

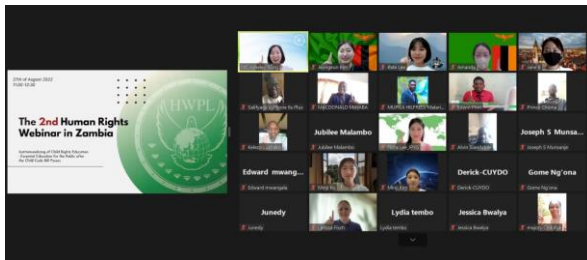


WEBINAR REPORT

“Human Rights Webinar in Zambia

Institutionalizing of Child Rights Education

- Essential Education for the Public after the Child Code Bill Passes



Date and Time:	Saturday, August 27th, 2022, 11:00-12:30 (Time in Zambia)
Location:	Online (Zoom)
Topics:	Institutionalizing of Child Rights Education Essential Education for the Public after the Child Code Bill Passes
Host:	HWPL Western Seoul & Gyeonggi Branch
Speakers:	Ms. Renu Saran, Principal of Childhood Joy Academy Mr. MacDonald Mayaba, Freelance Journalist Mr. Edwin Phiri, President of Zambia Peer Educators for Civic, Citizenship Education and Revolution Skills(ZAMPECCERS)

The Human Rights Webinar in Zambia was conducted to raise awareness for the problem of child marriage in the country, and the importance of children's rights through education and the media. Active support and efforts by both the government and civil society were also emphasized as essential for raising awareness to these issues.

"Education can help people to unlearn and change their behaviors by providing them with new insights to be enlightened. I believe the peace organization's education activities are really

good to bring about change, but what is important is to involve the media as well. The media have to advocate progress so that everyone else can hear about it."

- Hon. Brenda Nyirenda, a member of parliament in Lundazi

Our role comes into how we should realize the pieces and sections of legislation that have been already enacted. Let us really put our heads together and see how we can interact on this platform. Let us not just pass the blame only to the government but take a leading role.

- Mr. Kelezo Lushako, Research Department of National Assembly

Introduction Webinar

On August 27th, Human rights Webinar was held online by Heavenly Culture World Peace Restoration of Light (HWPL), a peace NGO in Special Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC, to discuss the enactment of laws to solve the problems of early marriage in Zambia and the roles and efforts of civil society.

As Zambia has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world, the Government of Zambia has made headway in reviewing the policy and law that bears considerable influence on child marriage. Zambia has been adopted a national strategy to build "a Zambia free from child marriage by 2030" to end child marriage.

The Human Rights Webinar in Zambia was conducted to raise awareness for the problem of child marriage in the country, and the importance of human rights of children through education and the media. Active support and efforts by both the government and civil society were also emphasized as essential for raising awareness to these issues. It was a time to narrow the gap of understanding through communication between lawmakers and civil society.

At the webinar, around 30 people such as youth, a primary school teacher, and journalists who support the Children's Code Bill attended. It included Hon. Imanga Wamunyima, Member of Parliament in Nalolo, Hon. Joseph Simumpuka Munsanje, Member of Parliament in Mbabala and Hon. Maureen Mabonga, Member of Parliament in Mfuwe.

Background Information

Child defilement cases have been on the rise in recent years. The Zambia Police Service reported that in the second quarter of 2021, 576 children were defiled. That number increased by 10% from that reported in the first quarter of the same year. Children have also fallen victim to



Gender-Based Violence (GBV). As of February 2022, 1,814 children were abused countrywide, representing 22.9% of all the victims of Gender-Based Violence reported. Girl children were the most affected with GBV, accounting for 1,342 (74%) cases compared to boys at 472 (26%) cases. It should be noted that the reported cases are just a fraction of the many incidences that remain unreported.

On the other hand, child marriage is currently estimated at 29% in Zambia, a slight decrease from 31% reported in 2014. This reduction can be attributed to several implemented efforts by the Government and its partners, following the National Campaign launch to end child marriage in 2013. The campaign intended to address the causes and effects of child marriages in Zambia.

However, with high levels of poverty still limiting access to livelihood opportunities among families, the risk of more children getting married increases as they experience additional vulnerabilities that lead to adopting coping mechanisms such as child marriage. For example, as households suffer limited livelihood opportunities and sometimes economic effects of COVID-19, the marriage of girls aged below 18 can be seen as the best alternative for parents and guardians to reduce the household burden or a means of earning incomes through informal dowry-based economies.

Furthermore, culture and traditional norms that encourage initiation ceremonies for girls that have attained puberty contribute to child marriages. During initiation ceremonies, girls are taught how to please men sexually and run a home, influencing their mind set to get married at a young age. These issues are a sad reminder that Zambia needs to take stern actions to end child violations repeatedly reported and those that go unreported.

Nonetheless, we appreciate ongoing efforts to end violence against children by the Government and its cooperating partners. Among the interventions implemented, Zambia ratified international human rights instruments on the protection and rights of children, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child. Moreover, Zambia became a pathfinding country in 2020 to end violence against children, raise awareness, provide a roadmap for action, and stimulate leadership commitment in preventing violence against children.

Furthermore, Zambia has made headway in reviewing the policy and law that bears considerable influence on child marriages. For example, the Children's Code Bill was drafted, which brings together all the laws governing the children's welfare and harmonizes the definition of a child. If passed, the Children's Code Bill will incorporate provisions under the customary law on marriages into Zambia's legal statutes to ensure that the minimum age of marriage cuts across all forms of marriages in Zambia – both statutory and customary.

Other laws and legislations that seek to protect children legally include the Education Act, the National Child Policy, the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act, the Re-entry Policy and the Education

Policy.

Points of discussion

Ms. Renu Saran, Principal of Childhood Joy Academy

Hello, my name is Renu Saran from Childhood Joy Academy, Lusaka, Zambia. We signed an MOU with HWPL in July. Before implementing peace education for students in school, we plan to provide HWPL peace educator training program for teachers. In addition to that, we are planning to establish HWPL peace monument in our school. Working with HWPL for peace and peace education is very meaningful to me.

As an educator, I would like to talk about the importance of peace education to children. Peace education is meaningful in itself, but it is more noteworthy in that peace education is closely related to improving children's human rights. The reason is that peace education can change one's mind and consciousness. It is important to establish a system to protect children, but at the same time, it is necessary to prepare people's consciousness for the system to be implemented well. Peace education is an education that fills one's mind with peace and creates peace citizens. In order to educate and nurture children as peace citizens, we, the grown-ups, must change together. And that is why we are planning to implement the peace educator training program preceding the peace education for students. Peace education is the most effective and lasting way to leave the world of peace as a legacy for children. As the principal of Childhood Joy Academy and a mother of two beautiful children, I believe that through peace education, the world will become something else and will be a completely different world where children will grow up in a safer and more protected environment than now.

I would like to give you a brief explanation on HWPL peace education curriculum. HWPL peace education is composed of basic but essential contents. This is an education that creates one's mind with peace. From chapter 1 to 4, we could find a peaceful state in all creatures of nature and learn the cause of the breakdown of peace in our world, and how we could restore the peace. From chapter 5 to 12, it teaches peace values. The peace values include gratitude, consideration, sacrifice, tolerance and forgiveness, courtesy to elders, efforts to preserve the heritage of ancestors, and law-abiding spirit. Students can get to know their own values with peace values and realize that not only themselves, but also people around them are as important as they are. Therefore, they would grow into citizens who protect each other's rights and respect their values. To do so, teachers should be aware of peace education and its values and be prepared to convey the peace values to students. The HWPL peace education does not say that in order to realize peace, we must do great and grand things. It is said that peace begins with a small movement, beginning from oneself, and that efforts of individuals can come together to realize peace. I hope we all work together for peace. If we all come together, we could make a completely different world together.

4) An additional remark to the attendees

The last thing I would like to talk to you about is the spread of peace education in Zambia. In order for



peace education to establish and spread within Zambia, there should be a link between the Ministry of Education and schools. It would be great if peace education would become a regular curriculum in Zambian education, and peace education could be distributed to all regions in Zambia. Because there would be no education more valuable than peace education. Thank you for your attention.

Mr. MacDonald Mayaba, Freelance Journalist

My name is MacDonald Mayaba, a Journalist from Zambia in South Central Africa – one of many African countries that love peace and respect for human rights.

Allow me from the onset to thank the Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light for the opportunity to speak at this second edition of the Human Rights Webinar in Zambia. I am overly thrilled to speak on the exciting topic that is emphasizing the need for laws and legal frameworks that protect children's rights, specifically the Children's Code.

I am happy that after a long time of waiting, my country is speedily working to enact this piece of legislation to change and harmonize laws relating to child rights.

Africa is home to many nuggets of wisdom, including proverbial sayings like *Imiti iyikula empanga* in local language Bemba to mean that "the tree seedlings of today are the forests of tomorrow." To raise a responsible generation, we must provide enough safety nets to protect children now from vices that would destroy their future.

I am happy that Zambia is taking milestone steps towards domesticating the widely and globally accepted Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child among other regional and global agreements.

However, let me point out something that does not sit well with me in the Children's Code Bill – its administration. To effectively promote children's rights, the Children's Code should have actively recognized local child protection bodies like the Community and District Child Protection Committees respectively.

These multi-sector committees at community and district levels are very important in the child protection process, just like Ward Development Committees in the CDF administration if you like... Local communities should own this process because they are the first point of contact for the child's life every single day. In Africa, we love to say it takes a whole village to raise a child.

I share a story on my social media platforms of a young girl that was abandoned by her parents at the age

of 8 with her younger sister aged 5 in Choma. The two young girls lived alone for about Seven years before I discovered them with the help of my colleague, Abigail Mwanza – one of many Citizens Journalists that I am mentoring under a programme for the Alliance for Community Action in Zambia. We told their story and brought it to the attention of authorities for intervention.

Now for seven years, the girls lived in full view of the community because locals obviously felt no need to intervene on the plight of the girls.

Secondly, decentralizing this process will ease information dissemination for quick intervention by authorities. We as a people should pursue decentralization in its totality not only for national development through WDCs, but also human development through local structures CCPCs and DCPCs.

Within a short time of publicizing their story, following all required ethical and professional provisions. Helpers were quickly identified. Decentralizing child protection through CCPCs and DCPCs will eliminate existing bureaucracies and make it easy for journalists to follow up and report on child rights related issues for speedy intervention from authorities.

In Conclusion, the fact that we are making steps to enshrine legal provisions to protect children's rights is a commendable step towards safeguarding and sustaining peaceful future generations.

But as we do so, let us continue refining these laws to effectively serve our communities beyond mere words, but action.

Thank you HWPL for promoting World Peace. A peaceful world begins with you and me. Peace must be seen in action and not just spoken a word. We must be deliberate in deciding to be peaceful as a people because it is a God-given choice instilled in all of us.

I thank you.

Mr. Edwin Phiri, President of Zambia Peer Educators for Civic, Citizenship Education and Revolution Skills(ZAMPECCERS)

Gender-based violence (gbv), child marriages and child defilement are just a few of the most violated rights in most countries of the world. nonetheless, a girl child remains a mutual victim in most community violations cost to cost. mother zambia has also continued to endure a fair share of these cases on not only its fellow mothers but children too, with over 1,814 cases, where 1,342 cases, translating to 74%, with boys at only 472 cases making up 26% of the total cases as of february 2022 as per information from zambia police, it is merely clear how many children, especially girl children have continuously been victimized.

In addition, child marriages have also relatively been on the rise following traditional customs and practices such as the initiation of girls in readiness for marriage regardless of whether they are personally ready or not.



With regard to the aforementioned grievances, orderly acknowledgement needs to be awarded to the many efforts that our governments, ngos and the commonwealth have put across in the fight against these defied norms/laws.

Furthermore, there is still more that can be done to ensure the full protection of children in our various societies and communities such as the enforcement of the children's code bill along with its institutionalization to foster long-lasting methodical awareness of our citizenry. This can only be achieved with full support from the individual to the government levels. As always, I believe we shall make it, as I quote the words of his excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema – "violence in one country is violence everywhere" which solidifies that in the fight for freedom, love and peace, indeed "we are one".

Highlights

Hon. Imanga Wamunyima, Member of Parliament in Nalolo

Children's code bill is a good start and overall, you know there's no law that is casting concrete. For the first time in history we are consolidating. And what should be the legal way of protecting children? We are clearly defining the way a child is.

Mr. Derick Mukumbiana, Board member of Center for Unity and Youth Development Organization

I want to believe until people understand what they are fighting for or what they are against. Then fully participate. The reason why we have that is because, people who are not educated and people even do not understand what human rights are. So, if we can find ways, we can deliver and communicate what human rights are.

Mr. Kelezo Lushako, Research Department of National Assembly

Firstly, I really want to bring the component of how serious the agenda of children's varieties in our country. By statistics, children are I think represented about 53.4% which translates to about 8 million children in this country. By those statistics, it simply means that we should take the matters of children's rights quite seriously.

So I was talking about how serious the issue of addressing children's rights is in our country considering the weight and the magnitude, the number of children in our country. I simply want to request our area members of parliament and the government and our civil society organizations and many other partners.

The more challenging problem we are facing at the moment is not the members of parliament's problems, it's not the government's problems, but it's a problem for all of us. They are calling for constant efforts in addressing these issues for the private sector has a role to play. Civil society has a role to play. And there are so many areas and action points that will be needed. One step has already been taken by the government by laying the legislation for everybody to see how they can play their role.

And there are so many issues that really come after the implementation of this as one of the steps as one of which is providing attentive care for children in need of care. I think this matter is being discussed quite substantially with so many contributions from civil society and the private sector.

So our role comes into how we should realize the pieces and sections of legislation that have been already enacted. Let us really put our heads together and see how we can interact on this platform. Let us not just pass the blame only to the government but take a leading role.

Mr. MacDonald Mayaba, Freelance Journalist

If we have a strong community framework and structures that protect children, we would see to it that communities themselves will be compared by law to respond and failure to respond to issues like that would be tremendous to child growth.

Next Steps

Our next step is to build a network between NGOs to expedite the Children Code Bill to be passed in Zambia. At the same time, we will provide a peace education to raise awareness about the importance of education and human rights to the civil society, especially to the students including those in the remote rural areas. We will continue to promote this plan of action and our achievements to the Zambian media to raise the law-abiding spirit and human rights.

Contact Information

+82-10-4694-9423

Amanda Kim, Department of International Law of HWPL Western Seoul & Gyeonggi Branch