EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Table of Contents

Children’s Rights Education: ................................................................. 1
International Legal Framework and State Party Obligations ..................... 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........................................................................... 1

Section One: International Legal Framework and State Party Obligations .... 4
1.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 4
1.2 The Rights of the Child ................................................................. 5
1.3 The International Legal Framework for Children’s Rights Education .... 5
   1.3.1 Human Rights Education or Children’s Rights Education? ........ 6
   1.3.2 Children’s Rights Education .................................................... 6
1.4 Beyond the Legal Obligation .......................................................... 7
1.5 Implementing Children’s Rights Education ....................................... 7

Section Two: Research Objectives ......................................................... 8
2.1 Research Gap and the Current Study ............................................. 8
2.2 Education Policy and Practice in HKSAR ...................................... 9
2.3 Research Objectives ....................................................................... 10

Section Three: Methodology ............................................................... 11
3.1 Introduction .................................................................................... 11
3.2 Country Comparison ...................................................................... 11
   3.2.1 Phase I: Document Analysis .................................................. 11
   3.2.1.1 – 3.2.1.2 Education and Legal Policy Analysis .................... 11
   3.2.1.3. International Best Practices .............................................. 12
   3.2.2. Participants of the Country Comparison Review ................... 14
   3.2.3. Instruments of the Country Comparison ............................... 14
   3.2.3.1. Qualitative analysis - Interview ........................................ 14
   3.2.3.2. Quantitative analysis – Survey ......................................... 14
   3.2.4. Limitations of the Country Comparison ................................ 14
3.4 Hong Kong Study ........................................................................... 15
   3.4.1. Preparation and Procedures of the Hong Kong study ............. 15
   3.4.2. Participants of the Hong Kong Study ..................................... 16
   3.4.3. Instruments of the Hong Kong Study .................................... 17
   3.4.3.1 Questionnaire Surveys ...................................................... 17
   3.4.3.2 Case Study ...................................................................... 17

Section Four: Results and Discussion For the Survey .............................. 18
4.3 Questionnaire Responses ............................................................... 18
   Principals and SMT ......................................................................... 18
   Teacher CRE training (Art 42) ........................................................ 18
   Student participation in decision-making at schools ......................... 19
   Children who need extra help ....................................................... 19
   Bullying ......................................................................................... 19
   Understanding of equality ............................................................. 20
   Awareness of Children’s Rights ..................................................... 20
   Corporal, Physical and Non-physical Punishment ............................. 21
   Privacy and Integrity .................................................................... 21
   Compulsory Drug Test .................................................................. 21
   Condition for having Children’s Rights ......................................... 22
4.4 Education on Children’s Rights reported by students ....................... 22
4.5 General understanding of human rights and role of government .......... 22
4.6 Basic knowledge of Human Rights (Article 42) ................................................................. 23
4.7 Children’s rights in the curriculum ....................................................................................... 23
4.8 Children’s rights as guiding principles for school policies and practices ......................... 23
4.10 Parents’ Role in Children’s Rights Education ..................................................................... 24
4.11 Analysis of standardised scores .......................................................................................... 25

Section Five: Country Comparison and Policy Review ................................................................. 25
5.3 Background: Hong Kong’s Legal and Education System ..................................................... 25
5.4 Human Rights and Children’s Rights Education: Gaps and Challenges to Implementation
   - Country Literature Review ..................................................................................................... 26
     5.4.1. Hong Kong .................................................................................................................. 26
     5.4.2. United Kingdom and Northern Ireland ......................................................................... 28
     5.4.3. Australia ...................................................................................................................... 29
     5.4.4. Council of Europe ....................................................................................................... 30
     5.4.5. Norway ...................................................................................................................... 33

Section Six: Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 33
Section Seven: Recommendations ................................................................................................. 35
Section One: International Legal Framework and State Party Obligations

1.1 Introduction

Children's rights education generally refers to the explicit teaching of children's rights in schools in an environment and manner that itself models and respects those rights. It is a specific form of the more general concept of human rights education with a particular focus on children's rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children's rights education is based on the understanding that children are full and equal rights-holders and citizens, that schools are democratic communities where children learn the values and practices of citizenship and that educating children about their basic human rights is a legal obligation under Article 42 of the UNCRC.

Article 42 requires member States to “make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike”. In addition to this obligation to implement children's rights education and to disseminate the provisions of the UNCRC, Article 29 requires State Parties to ensure that the education of children is directed at, inter alia, “the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations”.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNC) has further noted that not only the content of the curriculum but also the educational processes, the pedagogical methods and the environment within which education takes place must be firmly rooted human rights. Children's rights education can therefore be understood as a holistic approach to education encompassing the explicit teaching of the rights described in the UNCRC in an environment and manner that itself models and respects the rights of children. Children's rights education can therefore be understood as comprising three mutually reinforcing and closely linked tracks: 1) children's right to education; 2) Children's rights in education; and 3) children's rights through education. Accordingly, the UNCRC's architecture frames the duties of State Parties along the three P's: Promotion, Protection, and Participation pertaining to the rights of children.

Despite the legal obligation and compelling evidence of the desirability and beneficial outcomes of children's rights education, most countries lack comprehensive policy directives aimed at incorporating such principles into curricular content and children's rights education approaches into their educational programmes. Current efforts appear to be limited primarily to ad hoc initiatives and have largely focused on human rights education rather than on children's rights education specifically as is required by the UNCRC.

1 UNCRC Article 42.
2 UNCRC Article 29.
1.2 The Rights of the Child

Historically, children were often seen as a special and vulnerable class of human beings in need of special protective care. Since the beginning of the 20th Century however, this paternalistic and protective approach slowly started to give way to an emerging understanding of children as independent bearers of rights leading to the legal enactments to guard the interests of the child to reflect their individuality, autonomy and dignity at national, regional and global levels. The adoption of the UNCRC in 1989 aimed at securing the formal recognition of children's rights. It provided a new understanding of children through a reconceptualization of their existence as independent human beings and rights holders in need of protection against harm and participatory agents in their own right. It also imposed an obligation on state members to protect and ensure the proper implementation of children's rights straddling the civil and political as well as the socioeconomic and cultural spectrum of rights and in a manner that was appropriate to children's evolving capacities. The fact that the UNCRC remains the most widely ratified international human rights instrument in the world reflects the strong commitment to and the universal agreement over the values enshrined in the UNCRC as an instrument dedicated to safeguarding the rights and interests of children everywhere.6

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (“the Committee”) has outlined a set of general principles that constitute the core pillars of the State Parties’ commitment to the obligations that underpin the UNCRC: non-discrimination (Article 2); the best interest of the child (Article 3); the right of children to have their views heard and given due weight in all decisions affecting them (Article 12); and the rights to life, survival and development (Article 6).7 Building on these foundational principles, the UNCRC provides a comprehensive framework that sets the parameters within which concrete action or intervention affecting children's rights and interests should take place. It further establishes benchmarks against which State parties’ actions, policies and measures of implementation can be assessed for compliance.

The Committee has also emphasized that “while it is the State which takes on the obligations under the Convention, its tasks of implementation – of making reality of the human rights of children – needs to engage all sectors of society.”8 To facilitate this society-wide responsibility to implement children’s rights, the UNCRC emphasizes the obligation of State parties to promote awareness and understanding of children's rights among children as well as adults (Article 42). Without dedicated and programmatic approaches to raising awareness about the existence and substance of their rights and their equal entitlement to them, children's rights are likely to remain theoretical ideals rather than practicable targets enabling the enforceability of the full range of children's rights guided by the principled framework under the three P's: promotion, protection and participation.

1.3 The International Legal Framework for Children’s Rights Education

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6 As of November 2009, 194 countries have ratified the convention, with the only exception being the United States and Somalia.
7 These four principles have been identified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child as the guiding principles underlying all articles of the UNCRC. Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 5: General Measures of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc CRC/GC/2003/5 (‘General Comment No. 5’), (2003), para. 3-5.
8 Ibid., para. 1.
Article 42 of the UN CRC provides the basis for human rights education, and specifically children's rights education, to ensure that the UN CRC standards are widely known, implemented through domestic law and policy and that violations of the rights of the child are taken seriously. In addition to this obligation, Article 29 requires State Parties to ensure that the education of children is directed at, inter alia, “the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.”

The right to – and an obligation to provide – human rights education derives from the right to education, which includes the right to quality education directed at particular objectives. Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which is largely based on Article 26 of the UDHR, sets out the required aims of education which include: 1) full development of the human personality and sense of dignity; 2) strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; 3) enabling all persons to participate effectively in a free society; 4) promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all ethnic or religious groups; and 5) furthering the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 29 of the UNCRC significantly develops the fundamental purposes of education with a view to ensuring it advances an understanding that addresses the protective, substantive and participatory dimensions of children's rights. The 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET) further reaffirms that human rights education should encompass education “about” human rights, “through” human rights and “for” human rights (Article 2) and take into account the specific needs and conditions of the target group (Article 3(3)).

1.3.1 Human Rights Education or Children’s Rights Education?

While human rights education should integrate all human rights, including those of children, in practice teaching about and through human rights principles often ignores the specific rights of children and the evolving capacities of children. This research posits that children's rights education has a distinct programming objective as it incorporates the specific rights, responsibilities and needs of children in the content, delivery and environment of education, while at the same time incorporating broader human rights principles. It is argued that a child who learns about children's rights in a child rights respecting environment and in a manner consistent with his/her rights is more likely to have an understanding and appreciation of broader human rights principles as an adult than the other way around.

1.3.2 Children's Rights Education

Children's rights education should therefore be understood as a holistic approach to education encompassing three mutually reinforcing and closely linked tracks, as identified by Verhellen: 1) children's right to education; 2) Children's rights in education; and 3) children's rights through education. The first track, the right to education, refers to the requirements regarding the practical organisation of education (Article 28(1)) and the organisation of its content (Article 29(1)). The rights in education entails the obligation that education systems themselves must respect children's rights as is enshrined in the various articles of the UNCRC. The third track, rights through education, refers to the indirect implementation of Articles 29(2) and 42 of the UNCRC through education in which children learn about their rights and develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This third track reflects the specific need for

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effective human rights, and more particularly, children's rights, education. Such an approach incorporating the 'rights through education' principle is called for directly in Articles 29 and 42 of UN CRC. Article 29 stipulates that “the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,” whereas, Article 42 requires State parties to “undertake to make the principles of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.” Article 42 UN CRC makes the dissemination of knowledge about human rights an explicit obligation. Together these tracks outline the right to – as well as the obligation for – implementing children's rights education as part and parcel of the responsibility to protect children and their rights under the UN CRC.

In meeting these obligations for children and young people, both State Parties and schools bear a great responsibility as they have control over the primary channels through which children and adults can be continuously educated about human/children's rights. This also underscores the importance of training individuals and particularly, teachers, in human rights knowledge and practice so that they can effectively deliver human and children's rights content.

1.4 Beyond the Legal Obligation

There is an emerging consensus that children's rights education has the capacity “to widen and deepen understanding and support for rights and responsibilities, to advance the practice of citizenship in the democratic community of the school, and to create a more positive school ethos for learning, mutual respect, and good social relations,”10 promoting rights knowledge and understanding as well as human rights respecting behaviour and attitudes. These benefits can have significant positive effects in the longer-term development of individual citizens’ responsibility for rights-respecting behaviour in society.

1.5 Implementing Children’s Rights Education

More than 20 years after adoption of the UN CRC, lack of knowledge of children's rights among children, as well as adults, remains widespread in most countries that have ratified the UN CRC. From the country reports submitted to the UN CRC Committee, it is clear that what is sorely lacking are systematic, comprehensive and State Party initiated efforts to incorporate children's rights into the broader framework of educational curricula inside and outside the classroom and policies in society more generally.

Some of the major challenges in implementing children's rights education programs reported in the literature are persisting traditional attitudes towards children and their rights; teaching difficulties including teacher attitudes, workload and stress; the lack of compulsory teacher training on human and children's rights; lack of resources; lack of effective leadership11, and the absence of child-rights based pedagogy in teacher training programs. Without the support of the wider community, and in particular, of teaching staff, efforts to implement children's rights education are likely to fail. Such support from key stakeholders however, is unlikely to be forthcoming in the absence of a strong human rights culture. The relationship between raising awareness about the UN CRC and children's rights education is thus, cyclical and mutually reinforcing.

While primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of children's rights lies with individual States\(^\text{12}\), the responsibility to implement these rights goes beyond States and places an obligation on all levels of society including corporations, institutions, decentralised governments as well as individuals. They need to provide support, leadership, commitment and cooperation for State actions and initiatives to ensure successful implementation. There are both general and specific measures of implementation that need to be effected to achieve widespread dissemination and promotion of children's rights and their integration into curricula.

On the one hand, general measures, such as raising awareness about the UN CRC is a direct obligation under Article 42 as well as a crucial element for creating an environment conducive to successful children's rights education. On the other hand, specific measures, including children's rights education, are likely to result in an improved human rights culture as well as fulfil the State Party's obligations under Article 42. These include planning and implementing strategies and measures around Verhellen's three track taxonomy for children's rights education: rights to, in and through education.

To effectively implement children's rights education programs, State parties should review the compatibility of national legislation with UN CRC, for example, laws relating to corporal punishment in schools, minimum employment age, freedom of religion, right to education, etc. Another key implementation measure is the development of a comprehensive children's rights education strategy. In developing such a strategy, States should take into account the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the Committee as well as consult with relevant stakeholders including teachers, parents and children themselves on the status quo and to identify areas for improvement and reform. A multilevel stakeholder engagement that includes the voices of children in this process is critical, particularly given the broad range of people who, and spheres in which, people wield an immense amount of power over children. In developing a comprehensive strategy, particular attention needs to be paid to identifying and giving priority to the most vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged groups of children. The strategy must go beyond just setting goals and should also include a detailed plan on how and within what time frame these goals are to be achieved. This strategy must receive national level endorsement.

It is also important that all relevant government departments as well as non-government organizations who are to play a leading role in the process are identified, briefed, trained and that coordination is established. Other requirements include the allocation of sufficient resources and systematic monitoring of progress on development and implementation of such measures. Finally, education, training and awareness about children's rights are paramount. Governments must therefore put sustained efforts in to awareness raising campaigns as well as integrating children's rights principles into the training of teachers, and the incorporation of the UN CRC and other human rights principles into the curriculum, school policies, administrative systems and teaching methods.

### Section Two: Research Objectives

#### 2.1 Research Gap and the Current Study

At present, the evaluation of Hong Kong's measures and steps to implement the requirements under the UNCRC, on an official basis, is limited to the periodic review of Hong Kong's obligations under the UNCRC whereby the HKSAR Government self-reports to the UNC. With a view to complementing the existing reporting process and to measure more concretely the extent to which the HKSAR Government has met its Article 42 obligation, this Study is designed to examine these issues from a scientific and objective perspective. The section outlines the current situation in Hong Kong as regards the implementation of these obligations. This serves to identify any gaps from a policy perspective and enable the research instruments to map relevant areas for improvement to ensure effective compliance.

2.2 Education Policy and Practice in HKSAR

The UNCRC was extended to Hong Kong in 1994. As signatory to the UNCRC, in light of Hong Kong's obligation under Article 42 “to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike” should have directly influenced both education policy and educators’ practice and training. Currently, the UNCRC is not part of the school curriculum as a separate subject per se and it is not entirely part of the school ethos. The HKSAR government incorporates general human rights values into the moral and civic education programs in educational curricula and more broadly through other courses such as General Studies, Social Studies, Economic and Public Affairs, Government and Public Affairs, Liberal Studies and Integrated Humanities where children discuss equality, liberty, freedom of expression and respect for different ways of life.

Research over the last decade has demonstrated the link between educational priorities and common perception. Studies have found that Human Rights in general are not part of Hong Kong's cultural and value system. Culturally, social stability has been found to be the more desirable end than individual rights. Similarly, minority rights receive little support from the general public. Additionally, teachers' confusion and fears relating to HRE constitute one of the major obstacles to the practice of HRE. For example, the common perception is that rights-education would lead to a loss of control or authority over children. Teachers felt they did not have sufficient knowledge, time, resources and support to fully implement HRE/CRE. Furthermore, teachers felt that human rights educators, while experts in their field, lacked the pedagogical skills to teach in the classrooms. A survey has revealed that teachers felt confused, incompetent or even indifferent in the topic of human rights education. Other studies revealed that teachers and principals have reservations and fears about HRE: fear of confusion, fear of losing authority, fear of being troublesome, fear of too heavy a workload, fear of lack of understanding, fear of abuse by students and fear of implementation.

This is thought to be undesirable from parental and teacher perspectives. Technical improvements are also necessary: better teacher training, teaching materials and a clear integration of HRE into the curriculum would constitute major steps forward.

Hong Kong education has a long tradition of being test-driven with a knowledge-based curriculum focusing on school performance and international competitiveness. Recent changes to the curriculum have emphasized the holistic development of children as one of its principal aims (2002). These reforms created two key subjects “Personal, Social and Humanities Education” (Primary 1 through Secondary 3 since 2002) and “Liberal Studies” (Senior Secondary since 2008) as well as the key area of “Civic and Moral education” (at all levels), which have the potential to become an important foundation to foster a human rights culture in schools. As previous studies have shown, fundamental changes to curriculum and policy reflecting the ideals of the UNCRC would have a magnified effect on the public perception and the general state of human rights generally in Hong Kong. This is particularly so given the critical role that education plays in shaping the values and practices of children as future citizens.

The limited body of research in Hong Kong does identify partial implementation of HRE in schools. It also argues that HRE has been overshadowed by civic education, which seems to have received more government funds than HRE. Moreover, researchers showed that both students and teachers showed little interest and a lack of understanding towards human rights principles.

On the ground, motivated teachers, predominantly with the support of NGOs, have made attempts to promote HRE among Secondary students. Often teacher training on HRE is sporadic and limited. More attention should focus on training the teachers in a more organized and systematic manner. There is at present only one elective offering HRE, signalling the critical lack of teacher training on the content of human rights education. Teaching training pre- and in-service should include such professional development focusing on human rights, social justice and intercultural education to ensure teachers can meet the demands of a multicultural learning environment. Government provided resources and structured training opportunities or materials are mostly absent and fall far short of what is required. Full recognition of children's rights would require a fundamental revision of many of the established practices of schooling (Osler & Starkey 2010).

There are many important components to educating involved citizens: a strong curriculum with emphasis on HRE and CRE, more effective teacher training, increased awareness of children's own rights, and a fundamental reorganization of schools and pedagogy with regard to HRE (Lee & Yuen 1999). While the present government curriculum does not offer HRE explicitly, knowledge areas like PSHE, Civic and Moral education, and Liberal Studies provide openings for teachers to include HRE in their lessons. Though the current program does represent an improvement relative to historical standards, there is room to improve implementation as Hong Kong seeks to enhance its educational offerings whilst seeking to meet its obligations under the UNCRC.

2.3 Research Objectives

Against this background, the research team identified various research gaps. One of the primary purposes of this research study is to fill this gap and obtain greater clarity of Hong Kong's existing policies and measures and to assess whether the Hong Kong Government or other relevant stakeholders have taken appropriate measures and steps to ensure the implementation of children's rights education after signing the UNCRC.
This study sets out to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To explore implementation of children's rights education in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.
2. To examine pupils' awareness of their own rights and also teachers' knowledge of children's rights.
3. To examine teachers’ views and practices on the inclusion and teaching of human and children's rights education as part of their classroom curricula and to assess whether they take a rights-respecting approach as a matter of practice in their school environment.
4. To gain a better understanding of the pedagogical approaches to teaching children's rights in the schools across different grade levels.
5. To conduct a comprehensive literature review on children's rights education in Hong Kong and to engage in a comparative review of relevant literature in other parts of the world.
6. To compare the pedagogy, policy and practices in Hong Kong with the international best practices in select jurisdictions.
7. To make recommendations on structural and substantive improvements for Hong Kong's practices in implementing its Article 42 obligation pertaining to children's rights education to ensure compliance with UNCRC obligations.

It is hoped that the findings from this study can lead to a better understanding of the ground realities pertaining to the implementation of children's rights education in schools through engagement with multilevel stakeholders.

Section Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate pupils’ awareness of their own rights and teachers’ knowledge of children's rights. We also sought to examine teachers' views and practices on the inclusion and teaching of human and children's rights education as part of their classroom curricula and also to assess whether they took a rights-respecting approach as a matter of practice in their school environment. To fully inform our survey tool, we undertook a country comparison to survey international best practices regarding the implementation of children's rights education in select jurisdictions.

3.2 Country Comparison

The study was conducted in three phases comprising of document analysis and literature reviews, quantitative and qualitative data collection; and data analysis.

3.2.1 Phase I: Document Analysis

3.2.1.1 – 3.2.1.2 Education and Legal Policy Analysis
This phase of the project focused primarily on document analysis from both a legal and education policy perspective and was designed to inform the process of drafting the research instruments for later use in Phase 2. The analysis from the education policy perspective entailed a general curriculum overview spanning from Primary through Secondary Schools, reviewing learning materials such as textbooks and lesson plans produced by different parties (mainly by EDB, CDI and NGOs), existing policies, structures and courses for pre- and in-service teacher training as well as reviewing the teaching and learning methodologies for HRE/CRE. The research team also conducted a review of the UNCRC in terms of the legal obligations it places on the Hong Kong Government with a particular focus on the education sector and the obligation to raise awareness of children's rights. The legal policy analysis of UNCRC implementation in Hong Kong schools entails a detailed analysis of policy documents, school curricula and general school management policies through the lens of the UNCRC.

In summary, this part discusses the following questions:

- Is the curriculum content and its objectives rights-based?
- Are the methodologies learner-centred, democratic and participatory?
- Are the materials and textbooks used by the teachers consistent with children's human rights values and human rights values more broadly?
- Whether the policy documents and teaching curricula can objectively be said to have met the requirement of 'provision' and 'promotion' as required by Article 42 of the UNCRC;
- Whether the content of teaching material itself accurately captures the substance of rights enshrined in the UNCRC, including the cardinal principles of autonomy, human dignity and best interests of the child; and
- Whether in light of these findings, the position in HKSAR is one which can be described as compliant or non-compliant with the Article 42 obligation.

In addition to analysing government policies and mandates, the analysis draws on school policy observations from the case study schools, particularly looking at enabling and facilitation mechanisms for the implementation of children's rights education in the variety of contexts studied.

### 3.2.1.3. International Best Practices

A comparative review of the collected data on the existing situation of child rights education in Hong Kong and international best practices was also taken to assist in the formulation of concrete and specific recommendations on the direction that curriculum, policy and legal reform ought to take in order to make Hong Kong's compliance with the UNCRC's Article 42 obligation more efficacious. The international comparison component comprised of three parts: literature review of CRE implementation and participant identification; quantitative and qualitative data collection; and data analysis.

Three countries were selected for the international comparison: United Kingdom (UK), Norway, and Australia. These countries are of significant comparable value. Given that Hong Kong's education system and curriculum have long been derived from a primarily UK-structured curriculum. Furthermore, Australia and Norway have
been widely reported as being exceptionally advanced in their development of such curricula and their general implementation of CRE. A close examination of the policies and programs in these countries together with an evaluation of the experiences of those involved in developing and implementing them facilitated the identification of best practices applied internationally for consideration of their applicability in the Hong Kong context.

A. Part I: Literature Review

The literature review examined relevant legislative and policy documents, national curriculum documents, and relevant CRE programs and policies that have been developed in each of the respective countries as well as reports submitted by the countries to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and any corresponding Concluding Observations and Recommendations based on those reports. Ultimately, a thematic content analysis of all documents for each country was undertaken based on country background; characteristics of the education system; extent to which children's rights and human rights are incorporated into the curriculum (either implicitly or explicitly); overview of existing CRE policies and initiatives (government or non-government); and children's rights in teacher training.

B. Part II: Qualitative and Quantitative Data

In-depth interviews were conducted with a small group of stakeholders in each of the three countries. Questions focused, inter alia, on the extent and nature of CRE programs and practices, materials used, what worked effectively and what did not, how the programs could be improved and perceptions on how these practices have changed the human rights knowledge and culture in their school or community. In addition to the in-depth interviews, a small number of surveys were distributed to a small number of selected schools that were identified as having implemented CRE approaches. The sample size of the targeted schools was 6 schools (2 schools in each country). It was intended that within each school, three separate questionnaires would be distributed to principals, teachers and students.

Both the survey data and the interview responses were analysed in light of State Parties' obligations under Article 42 of the UNCRC and the effectiveness of the CRE approaches deployed by them respectively in meeting this obligation. The data from the surveys was used to determine the difference in human rights knowledge and culture between schools that have implemented CRE approaches and those that have not; to compare the effectiveness of different CRE approaches; and to determine the most effective approaches.

C. Part III: Data Analysis

As part of the data analysis, the research team identified international best practices pertaining to CRE approaches in meeting State Parties' obligations under the UNCRC and developed a set of recommendations on how these best practices can be implemented in HKSAR in light of its education policy, resource implications, international human rights commitments, and the role of government, parents, teachers and other members in society in effectively addressing the developmental needs of children in HKSAR.
3.2. Participants of the Country Comparison Review

A total of 13 participants were interviewed as part of the international comparison. Participants included principals, leading academics and researchers, NGO workers, the Ombudsman for Children and child rights education specialists. Due to limitations in funding and resources and the corresponding inability of the research team to travel to the three countries for data collection, the data had to be collected virtually and relied heavily on the stakeholders’ cooperation and assistance with distribution of the surveys within schools to the relevant stakeholder groups. Moreover, the qualitative component also had to be conducted virtually via Skype. These limitations resulted in a smaller sample of schools being recruited. As a result of having to conduct the research ‘virtually’ and having to rely on supportive stakeholders to facilitate the schools’ participation, only a very small number of schools participated in the survey. In total three schools participated in the survey.

3.2.3. Instruments of the Country Comparison

3.2.3.1. Qualitative analysis - Interview

The interviews were largely structured using an interview script. Questions in the interview script were divided into 4 categories:

1. background information;
2. participant’s understanding of knowledge and perceptions of children’s rights among the general public in their respective countries;
3. the nature of CRE programs or policies that the participants are involved with; and
4. views on essential tools and/or approaches for successful CRE implementation.

3.2.3.2. Quantitative analysis – Survey

The questionnaires were developed specifically to gather detailed information on the impact of CRE programs and or policies on the human rights knowledge and culture in schools. Questions were categorised according to:

1. background information of the participant (anonymous);
2. school education policy;
3. children’s rights knowledge and understanding; and
4. children’s rights in the classroom and in the broader school and learning environment.

These tools corresponded to the Hong Kong version of the surveys and interview schedule to allow for meaningful comparisons.

3.2.4. Limitations of the Country Comparison
Due to limited time and budgetary constraints, the research team was not able to travel overseas to conduct the interviews and surveys. The main limitation of this method of engaging stakeholders was that it restricted the ability of the research team to access schools and conduct the quantitative research part of the international comparison on a random sampling basis and therefore, we relied on supportive third party stakeholders to facilitate this for us. The quantitative data response range was very low and we were ultimately limited to a small sample size given the constraints of not being there in person to follow up with participants on completion of surveys and to have them mail back the documents to the team. However, the limited sample does not impact the overall findings of the research as this research does not propose to draw general conclusions, but rather, to learn about some of the positive and negative experiences that stakeholders have experienced in developing and implementing CRE projects to help guide the development of appropriate recommendations for Hong Kong. Moreover, the qualitative data was contextualised in light of the international literature review conducted with respect to the countries surveyed.

3.4 Hong Kong Study

As no prior research has addressed these questions on a comprehensive basis in the context of Hong Kong before, this Research Study targeted a large sample size to ensure the representativeness and reliability of the data pertaining to this phase of the project. To gain a better understanding into the methodology of the pedagogical approaches to teach children’s rights in the schools, the study conducted the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups across a broad sample stratified by school type, class level, class teacher role and principal. The interviews and focus groups helped to contextualize the research data obtained through the survey questionnaires.

3.4.1. Preparation and Procedures of the Hong Kong study

In Phase 1, after the completion of the educational and legal policy analysis, the research team drafted and piloted the questionnaires. Phase 2 aimed to collect data via multiple survey questionnaires and case studies targeting three key informant groups, namely school principals or other senior managers, teachers, and pupils on the implementation of Children’s Rights education at all school types (i.e. primary and secondary mainstream schools, ESF/international school and special schools) and also descriptive data on pupils’ awareness of their own rights. The cross-sectional survey acted as the quantitative component and was designed to facilitate the triangulation of the data collected in the qualitative interview focus groups. The case studies involved focus groups with pupils and teachers, one-to-one interviews with school principals, analyses of school policy documents on Children’s Rights education, and classroom observations to ascertain pedagogical approaches to children’s rights education and the implementation of these values in the school environment as a whole.

During Phase 3 of the project, questionnaire data, open ended interview responses and observation data were analysed in light of UNCRC standards pertaining to children’s rights education. These approaches entailed measures to test the accuracy of the material used, the means by which it is delivered and its success and effectiveness in conveying the desired information in light of UNCRC standards.

We then selected key areas based on the descriptive data to investigate the holistic CRE performance of the
schools that participated in the questionnaire survey. Data was thematically categorized and scored to reflect positive or negative elements of the school's CRE performance. The scores were then used to identify schools with good practices. Further statistical tests and analyses were also conducted in order to generate specific relationships and correlates between different variables.

Following the process of data analysis, recommendations were developed in light of the legal obligations of State parties under the UNCRC, the UNC's observations on HKSAR and international best practices in children's rights education. The recommendations have also been contextualised in light of HKSAR's education policy, resource implications, international human rights commitments, the role of the government, parents, teachers, and other members in society in addressing effectively the developmental needs of children as future citizens.

3.4.2. Participants of the Hong Kong Study

A total of 58 participant schools were targeted representing each key stakeholder group (counting the case study schools surveyed as part of the Education SPF). These participants represented local primary, secondary, international/ESF and special schools respectively.

As there are smaller numbers of ESF/international schools, a larger proportion of these schools have been targeted. By oversampling the small group of schools (i.e. ESF/International primary and secondary schools) we aim to ensure that the sample size is not too small and so that it can be weighted back to the general population. The school sample has included a small number of special schools to investigate practices of Children's Rights education and pupils' awareness of their rights for this vulnerable group of children. The hope is that the stratified sample will yield results that will highlight the influence of factors such as the school-governing body, source of funding, teacher training and the incorporation of religious studies into school curricula on the questions being researched.

The first few grades of primary school pupils are not included in the questionnaire survey as this methodological approach will not be appropriate for young children. The team investigated perceptions of groups of young pupils only in primary Grade 5 and 6. As for primary and secondary schools we targeted Form teachers, discipline/subject teachers and teachers in charge of disciplining children for transgressions on school grounds. This is to ensure that a broad cross-section of teachers involved in the types of courses that would likely include children's rights content is captured as well as teachers with a more 'permanent' link with the children to assess the extent to which such content is incorporated in the overall learning environment. The survey part of this study has reached a large part of the target population gathering 6,734 questionnaires from principals, teachers and pupils at 44 schools.

The case study part of the project had a sample of 5 schools, representing local primary school, local secondary schools, ESF/international primary school, ESF/International secondary school, and special school for mild disabilities. Another 9 schools were sampled as part of an add-on project funded by the University of Hong
Kong's Small Project Fund Scheme. The case studies involved focus groups with pupils and teachers, one-to-one interviews with school principals, analysis of school policy documents on Children's Rights education, and classroom observations. Each focus group comprised of 6 to 8 participants. At each school, we interviewed 14 to 18 students, 4-6 teachers and a principal or a member of Senior Management Team (SMT) as part of the focus groups and/or during one-on-one interviews. We interviewed a total of 265 stakeholders.

3.4.3. Instruments of the Hong Kong Study

3.4.3.1 Questionnaire Surveys

The primary school questionnaires have used simpler language, taking into account of developmental level of younger pupils. The teacher and principal questionnaires have been further modified into primary and secondary versions as the pilot questionnaire revealed it was better to have separate versions to cater for the different settings in primary and secondary schools so that we can obtain more accurate responses that are comparable across school levels. Thus, in total, there were seven questionnaire instruments targeting three key informant groups, namely school principals or other senior managers at schools, teachers, and pupils.

The sample of the questionnaire survey has been drawn proportionally and stratified across school funding body, school type, academic outcomes of schools, and level of support provided to non-Chinese speaking students. The questionnaires for school principals, the SMT and teachers have been developed in conjunction with the objective of ensuring that survey questions reflect UN CRC standards for children's rights education and the obligations of State Parties under the UN CRC pertaining to the implementation of these standards. The instruments include questions to capture their understanding of and familiarity with UN CRC standards, their views on the nature of the obligation to implement children's rights education, the source of their knowledge or training on children's rights and their awareness of any support networks or resources that can be accessed to develop relevant teaching materials. They were also surveyed as to whether the courses they teach or the learning environment they are in charge of (classroom or outside the classroom) encompass elements of children's rights content implicitly or explicitly.

The principal surveys targeted school principals or a representative of the senior management team to collect data on schools' policies and practices regarding Children's Rights Education. The teacher survey sought to ascertain teachers' practices and views on content, delivery and implementation of Children's Rights Education. The student survey sought to elicit pupils' perspectives on the implementation of Children's Rights Education in Hong Kong schools but also, to assess the extent to which children's rights were protected in and through education.

3.4.3.2 Case Study

Consideration has to be given to the diversity and difference in response capacities between different groups of children and young people when designing the methods of data collection. The focus group interviews at Grades 5 to 6 of primary schools had been conducted through games, group work and animated video
simulation that would enable younger children to express awareness of their rights through other means. The games used visual simulations (use of Children’s Rights cards) and an animated video (notebook babies video concerning bullying). For secondary students, a local news video reporting a bullying incident at a local secondary school was used instead of the animation since this was considered more appropriate for older children. This is to ensure authentic context for the students to relate their experiences and thus eliciting Children’s Rights related information. “Rights and Wants” cards were used to facilitate the game in the focus group interview. The set of cards used in primary school setting were modified into a simpler version.16

Section Four: Results and Discussion For the Survey

In this analysis of the Children’s Rights in Education questionnaire, we discuss each sub-category. First we refer to the descriptive statistics generated (these descriptive statistics are frequency counts and valid percentages from the questionnaire responses we have collected). Then we discuss the results using further statistical analysis (tests involved are Pearson Chi-square test, Kruskal-Wallis test, Spearman’s rank Correlation test and T-test). Finally we supplement the analysis with relevant qualitative data related to the discussion.

4.3 Questionnaire Responses

This section presents an overview of the students’, teachers’ and principals’ responses. The demographic results have been broken down by stakeholder type. Here are some of the significant findings:

Principals and SMT

The sample size for principals is very low (20 primary school principals and 23 secondary school principals). An overall trend can be identified in that principals’ responses were generally much more ‘positive’ and ‘child rights aware’ compared with teachers. However, it is not clear if this indicates more knowledge of Children’s Rights and a more positive approach towards CRE or whether the principals simply answered more ‘self-servingly.’

Teacher CRE training (Art 42)

Only a small proportion of teacher and principal participants had received any kind of CRE training (PST: 5.7%; SST: 7.2%; PSP: 21.1%; SSP: 14.3%). This reflects a critical lack of teacher training in CRE in both groups. CRE training is generally inadequate for all groups given the importance of such background training and its implications for CRE in classrooms and schools. The results show that if the school could provide more resources for the teachers, they are more likely to receive CRE-related training (p<.001). Also, if the school provides training (in-house or outside) for teachers, they are more likely to incorporate CRE into the curriculum (p<.001).

16 Please refer to Appendix V for the interview flow and materials used.
Relatively few teachers indicated that their school has appropriate resources to support teachers in the implementation of CRE (PST: 22%; SST: 20%) and even fewer indicated that their school had provided any training for teachers to incorporate CRE into the curriculum (PST: 12.3%; SST: 14.2%). When asked what would motivate them to incorporate CRE into their teaching, the most common responses were:

- a course pack designed to incorporate CRE (PST: 78.3%; SST: 65%; PSP: 73.7%; SSP: 76.2%)
- opportunities for CRE related learning (PPS: 79.3; SST: 69.5%; PSP: 84.2%; SSP: 81%); and
- funding for CRE related materials and equipment (PST: 80.3%; SST: 68.9%; PSP: 78.9%; SSP: 81%).

**Student participation in decision-making at schools**

Most principals responded that their school has channels to enable students to raise concerns regarding the curriculum, school activities and facilities (PST: 58.9%; SST: 68.7%; PSP: 90%; SSP: 95.7%). However, significantly fewer principals responded that students are able to participate in decision-making at the school (PST: 29.7%; SST: 49.9%; PSP: 40%; SSP: 56.5%). We can also observe, especially among the secondary school principals' responses, that they had agreed that student's views could influence most of the school's changes except for curriculum (52.2% for curriculum, and more than 70% were of the view that such changes could be influenced by student views for all the other listed aspects). This observation is further reinforced by our qualitative interview results.

While most students in secondary school reported the existence of a student council/union (92.3% to 95.1%) and a student newsletter/bulletin (92.4% to 95.8%), freedom of expression in the student council/union was reportedly relatively weak (54.1% to 61.9%) and usefulness of the student newsletter/bulletin was likewise weak (33.7% to 44.7%). Only 40% of primary school principals reported the existence of a student union or council whereas 32% of the teachers reported the same. Primary school students were not asked a corresponding question.

Most primary school principals also voiced concerns that they think the students are not independent or mature enough to organize the student union. It also appears that primary school teachers are more conservative about letting students express their views.

**Children who need extra help**

The result shows a positive picture in that most secondary students were aware of fellow students needing extra help (79.3% to 79.7%) and most students reported that these students receive help from the school (88.8% to 94.4%).

**Bullying**

All principals reported that their school has strict policies and procedures regarding bullying between students (PST: 84.3%; SST: 82.5%; PSP: 100%; SSP: 100%). Further, teachers and principals believe that these policies have been communicated to all stakeholders, including students. This makes it remarkable how few upper secondary school students reported that they have been told what they should do if they are bullied (USS: 67.9%).
The results show that while nearly all students thought they knew what bullying is (98.0% to 98.6%), awareness of some elements of bullying being wrong was worryingly low, e.g. calling names was only recognised as wrong by less than two thirds of secondary school students (59.1% to 57.3%).

It is of some concern that secondary school students are less likely to report being bullied (73.5% to 76.6%). It is also worrisome that the responses ‘bullying back’ and ‘not knowing how to respond’ are increasingly likely with age 11.2% to 34.8% and 3.6% to 12.1% respectively. Similarly, it is worrying that fewer older students report being advised by teachers about bullying (89.1% down to 67.9%).

**Understanding of equality**

While nearly all students believe in the principle of equality, less than half are willing to be friends with students who are “different” (e.g. only 19.1% to 38.5% for boys who act like girls), with the exception of differences based on gender (from 77.1% to 94.1%).

**Awareness of Children's Rights**

While nearly all children are aware of having rights (93.4% to 95.2%), surprisingly few are aware of some basic rights, e.g. the right to see a doctor (59.2% to 73.2%) and even the right to sufficient food (75.1% to 79.5%). Awareness of the UN CRC is not high and only increases slightly with age (PSS: 54.9%; LSS: 63.9%; USS: 64.5%).

Most principals and teachers indicated a reasonable recognition of the basic children's rights. Interestingly, while principals generally identified basic children's rights, a majority also identified non-rights as rights (such as access to computer or pocket money). This might also be related to whether the respondents have received relevant training and understanding of basic children's rights.

There is a limited understanding of the notion that rights are inherent. More than half the principals and teachers feel that children must first fulfil their responsibilities before enjoying their rights (Children: PST: 76.0%; SST: 64.2%; PSP: 60%; SSP: 60.9%). Similarly a majority of them believe that, in certain circumstances, they should be able to suspend some rights (PST: 82.3%; SST: 79.5%; PSP: 84.2%; SSP: 72.7%). Interestingly, more teachers believe that children must first fulfil their responsibilities. This seems to indicate that many teachers do not view children as full citizens and confirms that they perceive the child to be an extension of the parental family unit/society until they reach the age of majority. This might also be explained by Chinese ideology and culture, which epitomizes teachers as the authority and the view that they can deprive children of certain rights for the children's benefit.

A majority of principals reported that their knowledge of children's rights is adequate to integrate their knowledge of children's rights values into the school management policies (PSP: 75.0%; SSP: 78.3%). However, the percentage of teachers who felt that their knowledge of children's rights is adequate enough to integrate children's rights values into
the school teaching philosophy is lower (PST: 55.0%; SST: 63.6%). When asked if their knowledge is adequate enough to integrate children's values into teaching, more than half said no (PST: 60.4%; SST: 64.8%).

Most teachers and principals feel that it is important that children have a Convention to protect their rights (PST: 89.4%; SST: 83.6%; PSP: 75%; SSP: 82.6%). This again shows the principals and teachers have a good theoretical understanding of the Convention. Interestingly, when asked whether students are able to participate in decision making in the classroom, a much lower percentage of teachers and principals responded affirmatively. This could indicate a discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and practical application or the lack of understanding that the freedom to express views extends to the classroom.

The result also shows the critical importance across school levels for teachers as the source of students’ knowledge about their rights (PSS: 75.3%; LSS: 70.1%; USS: 73.9%). What is interesting is that the Internet and books are reported as of comparable importance to parents as a source.

**Corporal, Physical and Non-physical Punishment**

Fewer teachers than principals felt children should have the right to be free from corporal punishment. This seems to indicate that teachers do not perceive corporal punishment to be ‘abuse’ but rather a legitimate instance of temporary suspension of the right to be free from abuse. There are high ratings on the notion of children having basic rights, which indicate that there exists a difference between the theoretical understanding and the practical operationalisation of UNCRC rights. There is always the possibility that there may be significant disagreement about the content of these rights.

International/ESF schools’ teachers and principals appear to be more aware of the importance of ensuring students are free from corporal punishment. Whereas local primary and secondary schools appear less aware or likely to be of the view that freedom from corporal punishment is the students’ right. Many local school teachers and principals view this as a cultural difference.

**Privacy and Integrity**

In terms of the recognition of privacy and integrity issues, there is a distinct lack of awareness. Most principals and teachers feel that parents should be able to monitor their children's internet activity (PST: 88.8%; SST: 82.6%; SPS: 90.0%; SSP: 86.9%). Interestingly the acceptability of parental monitoring of internet/phone use among students is not high and drops sharply as age increases (PSS: 44.3%; LSS: 24.5%; USS: 15.3%).

**Compulsory Drug Test**

A slight majority of principals responded that schools should be able to force students to take a drug test if their parents consent (PST: 58.9%; SST: 61.1%; PSP: 65%; SSP: 60.8%). Slightly fewer teachers felt this way. This response provides some insights into principals understanding of children's bodily autonomy and integrity. Like parents, principals would probably justify such an intrusion as being for children's own wellbeing and interest. However, the approach taken is one that ignores the need to balance invasive parenting / mentoring with
autonomy-based approaches that depend on the child’s autonomy / decision particularly where such decisions have implications for their bodily integrity or involve their person.

**Condition for having Children’s Rights**

The results show student awareness of whether all children have the same rights and whether Children’s Rights differ from adults and if so, for what good reasons. Awareness of equal rights does not seem to improve with age (PSS: 73.9%; LSS: 69.7%; USS: 71.6%). Most students believe that they must first fulfil responsibilities before enjoying their rights (LSS: 88.8%; USS: 89.6%) but most also believe this applies to adults (LSS: 79.0%; USS: 84.7%).

**4.4 Education on Children’s Rights reported by students**

Students report that learning about children’s rights is a low priority in the classroom (PSS: 55.0%; LSS: 47.8%; USS: 40.4%), compared to learning about Government (PSS: 73.9%; 79.8%; USS: 76.7%), other cultures and religions (PSS: 83.8%; LSS: 84.1%; 81.8%) and protecting the environment (PSS: 97.8%; LSS: 94.4%; USS: 93.2%), even though most believe it is important (LSS: 91.0%; USS: 90.3%) and want to learn about this (PSS:86.8%; LSS: 75.9%; USS: 74.2%). Most, but certainly not all, students feel safe and happy (PSS: 87.2%; LSS: 82.5%; USS: 85.1%) and respected (PSS: 93.6%; LSS: 91.6%; USS: 91.4%). A relatively higher proportion of upper secondary school girls (92.9%) thought that “it is important for children to learn about children’s rights at school” when compared with the upper secondary school boys. This correlates the significance levels of whether the upper secondary student respondents thought it is important for children to learn about children’s rights at school with their gender ($p<.001$).

Also, few secondary students report any children’s rights promotion in school other than during Liberal Studies lessons (LSS: 43.7%; USS: 48.2%) or through an invited speaker (LSS: 41.6%; USS: 28.8%).

**4.5 General understanding of human rights and role of government**

The responses of teachers to statements such as, whether the Government should be able to interpret the law flexibly to solve pressing social issues; whether it is unacceptable for the police to use torture, even in special circumstances; whether it is legitimate for Government to deny entry to people who pose a threat to HKSAR’s stability due to their sensitive political views, were mainly affirmative or neutral rather than opposing these views. Although some principals also replied in the affirmative or expressed a neutral view, the percentage was generally lower than for teachers. This points to a weak understanding of and commitment to the rule of law among the principals and teachers. This is problematic given their significance as role models for children and the likelihood of transferring these views to their students.

Regarding the statements, ‘It is acceptable for landlords to refuse to rent property to ethnic minorities,’ ‘It is acceptable for employers to refuse to hire persons with disabilities,’ a majority of the respondents felt that it is unacceptable. However, the fact that, approximately a quarter of the school principals responded “neutral” to this statement indicates a lack of understanding of human rights and the principle of equality. This reflects a concerning level of apathy that is unhealthy among professionals who are the closest role models for students.
4.6 Basic knowledge of Human Rights (Article 42)

Around half of the school principals and teachers expressed their disagreement with the view that not all persons deserve the same treatment as others (PST: 59.2%; SST: 58.1%; PSP: 45.0%; SSP: 65.2%). Of those who felt that not all people deserve the same treatment (PST: 15.2%; SST: 17.5%), the most common responses were: People with disabilities (PST: 23.9%; SST: 27%); Transgender people (PST: 19.3%; SST: 16.7%); Gay men (PST: 25%; SST: 25%); Lesbians (PST: 20.8%; SST: 19.6%); and People with a different skin colour (PST: 11.9%; SST:13.5%). These findings should be considered with caution as they could also indicate an understanding that these groups are entitled to special treatment (positive discrimination). However, the fact that ethnic, transgender, gay and lesbian groups are also the subject of disagreement here, groups that are traditionally marginalized and very much so in Hong Kong given the lack of adequate statutory protection, it is unlikely that the views stem from support for positive discrimination in terms of treatment.

4.7 Children’s rights in the curriculum

It is worth noting that more than a quarter of the school principals reported that children’s rights are not part of the curriculum (PST: 25.7%; SST: 42.5%; PSP: 30%; SSP: 30.4%). As Children’s Rights are not part of the curriculum, student responses also reflect this. During the qualitative interview, some of the liberal studies teachers mentioned there is a chapter in a Form 3 Liberal Studies lesson which explains rights and responsibilities. However, children’s rights are not clearly indicated as a component of the curriculum in the syllabus. Of the topics listed, it is clear that Children’s Rights seem least likely to be incorporated. On the whole however, the reported percentages of reference to relevant materials for the development of curricula and policies are fairly low (only a slight majority). The practice is even less common at secondary schools it appears.

A majority of principals (>75%) indicate that the “best interest of the child” principle was taken into account in the development of school policies, curriculum and school code of conduct. However, that less than half of them have indicated that they have heard of the concept indicates some sort of discrepancy/error. The principals might interpret the “best interest of the child” literally. This inconsistence suggests the principals might not have a clear conception or understanding of the “best interest of the child” as a legal principle and the practical implications this has in the context of children.

4.8 Children’s rights as guiding principles for school policies and practices

Less than half of the principals reported that their school refers to the UNCRC in the planning of school policies (PST: 15.1%; SST: 12.9%; PSP: 31.6%; SSP: 31.8%) or curriculum (PST: 13.9%; SST: 11.3%; PSP: 36.8%; SSP: 22.7%). However, the affirmative response is much higher among principals compared with teachers, only 15% or less responded that they made reference to the UNCRC in the development of school policies or curricula. The higher affirmative response from the principals compared to the teachers might be attributed to the fact that the policy is not fully delivered by the principal to the teachers. Although most principals and some teachers think they have
incorporated Children's Rights in the school curriculum and school policies, most of them are not referring to the UN CRC. Most teachers and principals might not know the detailed content of UN CRC even if they have heard of this document. They might not correlate UN CRC with Children's Rights standards set out in the document and may be referring to Children's Rights as a matter of generality.

4.9 Children’s Rights in the Classroom and School

Almost all principals felt that students should have the autonomy to decide on their stream of education (PST: n/a; SST: 89.5%; PSP: n/a; SSP: 100%). However, we should also be aware of the gap of a good theoretical understanding and the real practice. Principals and teachers seem to be aware that students’ parents might alter the final decision of students’ selection of their education stream.

The majority of principals recognize that Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students belonging to ethnic minorities have different learning needs compared to students from the Mainland (PST: 82.7%; SST: 71.5%; PSP: 90%; SSP: 68.2%) as well as compared to locally born Chinese students (PST: 82%; SST: 74.8%, PSP: 90%; SSP: 68.2%). However, while aware of the different learning needs, less than half of secondary school principals and teachers reported they had measures in place to assist NCS students (SST 45.3%; SSP: 40.9%).

4.10 Parents’ Role in Children’s Rights Education

The survey data had gathered views from students, principals and teachers regarding their impressions of the role of parents in Children's Rights education. We asked them to reflect on the statement: “To prevent children from going astray, parents should be able to monitor their internet activity.” Interestingly, among secondary school teachers, their ethnicity is correlated to their responses (SST: \( p < 0.05, p\text{-value}=0.042 \)). Chinese teachers tend to think parents should ‘monitor’ their children. Closely reflecting the impact of ethnicity on thinking, responses from local schools indicate the thinking that parents and teachers have the ‘responsibility’ to ‘control’ and ‘prevent’ children from doing anything wrong.

Spearman's rank correlation test for this question against highest education qualification among primary school teachers (PST: \( p < 0.01, p\text{-value}=0.001, \rho=-.167^{**} \)) shows that teachers who receive more education/training will have a clearer understanding of parents’ role in Children's Rights education.

On a separate question, ‘Do you think it is okay if your parents check your internet activities or phone messages?’ the Pearson chi-square test shows significant results for lower secondary and primary students (LSS: \( p < 0.01, p\text{-value}=0.001 \); PSS: \( p < 0.01, p\text{-value}=0.002 \)) of different ethnicities. The responses appear to suggest that Chinese students’ parents are stricter in that Chinese students tend to think it is normal for their parents to check their internet activities or phone messages. Additionally, students (PSS religion: \( p < 0.05, p\text{-value}=0.020 \) (USS, LSS, PSS school type: \( p < 0.001, p\text{-value}=0.000 \)) from local schools with a traditional Chinese religious background (i.e. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism) tend to think it is okay for their parents to check their internet activities or phone messages.

These results reveal the importance of promoting and educating students and adults alike about Children's Rights. These results also reflect clearly that once they gain sufficient basic knowledge of and insights into Children's Rights, their other understanding, perceptions and actions will adjust accordingly.
4.11 Analysis of standardised scores

This section is based on the standardised scores which provide a fair basis to compare overall student, teacher and principal knowledge, school practices, training and experience of Children's Rights at school and at home, across school levels and school types.

Student knowledge and understanding of Children's Rights increases across all three levels (PSS: 54.3; LSS: 58.0; USS: 59.3), but is still not significantly higher even in upper secondary. The results also show a slight but significant deterioration of the school being a rights-respecting school with corresponding teaching and school practices in practices from primary to secondary (PSS: 71.6; LSS: 69.1; USS: 69.8), while students' experience of rights in school and at home appears to be better in secondary compared to primary level (PSS: 64.2; LSS: 64.2; USS 69.9).

At the school level, there is no evidence of practical differences in terms of classroom and teaching practices and rights-respecting school environment as reported by students but there is evidence of differences in terms of knowledge and understanding of children and human rights and experience of rights at school and at home, with the highest knowledge and understanding being reflected among students in the ESF/International Secondary schools and the best experience of rights at school and at home being reported among students from the Local Secondary schools, with negligible differences between Local and ESF/International Primary schools. The major differences are between Primary and Secondary schools in general.

Section Five: Country Comparison and Policy Review

This section of the study includes findings from the comparative literature review and presents an analysis of the findings of the Hong Kong Study in the context of this country comparison. The overall objective of this section is to present a comprehensive overview of the state of CRE from our review of past literature in Hong Kong and internationally and international best practices concluding with an assessment of where Hong Kong stands based on the outcomes of the current study.

5.3 Background: Hong Kong's Legal and Education System

This section outlines the legal framework in which international human rights standards are translated into domestic policy in Hong Kong and the extent to which this includes the obligation to promote children's rights education as posited as a state party obligation under the UNCRC. The section then looks at the current situation of children's rights education in Hong Kong, providing a brief overview of the educational system in Hong Kong, outlining current practice, major issues and gaps relating to the implementation of CRE in Hong Kong.
Both the UN CRC as well as the ICESCR have been extended to the HKSAR, thereby binding the HKSAR government, making it obligatory that it fulfil its obligation to promote children's rights education. While there is no specific reference to the requirement of providing human rights education, the obligation is indirectly covered by Article 39 of the Basic Law, which provides that “the provisions of the [ICCPR] and [ICESR] and international labour conventions as applied to Hong Kong shall remain in force and shall be implemented through the laws of the HKSAR,” thereby giving these international provisions constitutional status through their entrenchment in the Basic Law. The Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO), enacted in 1991, incorporates the ICCPR into domestic law, thereby implementing enforceable rights and freedoms. But on closer inspection, the Basic Law and the BORO include very limited reference to education related rights.

The Education Ordinance and Education Regulations Ordinance outline the main rules for the governance of schools in Hong Kong. These relate mainly to the establishment, funding, and accreditation, etc. of educational institutions. Perhaps the only reference to children's rights, and one which is only implicit, can be found in Part VIII of Cap 279A which prohibits corporal punishment by teachers (Regulation 58).

In its review of HKSAR’s report under its UNCRC obligations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) notes several issues in relation to Children’s Rights Education in HKSAR. In relation to Article 42, the Committee expressed concern that “professionals working with and for children, as well as children and parents themselves, have limited awareness and understanding of the Convention in the Hong Kong SAR” and recommended that the government strengthen its efforts and take the following actions: to ensure that human rights education is provided in schools at all levels and to raise awareness of human rights among all sectors of society, including among State officials and the judiciary. More specifically, the Committee raised the issue of equal access to (quality) education, particularly the quality of Chinese language education for immigrant and non-Chinese speaking Hong Kong permanent resident children as well as access to education in general for refugee and undocumented migrant children, noting that both these groups were grossly neglected under the present education system, which systematically marginalised their equal access to quality education.

5.4 Human Rights and Children’s Rights Education: Gaps and Challenges to Implementation - Country Literature Review

5.4.1. Hong Kong

As a signatory to the UNCRC, Hong Kong’s obligation under Article 42 “to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike” should have directly influenced both education policy and educators’ practice and training. However, to date, CRE is not a significant part of the school curriculum (whether as a separate subject or incorporated into other subjects) and it is not entirely part of the school ethos, seldom being incorporated as an element of teacher training. HRE is not taught as a separate topic and it is not an important part of the curriculum even if progress has been made. Child rights is an optional module in civic education and liberal studies. Due to the inadequate knowledge of teachers in the subject area and the overwhelming learning needs of both primary and secondary studies, teachers often skip the module.
Studies have found that Human Rights in general are not part of Hong Kong's cultural and value system. Culturally, social stability has been found to be the more desirable end than individual rights. Additionally, teachers’ confusion and fears relating to HRE constitute one of the major obstacles to the practice of HRE.

More disturbing are some of the materials in circulation, particularly in primary schools in Hong Kong, which were found to contain very disturbing stereotypes and representations of Hong Kong’s ethnic minorities under the guise of a chapter promoting racial harmony. A separate study has found that there is a dangerous generalisation of minority communities and their mostly negative or offensive stereotypes based on cultural or religious beliefs and dress or job types, which, in light of similar stereotypes being reinforced through the media, run the risk of breeding misunderstanding and disharmony in Hong Kong society. Similar prejudice and discrimination exists against asylum seekers, refugees and persons with disabilities and particularly, the children in these groups as regards their lack of access to education at all or inclusive education in the case of children with disabilities. This is disconcerting since many students do not have encounters with ethnic minorities in Hong Kong so as to be able to form their own informed views. For many, what they learn in schools and through media is their only source of knowledge. This is worrisome and needs immediate rectification as these representations can hardly promote notions of equality and non-discrimination.

Although the literature review and surveys attempted to look at whether there was in general, coverage of key human rights principles such as gender equality, respect for diversity, and understanding of others, including those of various ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds, democracy and rule of law, sexual and reproductive health, respect for the environment and non-violent conflict resolution in the curriculum, the findings are not conclusive as to the specific inclusion of CRE or HRE in the formal curriculum. However, it is fair to say that none of these are systematically included nor are they made compulsory to teach under the formal curriculum being followed by mainstream schools.

Although many respondents agreed that social protection should be provided to children and everyone should have the right to religion, they denied children's right to religion, right to physical integrity and right to privacy. This may suggest that children are considered as subjects for provision and protection but not as autonomous beings entitled to participation in decisions pertaining to their interests and needs according to Hong Kong Liberal Studies teachers. This reveals that the concept and content of children's rights are much misunderstood among the teachers and particularly worrying is that these are the teachers who are typically tasked with teaching human rights and children's rights.

The fact that there is only a sporadic set of materials out there, which are not reviewed from time to time by any official body to determine the appropriateness of the content in terms of Hong Kong’s treaty obligations in general in terms of promoting human rights values and more specifically, its obligation under the UNCRC and whether the content specifically covers human rights and children's rights makes clear that the Government has yet to introduce systematically into the school curricula as a matter of requirement such content, set key indicators to measure and evaluate the substance and impact of the content in terms of understanding and awareness as well as require that teachers have undertaken relevant training in children’s rights in order to ensure confidence and knowledge in delivery.

17 Liz Jackson, No place in liberal studies for ethnic stereotypes and overgeneralisations, *South China Morning Post*, 9 July 2014.
18 Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission, Centre for Civil Society and Governance at the University of Hong Kong and Policy 21, Study on Racial Encounters and Discrimination Experienced by South Asians (2012).
of content. The fact that such materials have been developed by a group of NGOs and are available for anyone to use in the classroom does not absolve the Government of fulfilling its own obligations to disseminate the information through various means, particularly in the educational context as one of the more prominent forums in which such content can be successfully delivered. The Government's initiatives as described above are piecemeal, passive and very limited in their effectiveness and impact.

Teacher training colleges in Hong Kong offer at best an elective on HRE or at worst no courses at all. The fact that there is only one elective course available on human rights education and no specific course on training teachers in children's rights education at all is instructive as to the reasons behind teachers’ apprehension about rights and their general approach to teaching rights as earned in exchange for fulfilment of responsibility. Initial teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers should focus more on human rights, social justice and intercultural education. Teachers and principals need to receive HRE methodologies in pre-service and in-service training in Hong Kong, where the pedagogy is teacher-centred and the teaching practices not interactive. Attitudes towards human rights tend to be significantly higher in teachers who receive certain types of training. Presently, the curriculum, classroom setting, and teaching approaches all pose obstacles to implementing HRE and CRE.

These are major gaps that set the agenda for Government action if it is to take seriously its obligations under Article 29 and 42 of the UNCRC and to do so more proactively.

5.4.2. United Kingdom and Northern Ireland

The UK Government signed the UNCRC in 1990 and ratified it in 1991, without any relevant reservations to any of the provisions. Although the UK has ratified the UNCRC, it is not part of domestic law and thus remains unenforceable in the courts. The UNCRC has also not been fully incorporated into legislative and policy processes in England.

The national curriculum in England and the corresponding guidelines in Scotland do not explicitly include information about the UNCRC. In England, specific reference is made in the citizenship curriculum to pupils understanding of legal and human rights and the role of international organisations. While Scotland does not have a national curriculum, a framework document on citizenship education been developed which makes clear reference to the UNCRC and broader rights. In Northern Ireland, the Education Order (2006) includes provisions for a revised curriculum which includes citizenship education, providing opportunities to use local and global examples to investigate topics such as diversity, inclusion, cultural heritage, equality, democracy, participation and human rights. In Wales, the Framework for Personal and Social Education for Stages 1-4 includes references to the UNCRC and human rights.

The UNCRC and children's rights principles do not generally appear to be included in teacher training however, with limited information available regarding teacher training, it is not possible to conclusively say one way or the other. The UNC as well as UK's Children's Commissioners have noted with concern the general lack of knowledge and awareness of Children's Rights among teachers.

Literature has found that the application of Hampshire's Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (“RRR”) initiative, which is a rights-based whole school reform of school policies and practices helps children gain a better understanding of the
relevance of particular rights and responsibilities to their everyday behaviour. Another important and telling initiative has been the development and evaluation of the UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). The RRSA has had a positive impact on specific areas of school environment, including school ethos, relationships, inclusiveness and understanding of the world in the broader context as well promoting the overall wellbeing of the school community. All the schools were markedly noted for the positive relationships between students as between themselves but also between students and staff; respect, empathy and listening broadly characterised the school environment in the schools concerned. Moreover, the impact of the award was also reflected in the heightened contribution to issues of local and global concern, particularly in areas concerning Children's Rights and in places where these rights have been undermined.

5.4.3. Australia

Australia has ratified the UNCRC in 1990 with a reservation on art. 37(c). School education is generally compulsory for all children from age 6 to 16 (Year 1 to 9 or 10), including indigenous children, homeless children, children living in remote areas and children with disabilities. While Australia continues to deliver some of world's highest quality education, some specific groups of children do not enjoy the same educational opportunities as other students. These groups include, aboriginal children; disadvantaged children; children from refugee and newly arrived backgrounds; children in out-of-home care; and children with a disability. In fact, Australian schooling was classified as achieving only average equity. The 2011 report on Review of Funding for School has made the recommendation that a higher proportion of funding should be directed to the identified disadvantaged children groups in order to achieve a fairer education system.

Under the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011, existing and new legislation must be in compliance with Australia's human rights obligations, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, in terms of HRE and Minority's rights education, there is only little experience and history in the schooling of Australia, as many of the Australians are under the impression that human rights violation only happens elsewhere but not in their homeland. The Australian Government's response to the 2009 Human Rights Consultation Report has shown a commitment to human rights education, but currently there is no reference to the UNCRC or child rights in the Australian Curriculum. Overall, human rights concepts and principles are not incorporated by way of systematic teaching but are incidental to other topics such as social justice, welfare and freedom of speech in the existing curriculum.

Without mandate from the government, teachers that were willing to incorporate HRE into the curriculum usually did it out of their own personal passion and without much support from the school. They identified themselves as “lone-wolves” or separated cases. Obstacles in implementing HRE identified by the teachers include: crowded curriculum, lack of government mandate, lack of teaching resources, confusion as to how the material can be incorporated into the curriculum, lack of training.19

One of the major initiatives from the Federal Government is the development of the Discovering Democracy kit, which is to be used as part of civic and citizenship education and is distributed nation-wide as free educational resources. However, its value as HRE material is limited - there is limited discussion on human rights, economic,

social and cultural rights are ignored, a biased impression that human rights violations happen only outside of Australia is conveyed. Some of the teachers have been reluctant to use the Discovering Democracy kit as they perceived it as government propaganda and loaded with political motivation and therefore, unbalanced.

It is important to note that Australia is currently undergoing a multi-year review of the national curriculum. Several organisations have been actively lobbying the responsible authority (ACARA) for increased reference to human rights in the new curriculum. In its position paper on the national school curriculum review, the Australian Human Rights Commission has made recommendations that the visibility of the concept of human rights in the national curriculum has to be heightened or that “Human Rights and Australian Values” should be made one of the cross-curriculum priorities. Principles such as human dignity, universality, equality and non-discrimination, respect and responsibilities, accountability of government and active participation are recommended to be included in the curriculum.\(^{20}\)

From the response of the interviewees and based on the literature, several crucial components for successful CRE practices were identified:

- **Curriculum**
  Inclusion of children's rights in the curriculum, including explicit reference of Children's Rights within certain topics and Children's Rights and children's rights language throughout the whole curriculum.

- **CRE Resources**
  CRE materials for teachers should be easily available, free (or cheap) and directly linked to the curriculum.

- **Professional Development of Teachers**
  There is also a need to increase awareness and knowledge of Children's Rights and rights respecting teaching methods during professional development of teachers. Without this, teachers are much less likely to take on available CRE activities and materials.

- **Community Conversation**
  The need to increase awareness of children's rights extends beyond teachers and several respondents felt that increased community conversation on children's rights is also crucial for successful implementation of CRE. Increased interest in Children's Rights among young people can in turn have a bottom up effect with student organisations within the school encouraging CRE activities.

- **Supportive Senior Management**
  Several respondents further argued that successful implementation of CRE activities within the school requires support from the executive team (principals) is very important for successful implementation of CRE initiatives.

### 5.4.4. Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) is an international organization founded in 1949. It covers virtually the whole continent of Europe, including 47 member states. Given the large number of countries in this regional grouping, this section will present a general overview of the systems in place and the incorporation of HRE / CRE into the educational context rather than delve into each jurisdiction's individual system.

The CoE has adopted numerous texts with the view to ensuring that the relevant human rights principles are incorporated into appropriate teaching and learning environments. This part refers to the CoE recommendation Rec (2002) 12 on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) and analyses the two main textbooks developed by the CoE, which are widely disseminated among the 47 member states. - Compass and Composanto. Both manuals are based on international training materials developed this past decade.

In terms of integration of EDC/HRE into the formal curriculum, the study underlines the diversity of practices where EDC is taught as a specific subject mostly frequent in secondary schools (especially in South-Eastern, Central and Eastern European regions), with a cross-curricular approach and diffused in all subjects; in an integrated programme across the curriculum mainly in primary schools (especially in Western and Northern Europe), or in a combination of ways as a separate subject, in integrated programmes and in cross-curricular contents especially in Southern Europe.

In terms of education, the strategy for Children's Rights (2012-2015) promotes citizenship and human rights education, including the development of training programs for education professionals, with particular focus on Children's Rights, democratic culture, equality, new media environment, intercultural dialogue and a child- and learner-centred pedagogy, with a view to ensuring a non-violent environment.

On February 15th 2012, the Council of Europe adopted a Four-year plan for children's rights. The strategy focuses on four main objectives:

- Promoting child-friendly services and systems (in the areas of justice, health and social services);
- Eliminating all forms of violence against children (including sexual violence, trafficking, corporal punishment and violence in schools);
- Guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations (such as those with disabilities, in detention, in alternative care, migrant or Roma children); and
- Promoting child participation.

In addition, the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) underlines that the Council of Europe programmes on human rights education and education for democratic citizenship will be promoted and shared with a view to providing for a healthy psychosocial and physical school environment which promotes children's well-being, as well as the

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22 Previous achievements under the first two policy cycles (2006-2009 and 2009-2011) include • the development of new working methods and strengthened the Council of Europe's capacity to fulfil its mandate, notably by setting up a multi-stakeholder platform on the rights of the child, and by training Council of Europe staff on Children's Rights and child participation; the mainstreaming of Children's Rights, among the main Council of Europe actors and partners in Europe, into virtually all policy areas and developed a holistic child rights-based approach that is complementary to the United Nations agenda; the identification of the need for and assisted in the drafting, adoption and promotion of new standard and policy guidelines (including national child-violence prevention strategies, child-friendly justice, health and social services); major legislative and policy changes regarding Children's Rights in member states, notably through its two campaigns (on eliminating corporal punishment of children and on stopping sexual violence against children); the increase of children's access to information and participation by producing child-friendly material, developing policy reviews on child participation and holding consultations with children; the development of co-operation with key international partners, moving from exchange of information towards joint programming and implementation (Council of Europe. Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012-2015, 6).
elimination of practices such as bullying, discrimination, degrading punishment and harassment by promoting non-violent values and behaviour.\textsuperscript{23}


In terms of Human Rights Education, the CoE has a long tradition of promoting and supporting citizenship and human rights education programs in formal, technical and vocational education settings promoting a whole school approach. Its flagship project, ‘Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education’, launched in 1997 is still ongoing. EDC becomes then a common education aim all over Europe and it is defined as ‘a set of practices and principles aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society.’\textsuperscript{24} In April 2012, the Council of Europe and the European Union joined forces to pilot a 3-year project in Turkey on democratic citizenship and human rights education in 20 schools.

Methodologies for HRE share common features such as a respect for children's experience and recognition of a variety of points of view; the promotion of personal enrichment, self-esteem and respect for the individual child; curiosity, an open mind and an appreciation of diversity; empathy and solidarity with others and a commitment to support those whose human rights are denied; a sense of human dignity, of self-worth and of others’ worth irrespective of social, cultural, linguistic or religious differences; a sense of justice and social responsibility to see that everyone is treated justly; the desire to contribute to the betterment of the school or community; the confidence to promote human rights both locally and globally (\textit{Compasito}, 27). The programmes adopt an HRE approach to evaluation entailing peer and self-assessment components.

In terms of actual teacher training, the \textit{All-Europe Study on education for Democratic Citizenship Policies} research underlines that EDC policies cannot be implemented without an effective participation of teachers. It notes that EDC per se is offered as a specialization in initial service teacher training is offered sporadically which raises concerns about the ability of teachers to effectively implement EDC in their classrooms.\textsuperscript{25}

The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly has adopted Recommendation 1849 (2008) for the promotion of democracy and human rights through teacher education. The Council of Europe published an array of manuals and tools for teachers and policymakers to unify practices and coordinate approaches to EDC/HRE teaching and teacher training across member states: Two manuals, “Tool on teacher training for education for democratic citizenship and human rights education,” and “How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for the development of competences,” have been published to coordinate teacher training across Europe.

\textsuperscript{23} Birzea et al. 2004, \textit{All-European Study on education for Democratic Citizenship Policies}. Council of Europe, at p. 16.

\textsuperscript{24} Birzea, at p. 13.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid}, Birza et al 2004, at p. 25.
5.4.5. Norway

Knowledge goals on human rights and children’s rights are incorporated in the Norwegian curriculum in the following subjects: Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics; social studies; politics, individual and societal; and in the curriculum for common programmes topics in the programme area for heath work subjects. The Norwegian education system incorporates the following elements: gender inclusiveness; respect for others; Democracy and the Law; sexual and reproductive health; respect for the environment; respect and tolerance; and pupil participation.

While the systematic instruction on the UN CRC is compulsory, the Ombudsman for Children reports that many children do not know enough about the Convention and its content. The UNC has expressed regret that human rights is currently only taught in upper secondary education as an optional subject.

The overall teacher-training curriculum requires “that teachers must be acquainted with international human rights and children’s rights that apply across national border”. Moreover, training in the UN CRC for pre-school teachers and generalist teachers is provided through the framework plans. Teachers under training are required to have “knowledge about and be able to discuss the meaning of different human rights conventions including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries”. There is no explicit mention of child friendly teaching methods in the teacher-training curriculum. However, the curriculum does implicitly include the need for teacher to learn about different teaching strategies.

In general, it appears that children’s rights – albeit often implicit - are an integral aspect of the Norwegian Education System and its corresponding guiding documents. There appears to be much emphasis on enabling students to participate and to express their opinions in the Norwegian education system. The Education Act includes several explicit references to the participation of pupils and the need to take their views into consideration. The Curriculum also explicitly states, inter alia, that schools and learning institutions shall facilitate pupil’s participation. At the national level there is a students’ interests’ organization, Elevorganisationen, which has regular meetings with the Ministry’s political leadership.

While there is very little explicit mention of the UN CRC or children’s rights in the Education Act or other relevant documents, many children’s rights values such as inclusiveness, protection, participation and differentiated learning needs are incorporated in different aspects of the education system. Moreover, children’s rights and related values are incorporated in several subjects of the curriculum at different levels. There is also much emphasis in the Education Act as well as the curriculum on autonomy of children and ensuring that the views of children are heard. However in practice its regulations are not always adequately implemented. One of the contributing factors is the significant difference in resources between municipalities resulting in great difference in terms of the quality of education and the services available for children. Also there seems to be a lack of national oversight over the implementation of the Education Act.

Section Six: Conclusion

While literature review indicates that the selected countries (UK, Norway and Australia) have done relatively well in terms of developing and implementing CRE projects, most NGO representatives, academics and practitioners in this
field in each of the countries felt that schools were not doing enough in terms of CRE and that there was much room for improvement. Improvement was considered most necessary in relation to legislation, curriculum reform and teacher training.

The findings highlight some of the critical gaps pertaining to state party efforts and their effectiveness in ensuring that the 3 Ps of the UN CRC framework are supported through the implementation of key measures in a range of spheres of governance and the provision of services. For example, there is a times

- a lack of awareness of the existence of the UN CRC among the key stakeholder groups, i.e. children or educators;
- a lack of sufficient understanding of the substance of the principles enshrined in the UN CRC and their implications for children and policies and practices relating to them;
- a gross misunderstanding of the concept of rights, their inherent nature and their inviolability exists among the primary stakeholders who have significant authority and control over children;
- a rather conservative attitude towards children and one that continues to perceive them as subjects rather than active agents that have a right to participate in decision making concerning their own interests; and
- a lack of appreciation of their own rights and entitlements among the children themselves, and therefore, also, the rights of other children, particularly those who are different from what is perceived to be the ‘norm.’

These gaps notably reflect the failures in terms of adequacy of dissemination of the UN CRC principles by the state parties, the lack of incorporation into appropriate frameworks and environments involving children, the lack of training of personnel in the suitable application of these principles on the part of those engaged with children on a regular basis and the lack of training of educators to deliver these principles as part of the educational content but also as part of the ethos of the school environment, and the lack of incorporation of these principles, particularly the best interest of the child principle, into the law and policy making frameworks.

In some countries, although there are excellent measures in place on paper to ensure that there is widespread dissemination of the UN CRC principles among the public and in schools, these measures have not translated into effective practical achievements of these goals on account of a failure of a comprehensive approach to accomplishing these aims. The examples convey the importance of the use of appropriate measures, resources and training to enhance motivation, competence and practical achievement of these aims through the provision of appropriate training tools, opportunities and even, awards for recognition of effective implementation where there is demonstrable positive impact.

The research has found that there are some clear indicators for successful implementation of CRE, both at a national level as well as for individual CRE projects and initiatives. Both the literature review as well as interviews with stakeholders in all countries under examination indicated that successful CRE requires a multifaceted approach. Some identified factors of success include:

- a strong legislative educational framework outlining the demands and standards for schools to incorporate children’s rights into the teaching and school environment, accompanied by strong implementation measures and regulatory framework;
- inclusion of children’s rights in the curriculum at all levels of education starting with early years and continuing until tertiary education;
explicitly and implicitly incorporate children's into the teacher-training curriculum;

- training for teachers as to how to apply this knowledge into practice;

- children's rights teaching materials that are developed in accordance with the curriculum and made easily available to teachers to overcome the obstacle of high pressure they face in terms of demands and the lack of time and resources;

- targeting the teachers and getting them involved and passionate about CRE;

- the international brand of larger, international children's rights agencies seems to give the CRE initiatives a bit more leverage;

- the use of holistic approach to CRE which not only aims to raise awareness of children's rights through teaching, but also to incorporate children's rights values and principles in all aspects of the school environment and to develop mutual rights respecting relationships, the example being the Rights Respecting Schools Award;

- getting backing from the head teacher or senior management; and

- thinking about the larger picture and how to accommodate growth in the future and gathering base-line data at the beginning of the initiative to allow for impact measurement.

Section Seven: Recommendations

1. A strong legislative educational framework outlining the demands and standards for schools to incorporate children's rights into the teaching and school environment should be introduced.

2. The legislative framework should include children's rights principles and standards such as participation, discrimination, inclusion, special education needs, etc.

3. The legislative framework should make it mandatory to include children's rights in the curriculum at all levels of education starting with early years and continuing until tertiary education, as a separate topic within the curriculum but also to ensure that children's rights language and principles are incorporated in all aspects and topics of the curriculum.

4. The legislative framework should seek to ensure that a comprehensive, whole school approach to the implementation of these principles is put into place so that children.

5. Children's rights should be explicitly and implicitly incorporated into the teacher-training curriculum. The Government should provide opportunities for pre-service and in-service compulsory training in these areas and facilitate advanced education to update teacher's knowledge, pedagogy and school methodologies.

6. The Government should facilitate the development of children's rights teaching materials, which should be directly linked to the curriculum, easily available to teachers, researchers, trainers and other interested personnel and provided free of charge or at a low cost.

7. The Government ought to ensure extensive dissemination of UNCRC principles through interactive media, targeting different stakeholder groups to discuss the principles and their broader application in the context of matters impacting children's rights. It is insufficient for the Government to set aside funds for other parties to conduct these activities. The visibility of Government's involvement in and commitment to the principles is crucial.
8. The government ought to make the best interest principle and the standards of the UNCRC part of a checklist that all ministers and officials proposing changes to law or policies to declare that the proposed measures are in compliance with these principles and will not have an adverse impact on the interests and rights of children.

9. The legislative framework is to be accompanied by strong implementation measures and a regulatory framework that ensures systematic and routine evaluation.

10. The legislative framework should require base-line data to be gathered at the beginning of the introduction of the new initiatives to allow for impact measurement so that relevant changes can be made with a view to improvement in the future. Schools should be required to collect and furnish relevant data for submission.

11. Any regulatory framework ought to ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of policies, law and curriculum to ensure the appropriate standards of the UNCRC and other human rights treaties and principles are met.

12. If some or all of these recommendations are incorporated particularly at the school level, then some formal recognition of schools or other stakeholder groups meeting these high standards is likely to have a positive and motivating impact on these and other stakeholders to improve standards and do even better.

13. The Government should make available funding for CRE initiatives initiated and developed by NGOs or by its offices / ministries or other groups of experts.

14. The most successful CRE initiatives take a holistic approach to CRE aiming to raise awareness of children's rights through teaching but also to incorporate children's rights values and principles in all aspects of the school environment and to develop mutual rights respecting relationships. These ensure teaching about children's rights but also on teaching through children's rights. The Government's activities, legislative framework on education and schools ought to bear this in mind in the development of standards, materials, activities, teaching and learning environment and building capacities and competencies in children's rights education.

15. Although these measures may go a long way towards raising the standards of children's rights awareness, education and implementation, a fundamental stakeholder group that has a strong impact on the realisation of children's rights is parents. The Government and schools ought to put in substantial efforts in educating parents groups about children's rights. This can be done through the distribution of educational material but also through the provision of seminars at hospitals or children's clinics and even at schools.

These recommendations serve to ensure a multilevel and multi-stakeholder approach to the incorporation of children's rights standards into the various spheres impact children and those who work with them personally and professionally. Such a holistic and comprehensive approach can help pave the way for improved realisation of children's rights in accordance with international best practice.