Senior Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose was to coordinate reporting and planning on human rights education, including input to the next Voluntary National Review, and opportunities for mainstreaming it in the National Education Programme.

In **Ghana**, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice convened a national committee meeting for developing a national action plan for human rights education. For the first time, the Planning Commission’s Committee on the Implementation of the SDGs was included, along with other actors involved in human rights education. This allowed them to triangulate information and coordinate their human rights education activities nationally. Previously, the Committee on the Implementation of the SDGs in Ghana did not cooperate or coordinate with the other relevant actors involved in SDG 4.7/ human rights education. Their improved communication could lead to further linking up on other dimensions of Human Rights and the SDGs, after this first good step.

ANNEX: BACKGROUND ON THE TOOL

SDG target 4.7 sets out an ambition to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education in human rights, gender equality, and promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence. The target reflects the provisions of international human rights standards, wherefore measuring progress on the target can be based on these standards. The SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool is designed to monitor the human rights aspects of target 4.7, with indicators that are systematically aligned with the underlying human rights standards. Thereby it lends itself to facilitate reporting to both SDG follow-up and review mechanisms, and to the monitoring bodies within the international human rights system.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights situates States' obligation to implement human rights education at the heart of all educational efforts:

” 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 friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Universal Declaration of human Rights art. 26(2)

This universal commitment to human rights education has been reinforced with the legally binding Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and other international treaties - and reaffirmed again and again by the international community over the past decades. Most importantly, with the adoption of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (UN WPHRE) in 2004, and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training by the UN General Assembly in 2011.

KEY PROVISIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), art. 13(1) ESCR, art. 13(1)

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that **education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.** They further agree that education shall **enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society,** promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), art. 29(1(b))

States Parties agree that **the education of the child shall be directed to (...) (t)he development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,** and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), art. 10 (c)

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular **to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (...) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education** by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), art. 7

States Parties undertake to **adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups,** as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and this Convention.

HOW DOES THE SDG 4.7 / HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION MONITORING TOOL MEASURE ACHIEVEMENTS?

The tool comprises a series of indicators that systematically reflect international standards on human rights education. The point of departure for developing the tool was the global SDG indicator 4.7.1, against which States are supposed to report on

their progress in achieving SDG target 4.7. Indicator 4.7.1 seeks to measure progress within the areas of policy, curricula, teacher education and student assessment. In order to secure broader application of the tool, we decided to expand its scope to also encompass a fifth domain – namely the learning environment. With the addition of this fifth domain, the tool systematically mirrors the normative and thematic links between SDG 4.7 and its associated global indicator (indicator 4.7.1), and the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) – the most comprehensive internationally agreed framework for human rights education.²⁰

The four dimensions of SDG Indicator 4.7.1:

- National education policies
- Curricula
- Teacher education
- Student assessment

The five components of the UN WPHRE:

- Educational policies
- Policy implementation
- The learning environment
- Teaching and learning processes and tools
- School personnel education

This addition, therefore, expands the scope of the Tool's use, to also encompass monitoring of progress in implementing the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) and its Plan of Action.²¹

When developing the tool, the first step was to map the human rights norms and standards underpinning each of the five domains. The mapping identified normative guidance from international human rights treaties as well as from treaty bodies' authoritative interpretations on the practical application of these standards, as well as operational guidance from the WPHRE's Plan of Action. Based on this, the core elements of the human rights standards were identified (attributes, in OHCHR indicator terminology) – and the indicators were then formulated to reflect these standards in a systematic way.

Because the indicators reflect human rights instruments in such a systematic way, the tool also lends itself to monitoring progress on implementation of provisions on human rights education contained in legally binding international treaties, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

WHY USE THE TOOL?

One of the overall ideas behind the creation of the tool has been to nurture dialogue on what it takes to enhance human rights education in national school systems. As a door opener for such dialogues, the tool generates graphic visualizations of the data entered into the system, based on index values assigned to the responses to the indicator questions.²² The data visualizations of countries' index scores under the different domains are thus meant to spark curiosity regarding what lies behind the scores – and nurture dialogue, peer learning and policy and programming developments.

Equally important, data generated with the tool can feed into national reporting on progress against the 2030 Agenda's SDG target 4.7 and give valuable input to countries' Voluntary National Reviews. Likewise, the data generated can be incorporated in States' reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and it can serve to report on national implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

THE FIVE DOMAINS

The tool consists of 23 indicators, spread out across the five domains of Policy, Curricula, Teacher training, Student assessment and Learning environment.

Policy

Indicators under the policy domain measure how well international standards on human rights education are reflected in national policies and institutional frameworks.

Teacher education

Indicators under the Teacher Education domain measure whether aspiring teachers gain knowledge on human rights as part of their training - and whether they are taught human rights-based teaching methodologies.

Curriculum

Indicators in the Curricula domain measure whether human rights are adequately integrated into curricula; whether teaching materials on human rights are available - and whether the teaching on human rights is adequately contextualized to the national context.

Student assessment

Indicators in the Student Assessment domain measure whether students' knowledge on human rights is measured, and whether student assessment is carried out in a human rights-respecting way.

Learning environment

Indicators in the Learning Environment domain measure whether national policies includes requirements for schools to secure that learning environments are rights-respecting.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2020, "[Evaluation of the implementation of the third phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education](#)"
- 2 Find the tool here: <https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/en>
- 3 For a full description of the methodology applied and an overview of the index calculations, please refer to the Tool's Methodology document, available here: <https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/en/node/247>
- 4 While this Briefing note presents findings from African countries only, NHRIs in other regions have worked with the indicators too, throughout the different stages of its development. These include the NHRIs from the Philippines, Australia, Georgia, Ecuador and Denmark. Currently, the NHRIs of Jordan and Palestine are working with the tool. In time, we strive to nurture peer dialogue among these NHRIs, and invite more to join the conversation.
- 5 The overview presented here is based on the SDG 4.7 / Human Rights Education Monitoring Tool's data explorer and its analysis and visualizations of data entered by NHRIs in Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya. All data are available here: <https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/en/node/272>
- 6 See Annex 1 for an overview of key treaty provisions on human rights education.
- 7 Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Commission for College Education (2012). Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for General Education. [Available online](#).
- 8 The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1999 includes direct references to fundamental human rights.
- 9 Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Commission for College Education (2012). Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Arts and Social Sciences Education. [Available online](#).
- 10 Ghana's National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework [can be accessed online](#).
- 11 See a comprehensive summary of Ghana's Curriculum Framework offered by [Cambridge Education](#).
- 12 Republic of Ghana. Ministry of Education. National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework.
- 13 In accordance with the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education, all States should apply human rights principles when evaluating and assessing students' achievements in the whole curriculum. This implies transparency in assessment criteria; equality for all students; and fairness without discrimination or abuse caused by biases towards individuals or groups who are stigmatized in the surrounding society.
- 14 Ministry of Education of the Republic of Ghana. National Council for

Curriculum and Assessment. National Pre-Tertiary Learning Assessment Framework. May 2018. [Available online](#).

15 Ibid.

16 To find out more information, refer to: <https://kicd.ac.ke>

17 To read more about the values and principles that shall guide the provision of basic education in The Basic Education Act 2013 <https://www.education.go.ke/index.php/downloads/file/96-basic-education-act-no-14-of-2013>

18 Find out more about responsibility of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers: <https://www.education.go.ke/index.php/about-us/state-departments/education/quality-assurance-and-standards>

19 An important issue for the NCHRF to consider is the bilingual education system. Currently, there are important differences between the francophone and anglophone school, so the Commission needs to consider implementing a common approach for teacher training.

20 The World Programme for Human Rights Education was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005, along with a Plan of Action for implementation of human rights education in primary and secondary schools (known as the Plan of Action for the first phase of the WPHRE) . Read more about the WPHRE here: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/programme.aspx>

21 Monitoring the implementation of the WPHRE is also included in the global SDG monitoring architecture, in that the Technical Cooperation Group for SDG 4 indicators have developed a thematic indicator known as indicator 4.7.3, which seeks to measure Extent to which the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education (HRE) is implemented nationally (as per the UNGA Resolution 59/113). This indicator, however, remains optional for states to report on

22 For a full description of the methodology applied and an overview of the index calculations, please refer to the Tool's Methodology document, available here: <https://sdg47-hre.humanrights.dk/en/node/247>

THE DANISH
INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

