

**NGOs and Human Rights Education in the Neoliberal Age:  
A Case Study of an NGO-Secondary School Partnership in  
London**

Samuel A. Mejias



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## Abstract

Launched in 2009, Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* project is to date the most ambitious attempt to create a global model for rights-based education policy. Drawing on theories of utopianism, pragmatism and micropolitics, this thesis explores the influence of whole-school human rights education (HRE) approaches for promoting human rights and school improvement within formal education.

Based on participant-observation, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis at both Amnesty and a London secondary school at multiple points over two years, this study examines how rights-based policies and practices are enacted through non-governmental organisation (NGO) partnership, and explores how the organisational and political contexts of NGOs and schools in England influence such projects.

The study found that *Human Rights Friendly Schools* was primarily implemented through the school's existing student voice programme, and was used to raise awareness of school-wide rights initiatives. Throughout the project, HRE was envisaged as both a means to empower students and as a way to improve their behaviour and performance. However, authoritarian leadership practices and damaging micropolitical activity undermined school-wide messages about human rights, and the human rights discourse represented by *Human Rights Friendly Schools* challenged elements of the school's behaviour management systems which teachers and students perceived to be excessive. Tensions between discourses of control and empowerment led to a series of teacher and student strikes – a destabilising chain of events that led to the dissolution of the Amnesty partnership.

This thesis concludes that whilst the partnership ultimately failed to embed the rights-based approach envisioned by Amnesty, important lessons can be learned. The findings suggest that future whole-school HRE projects should provide stronger support for school-wide rights learning, address potential disjunctures between rights-based and neoliberal policies and prioritise inclusion of the full range of school community voices in planning and implementation. Such approaches can support wider school policies and development strategies whilst simultaneously improving relationships between teachers, students and leaders.

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sam', written over a horizontal line.

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## List of Acronyms

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BIHR	British Institute of Human Rights
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSV	Buckingham Student Voice
CE	Citizenship Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
COE	Council of Europe
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (government department for education, 2007-2010)
DFE	Department for Education (current department for education)
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment (government department for education, 1995-2001)
DFES	Department for Education and Skills (government department for education, 2001-2007)
DFID	Department for International Development
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
FI	Fully Implemented
HIAP	Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service
HRC	UN Human Rights Council
HRE	Human Rights Education
HRFS	Human Rights Friendly Schools
HSGC	High School for Global Citizenship
JLT	Junior Leadership Team
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IS	International Secretariat
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills
QCDA	Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency
PDC	Personal Development Curriculum
PI	Partially Implemented
RRR	Rights Respect and Responsibility
RRSA	Rights Respecting Schools Award
SAT	Statutory Assessment Test
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SWP	Socialist Workers Party
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN HRET	UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WPHRE	UN World Programme for Human Rights Education
WSA	Whole-school Approach
WSC	Whole-school Change

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Human rights provide a moral and ethical framework to guide the political and social practices of communities, and are based on a set of universal entitlements that are guaranteed to all people (Henkin, 1989). Since the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 and its adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), human rights have evolved to become an internationally recognised framework for the promotion and achievement of democracy, justice and peace in the world (Osler & Starkey, 2010). The drafters of the UDHR recognised that operationalising human rights in everyday life required a commitment to education. Human rights education (HRE) has become an important strategy for the promotion of human rights (Hamm, 2001; Robinson, 2002; Starkey, 1991), and is enshrined in the UDHR in Article 26, which stipulates both a right *to* education and that education should strengthen “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, while also promoting understanding and tolerance among all nations, racial or religious groups” (United Nations, 1948, p. 10). HRE as an essential human right is also included in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a legally binding international instrument, which mandates states parties signatories to promote HRE. The adoption in December 2011 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training further codified international support for HRE.

Whilst UN conventions and declarations on human rights have largely called upon member states to take action to ensure human rights for their country’s populations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played a significant role in the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and development globally. NGOs are at the forefront of global civil society, a “vast, interconnected and multi-layered non-governmental space that comprises many hundreds of thousands of self-directing institutions and ways of life that generate global effects” (Keane, 2003, p. 20). The types of changes that global civil society seek to generate are characterised by their vision of a more just society, as their actions aim to have “peaceful or ‘civil’ effects”

(Keane, 2003, p. 8). Since the 1960s, NGOs have become a formidable presence in international development cooperation (Jordan & Van Tuijl, 2006) and they continue to grow in influence, engaging in considerable work to advance global social justice.

The majority of NGOs come from the relatively richer developed nations in the Northern hemisphere, their efforts often aimed at assisting developing countries in the global South across a range of development-related areas (Boli & Thomas, 1997). Education has long served as a key strategy for the work of NGOs in what have, since 2000, increasingly become human rights-based organisational agendas (Plipat, 2005; Schmith, 2005; Van Tuijl, 2000).

Humanitarian, advocacy and development NGOs comprise an active and growing field of educational development in a number of areas, including teacher training, curriculum development for primary and secondary state schools, infrastructure and capacity building, lobbying and campaigning, and community support projects. Many international Western NGOs operate education programmes targeting their own countries that aim to enhance their development and human rights work in other countries. The results of such efforts are an increase in the number of projects in schools with a focus on social justice and human rights. However, there is little research exploring the influence or impact of such educational efforts for either NGOs or schools.

England provides a rich example for study because of the high number of prominent national and international NGOs based there, the existence of a recognised “global dimension” framework (Bourn & Hunt, 2011) and citizenship curriculum in British schools that together promote HRE and other forms of education based on universal principles and democratic participation, and the close working partnerships that have been formed between NGOs and official policymakers, as well as between NGOs and schools themselves.

### **1.1 NGOs and Education in England**

NGO-supported HRE projects are an accepted feature of 21<sup>st</sup> century education practice in England. Development, human rights, and

environmental NGOs have been working in state schools in England since the 1970s to promote human rights and global perspectives on sustainable development and have played a critical role in the development of the field of global education (Hicks, 2003; Myers, 2009). Global education aims to prepare students for living in a globalized world (Mundy & Manion, 2008), advocating values connected to human rights, democracy and social justice that imply global interdependence and solidarity (Marshall, 2007). Global education responds to the perceived demands placed on governments to prepare national citizens for participation in an increasingly interconnected, transnational and globalized world. Ideas of citizenship education, for example – already a contested discursive space – are changing in response to the increase of transnational practices around development, democracy, and education driven by globalization (Osler & Starkey, 2005). As the nature of what young people need to learn to live in today's world remains contested, discourses of human rights, cosmopolitanism, national security, economic globalization and sustainable development comprise key and sometimes competing elements of the current field of global education.

NGOs working in formal education have historically offered specific and usually small-scale programmes such as teacher training, extra-curricular projects, or resource and curriculum development (Marshall, 2007). In recent years, some NGOs have begun to innovate on focused projects by offering holistic approaches to global education, in part to address the lack of wider penetration in schools of such projects (Marshall, 2007). At the same time, recent years have seen an increase in the factors driving state schools to work with NGOs. NGOs provide extra resources, often at low or no cost, providing a free good to schools during a period of fiscal austerity. Educational policies in England promoting community cohesion justify establishment of community links through external agency partnerships, which schools can use to demonstrate their engagement with civic groups in the community. Furthermore, the areas in which NGOs work comprise an element of official policy normatively conceptualising education as preparing learners to become “global” citizens. This provides a strong basis for inclusion of HRE

in national curricula, as does UK compliance with international human rights standards and the country's own Human Rights Act.

As a result of increased government interest in global education over the last decade, NGOs have occupied a role as experts, forging relationships with government departments that have placed them in a service provision role of sensitive and politically powerful values agendas. Government departments – the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Department for Education (DFE) in particular – work closely with NGOs to consult on educational policy, solicit teaching resources and training, and partner with schools to promote elements of the national curriculum that support department goals.

Yet despite the now household-name status of the many NGOs that operate in schools (e.g. UNICEF, Oxfam, Care, Plan, Save the Children and Amnesty International), and the current recognition in national educational policy of the importance of global understanding in education and of NGO input into this policy, there exists virtually no empirical research either exploring the influence of NGOs and their education projects, or investigating how NGO-school partnerships are enacted by stakeholders on both sides.

This study explores how one UK-based global NGO, Amnesty International, envisions and enacts HRE, and through a case study of a school project in England aims to construct a picture of its role in facilitating rights-based approaches to school development. I examine the development of a partnership between Amnesty International and one comprehensive state secondary school in an ethnically diverse and socio-economically deprived area in London to understand how each partner envisions, operationalises and adapts whole-school HRE projects intended to change school culture and enhance Amnesty's HRE work.

### **1.1.1 Personal Motivations**

My interest in researching the HRE work of NGOs emerges from my personal background and from my past work experiences. A native New Yorker of

Puerto Rican and Haitian background, my experiences living in Haiti led me to an interest in international development, which informed my decision to join the US Peace Corps and move to Madagascar to teach in a small village. My experiences there inspired me to focus my career on education, development and human rights. Working as a facilitator at Global Kids, a New York City-based NGO, I developed a passion for using HRE to positively impact the lives of marginalised youth.

My experiences teaching human rights to small groups of committed students often felt as if they took place inside a vacuum. Regardless of which school I taught at, the students who came to our classes reported the same thing: that there was nowhere else in the school where they could learn about human rights. Recognising the challenge of ensuring that isolated HRE projects could impact schools on a wider scale, Global Kids launched its own secondary school in Brooklyn, the High School for Global Citizenship (HSGC), that placed peace, justice and democratic participation at the heart of its mission. The idea behind HSGC was to empower the entire school to practice human rights on a daily basis.

When I arrived in London, I found a convergence of perspectives across UK development and human rights NGOs on the importance of promoting rights-respecting schools, much like HSGC was attempting in Brooklyn. I decided to focus my study on the whole-school approach as a way to examine the HRE work of human rights NGOs in state schools. In particular, I was interested in better understanding how a subject that was essentially marginalised in my country's educational system was actively thriving in England, and I wanted to also explore how HRE either supported or conflicted with wider national educational policies.

## **1.2 The UK Research Context: Education, Human Rights and NGOs**

In 1988 the UK passed the Education Reform Act, introducing a centralised national curriculum across a broad range of areas meant to “promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils [and] prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of

adult life” (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1988, p. 3). As part of these changes, schools were given a set of non-mandatory ‘cross-curricular’ themes to integrate into existing subjects, which included citizenship and environmental education among other social education themes that shared parallels with HRE.

In the mid-1990s, government educational policies began to prioritise some of these cross-curricular themes, creating new spaces for consideration of environmental and sustainable development, citizenship and human rights within the formal school curriculum (Marshall, 2007). Over the past decade, formal education policy has emphasised support for teaching subjects that foster understanding of global social responsibility, using environmental, development and citizenship frames. England’s citizenship curriculum for Key Stage 4 encourages learners to develop competencies so that they can play a “role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active and global citizens” (QCA, 2007b, p. 41). Most schools in England now teach in some form about active citizenship that includes a global focus. Furthermore, standards for citizenship teacher certification have also specified use of “voluntary and statutory organisations to plan and resource relevant aspects of the citizenship curriculum across and beyond the school,” effectively mandating engagement with NGOs to deliver the citizenship curriculum (DCSF, 2008a).

### **1.2.1 NGO Global Education Projects in the Neoliberal Age**

Despite support for global education in schools, the educational climate in which NGOs operate can affect the way in which such initiatives are received and implemented. Schools face external pressures to meet standardised state targets for attainment, which are predominantly based on a neoliberal script of market-based performance and enhanced choice as the solution for problems. Progressive and democratic education advocates have noted the ability of market-based educational discourses and practices to significantly influence how schools operate (Ball, 2009).

In this study I use the term *neoliberalism* to refer to

a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organized around a certain imagination of the “market” as a basis for the universalisation of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives (Shamir, 2008, p. 3)

Orientated around market principles, neoliberalism holds that economies and societies can be more successful if they free individuals from the restraint and inefficiencies of government bureaucracy in order to let private sector citizens perform more cost-effective and individualised services. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, British education policy embraces the neoliberal framework for schools through the concept of *personalisation*, which through its “rapid absorption into the official vocabulary of education” represents a new phase of the “marketisation of education” (Hartley, 2008, p. 377). Personalisation as an organising concept refers to the tailoring of educational services to cater to individual needs within the quasi-market of schools, envisioning

a new kind of consumer: not a ‘passive consumer’ who selects from what is on offer, but an ‘active’ user who ‘shapes’ service provision from below, thereby weakening both the consumer–provider nexus and that ‘producer-capture’ so abhorred by economic neo-liberals (Ibid, p. 366).

Whilst under market-based policies of the 1990s parents were previously given ‘choice’ of their preferred school ‘product’ based on its performance (3.3.1), personalisation fuses educational marketisation with democratic principles in order to empower “the parent, the pupil and the school to be co-authors and co-producers of the ‘product’ itself” (Hartley, 2008). The influence of personalisation on educational policy and practice is further explored in Section 3.1.3.

Apple (2004) identifies four elements underpinning current discourses of school performance in England and the United States that together comprise what he terms *conservative modernization*: market solutions for educational problems, neo-conservative emphasis on raising standards, religious conservatism clinging to narrowly defined traditions, and organisational philosophies of “accountability, measurement and ‘management’” (Apple,

2004, p. 15). Acknowledging the conflict and tension around these notions, Apple notes that combined they represent “educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the ‘ideal’ home, family, and school” (Ibid). Under conservative modernization, educational objectives take the same shape as those driving national economic and social welfare policies:

They include the dramatic expansion of that eloquent fiction, the free market; the drastic reduction of government responsibility for social needs; the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility both inside and outside the school; the lowering of people’s expectations for economic security; the “disciplining” of culture and the body; and the popularization of what is clearly a form of social-Darwinist thinking (Apple 2004, p. 15).

As such, attempts by NGOs and schools to promote global education are unfolding in an educational climate dominated by an unceasing neoliberal orthodoxy, which comes into conflict with the aims and purposes of more progressive forms of education, particularly those that stress community cohesion over a neoliberal, ‘personalised’ concept of education (Fielding, 2006). Specifically, the concepts of active citizenship and student voice have become part of a consumer satisfaction agenda for universities – the argument being that including the voices of students in the shaping of policies and practice can lead to more satisfied “customers” (Gavrielides, 2008).

### **1.2.2 Whole-school HRE: New Frontiers for NGOs**

Since 2000, five major UK NGOs (Amnesty, Oxfam, Plan, BIHR and UNICEF UK) have developed whole-school citizenship education and HRE projects to extend human rights and democratic practices beyond the classroom and into school-wide policies and practices. The approach is rooted in the notion that human rights must be simultaneously learned and practised throughout the school in order to be successful, and that a rights-based school ethos can lead to improved outcomes. This view has support not only in theoretical and empirical literature on HRE approaches (Bajaj, 2011; Covell, 2010; Hantzopoulos, 2012; Osler & Starkey, 2010; Sebba & Robinson, 2010) but also in official policies and initiatives of international and regional government

organisations, notably the UN (UNESCO, 2006) and the Council of Europe (Backman & Trafford, 2007; Council of Europe, 1985). The approach is consistent with international discourses on HRE since the mid-1980s that have advocated holistic approaches to teaching human rights (Council of Europe, 1985; Cunningham, 1991; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Verhellen, 2000).

The most recent and relevant example of international support for whole-school HRE is the on-going UN World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), which calls for a “holistic, rights-based approach” that includes human rights *in* education and human rights *through* education, a distinction that refers to the promotion of human rights *in* curricula, materials, methods and training, delivered *through* the daily, rights-respecting practices of the school and its community members (UNESCO, 2006, p. 3). Because it requires full organisational participation, the institutionalising nature of whole-school HRE suggests that NGOs can potentially contribute to school development policies whilst impacting entire schools and communities.

### **1.2.3 Amnesty International and Whole-School HRE**

Amnesty International is perhaps the best-known human rights organisation in the world, with global name recognition and a history of pioneering human rights advocacy and development efforts in the UK and other countries. Amnesty International began in 1961 as a network of campaigns to free “prisoners of conscience” around the world, and transformed itself into a global human rights watchdog with an established currency of moral authority (Hopgood, 2006). Over many decades, Amnesty has cultivated a strong reputation for protecting and defending human rights, advocating on behalf of human rights victims and causes, and raising awareness about the importance of human rights in all societies. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the organisation continues to use education as a key tool for promoting their missions in England and abroad. Amnesty has in the past decade expressed a strong commitment to HRE and specifically whole-school HRE.

#### **1.2.4 Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* Project**

Amnesty International piloted its first coordinated global education project for secondary schools, *Human Rights Friendly Schools* (hereafter HRFS), in 2009 and 2010 across fourteen countries. The HRE team at Amnesty's International Secretariat (IS), consisting of 3 full time staff and 10 volunteers, used the HRFS approach to support its mission to promote a global culture of human rights (Amnesty International, 2009). The project also represents Amnesty's contribution to the UN World Programme for HRE. HRFS sets an ambitious agenda for participating schools to incorporate ten core principles, developed from key international human rights instruments into four areas of school life: governance, curriculum, extra-curricular activities and school environment, and community relations. In each participating country, a national Amnesty International section partnered with one secondary school to develop and implement a one-year action plan to implement human rights across the school. In London, the Amnesty UK section partnered with Buckingham School to pilot HRFS in 2009-2010.

Amnesty International defines a human rights friendly school as:

A school that embraces the potential of human rights as core operating and organizing principles, [and] that fosters an environment and a community in which human rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, defended and promoted. It is a place in which all are included and encouraged to take part, regardless of status or role, where cultural diversity is celebrated. In short, a human rights friendly school ensures that equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation are at the heart of the learning experience and present in all major areas of school life. (Amnesty International, 2009, p. 12)

This definition constructs human rights as a school-wide policy framework, emphasising the role of human rights in the school environment and community as well as in the classroom. Inclusion and equality are particularly strong features of this definition, delineating a significant set of challenges for schools interested in employing the approach. Amnesty's definition is fundamentally idealistic and utopian; it charts a clear vision of a rights-friendly school without elaborating how schools can operationalise the vision.

Research in schools suggests that fundamental changes in school culture and operations are required in order to successfully embed rights-based policy frameworks (Carter & Osler, 2000; Covell, 2010). Recent research conducted by UNICEF UK on its whole-school HRE programme, *Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)*, suggests that rights-based policy frameworks can improve schools by reducing conflicts and bullying, improving relationships between students, and creating an atmosphere more conducive to learning (3.2.3) (Sebba & Robinson, 2010).

Amnesty International offers a unique case study within a crowded NGO educational field in the UK. Most NGOs are charities, and because they work in close collaboration with or are directly funded by government, often face restrictions or compromises on their projects. Amnesty is a member-supported organisation unbound by charity status and known for campaigning on controversial political issues. Nonetheless, Amnesty have managed to enter schools under the same guise as most NGOs and be seen by schools within the same framework as government-funding dependent NGOs, despite being an organisation with clear political goals for schools. They are not tied to any government agenda and are thus free to engage in direct political activity to encourage the promotion of human rights activism, although their projects often explicitly aim to support specific national curriculum goals.

### **1.3 Statement of the Research Problem**

There is little research exploring how key elements of global civil society – principally, development and human rights NGOs and other grassroots actors – partner with state schools to advance human rights in formal education systems. The dearth of literature on the subject highlights the necessity of this study, particularly in light of the increasing presence of NGOs in British schools and the lack of knowledge about both the processes involved in implementation and the impact these programmes may have on schools and student achievement.

Whilst there is clear evidence that government policies and NGO partners support HRE, there is little understanding of either the processes or the

outcomes of HRE programmes. There is virtually no knowledge of how NGOs interact with and influence formal education systems, particularly in terms of the negotiation of institutionalised power structures and political discourses required by holistic rights approaches.

Little also exists in terms of HRE evaluation and impact assessment studies that can shed light on HRE outcomes; consequently stakeholders such as government educational authorities and NGOs have no way to gauge whether HRE approaches work. To date, there is no study focusing on the relationship between NGOs and schools, how HRE is transferred, and how competing values agendas (particularly neoliberalism and progressivism) are negotiated in modern schools.

### **1.3.1 Purpose of Research**

This thesis explores the experiences of Amnesty International in negotiating the implementation of a whole-school HRE initiative in one London secondary school (“Buckingham”). Specifically, the research seeks to:

- Examine the way in which HRFS was conceptualised by both Amnesty and Buckingham School in relation to their organisational missions;
- Illuminate the partnership processes that occurred between Amnesty and Buckingham;
- Understand how HRFS was situated within prevailing neoliberal discourses of school development in England;
- Contribute to an emerging body of empirical literature reporting on the outcomes of whole-school HRE projects.

This research addresses a gap in academic literature on the interactions between NGOs and schools in the implementation of NGO-led education programmes. Previous literature on the role of NGOs in promoting HRE does exist, notably an article describing a 2005 study of NGO-supported Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses in human rights at universities (Gearon, 2006). Gearon highlights the diverse and non-systematic ways in which NGOs comprise an element of ITT citizenship, and raises salient political and policy questions regarding NGO agendas in education systems. However, the research study associated with Gearon’s article is unpublished, and there has been no research to date that explores this phenomenon in either an NGO or

state school context in England. There is a significant body of research on NGO-supported whole-school HRE in England (see Chapter 3), notably two University of Sussex evaluations of UNICEF UK's *Rights Respecting Schools Award* (Sebba & Robinson, 2009, 2010). However, this research focuses solely on the impact of whole-school HRE on schools and does not engage questions of UNICEF's role or of NGO-school partnership. Research on the use of rights-respecting approaches to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in the UK has also provided empirical evidence of the influence of holistic rights frameworks on education (Jerome & Bhargava, 2009).

Furthermore, there are lacunae in the literature regarding:

- The contribution of NGO-formal education partnerships to the goals of human rights-focused NGOs;
- The influence of partnership structures and processes on implementation; and
- The ways in which state schools negotiate external values agendas within established institutional values structures and prevailing educational policies.

This study will attempt to shed light on these processes. Whilst it cannot generalise about NGOs across all aspects of education, a detailed case study approach may offer a better understanding the types of challenges and opportunities that many NGOs face when attempting to extend their missions to state schools.

### **1.3.2 Framing Research Aims and Questions**

The main research question for this study asks:

*How is partnership enacted between Amnesty International and a London secondary school in jointly developing whole-school approaches to HRE?*

Several sub-questions underpin this larger research question:

1. Drawing on their experiences in and perspectives on human rights education, how was HRFS constructed (envisioned and prepared by key actors)? **(Chapter 5)**
2. How was HRFS implemented, and what were the key opportunities and challenges during the implementation process? **(Chapter 6)**
3. How was the HRFS partnership envisioned and enacted? **(Chapter 7)**
4. What were the observable outcomes of partnership enactment? **(Chapter 7)**

5. How did micropolitical relationships at Buckingham school influence and/or become influenced by the HRFS project? **(Chapter 8)**

In the chapters that follow, I outline the ways in which research into the Amnesty International Secretariat and UK section's implementation of the project can illuminate the main areas of interest identified here. The research study employed a case study approach, focusing specifically on examining the partnership over a number of different points of contact, including at the school, at Amnesty offices and at other locations, over a period of two years. Qualitative methods were used for data collection, including semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (including students, teachers, other school personnel, and Amnesty staff), focus groups, and participant observation of the partnership in practice.

Research visits were mainly conducted at Amnesty's UK offices and at the case study school in London. In the thesis I discuss the aspirations of project partners and their uses of HRFS over the course of its two-year pilot phase. I employ the notions of utopianism and pragmatism to draw a distinction between the ways in which Amnesty and the school conceptualise HRFS as contributing to the improvement of the school's values and operations as they relate to increasing human rights, and the more pragmatic uses of NGO-school partnership and of human rights frameworks for achieving internal and external educational goals as defined by the state.

#### **1.4 Articulating a Theoretical Framework**

I introduce through the literature review an overall theoretical framework for the study, drawing on the key theories and studies that shape my understanding of the phenomenon of NGO-school HRE partnerships. Merriam (1998) outlines the role of a theoretical framework in educational research as a study's "scaffolding [and] lens through which you view the world" (p. 45). For Merriam, the theoretical framework represents the "outermost frame" of the study and consists of the body of literature and disciplinary orientation used to situate the study (Ibid). For this study, the body of literature presented is mainly concerned on a conceptual level with:

- (1) The use of normative discourses on human rights to influence education and educational approaches;
- (2) The role of utopianism in influencing and shaping a global HRE movement;
- (3) Educational philosophies promoting democratic and learner-centred practices consistent with rights-based educational frameworks;
- (4) The policies and institutional structures influencing how and why schools promote HRE, particularly theories exploring neoliberalism and the use of discourses of power and control; and
- (5) Theories on the role of micropolitical relationships in influencing and responding to educational change.

I review existing theoretical and empirical literatures in these areas, highlight the key issues debated, and discuss the areas where this study may comprise a contribution to the academic literature.

### **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is presented in nine chapters, including this introductory chapter. In **Chapter Two**, I review the development of the modern international human rights regime and the foundations for current HRE theory and practice, examining pedagogical frameworks that both underpin and intersect with HRE. In **Chapter Three**, I turn to an examination of current HRE practices through a review of educational disciplines and projects that have informed the development of the field. The review situates the emergence of both whole-school approaches and the progressive, democratic schools movement in the context of the educational reforms of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and elaborates challenges facing whole-school HRE. **Chapter Four** details the methodology for the research study, and **Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight** analyse the key themes emerging from the collected data. **Chapter Nine** discusses the overall findings and their contribution to knowledge, summarises the data collected and analysed, identifies gaps and areas for further research, and makes initial conclusions about the role of NGOs in mainstreaming whole-school HRE approaches into state schools.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Universal Human Rights and Education**

The realisation of universal human rights, leading to justice and peace in all societies, is the primary goal of an extensive international human rights regime. This concept has been packaged into a neat catchphrase and aspiration, “the culture of human rights,” (Will, 1984) which can be found in much of the current international human rights discourse, often without clear definition but expressing the idea that human rights values should underpin community and societal practices. Widespread international support from the UN, governments and civil society organisations has created a strong platform for advancing the human rights agenda through education. Yet the complexity of the modern human rights field and actors working within it have resulted in the establishment of a diffuse, wide range of pedagogical principles and actions for its use as an educational tool, across a range of formal and informal contexts.

Drawing on theoretical perspectives from the academic literature as well as research and practice on HRE globally and in England, chapters 2 and 3 elaborate the theoretical and empirical fields for the study, focusing in particular on HRE in formal education. In this chapter, I first explore the current context for promotion of human rights principles globally, tracing the development of the current international human rights regime to the establishment of the UN and subsequent conventions and declarations. I then discuss the development of HRE as an educational discipline and examine pedagogical frameworks that both underpin and intersect with HRE.

#### **2.1 Building a Culture of Human Rights: Foundations for HRE**

HRE’s expansive growth as educational theory and practice over recent decades has mirrored the enhanced role of human rights on the global geopolitical stage since the 1950s. Ideas of human or natural rights have existed in various forms for centuries, expressed through ancient legal codes such as the Code of Hammurabi, the philosophies and political theories of Plato and Aristotle, and through national political documents such as the 1789

French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and United States Bill of Rights. The catalysts for the emergence of the modern global discourse of human rights were the two world wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. International consensus around the unacceptable scale of human misery during those wars drove the establishment in 1945 of the UN, and through the body's subsequent international declarations, covenants and conventions, human rights became universally codified as international moral and political standards for the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond (Landman, 2006). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the idea of promoting a global culture of human rights has become championed by key figures in the international human rights field, including the UN, as well as influential NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, and Oxfam.

In the following section I briefly review the development of the modern international human rights regime in order to trace the roots of and contextualize the current global movement for HRE.

### **2.1.1 The Universal Declaration and the European Convention**

Enacted in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) outlines a set of rights that all humans are entitled to, and that all nations and cultures can and should agree upon (Glendon, 2004). The UDHR was a landmark document, the first to present a core set of democratic principles that were international in scope and legal in nature. The UDHR aspired to create a new set of moral principles that societies could use to devise legal codes in order to ensure provision of human rights.

Rene Cassin, a co-author of the UDHR, categorised the human rights contained within as being similar in structure to a temple portico (Glendon, 2004; Osler & Starkey, 1996, 2010).

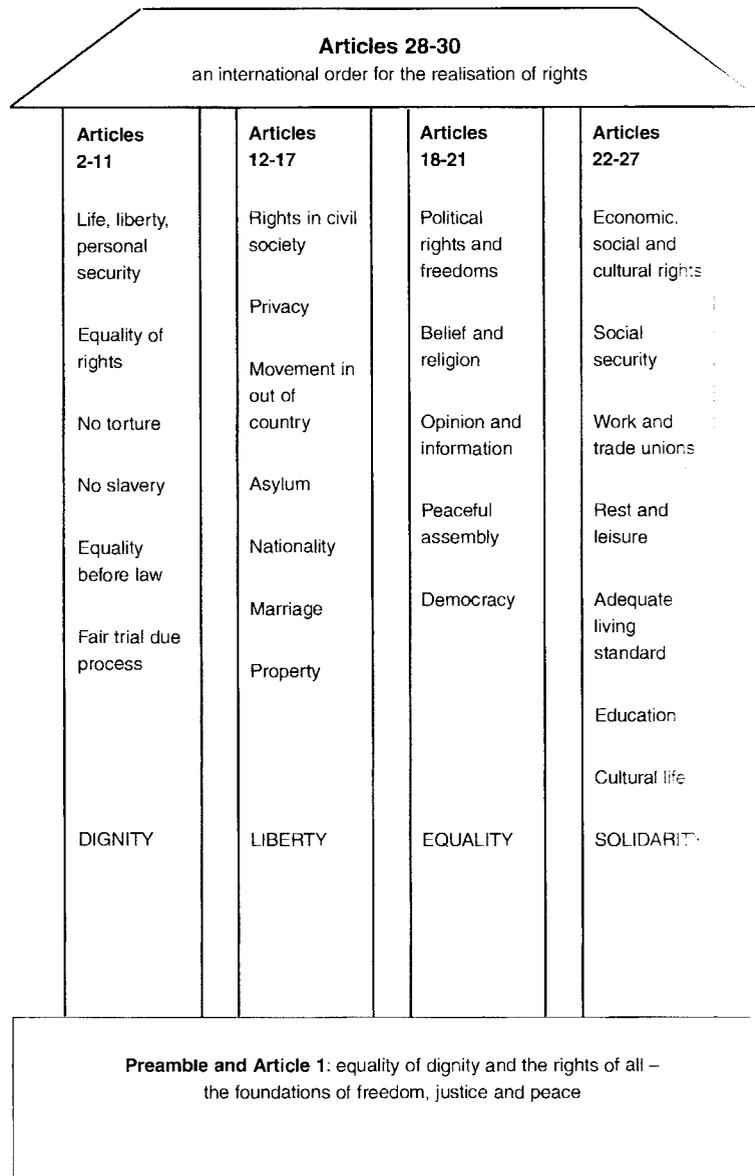


Figure 2.1 Cassin's model of the UDHR (Osler and Starkey, 2010)

The preamble and Article 1 outline the rationale and provide the moral foundation for a set of rights based on equality of dignity and the rights of all. The structure of the portico is held up by four separate “rights” columns, which are:

1. Individual rights contained in Articles 2-11 (*Dignity*)
2. Relational rights between individuals and groups, contained in Articles 12-17 (*Liberty*)
3. Political rights and public freedoms, including spiritual rights, contained in Articles 18-21 (*Equality*)
4. Economic, social and cultural rights, contained in Articles 22-27 (*Solidarity*)

These four pillars are crowned by a roof representing the last three articles, which call for an international order for achieving those rights. The UDHR thus offers an ethical framework to support a specific set of entitlements to be collectively pursued by the international community.

Scholars have argued that although the UDHR has no legal authority, it remains a significant achievement because of its universal applicability and strong moral force, and because of its impact on individual governments who have adopted certain of the Declaration's principles into their national laws (Donnelly, 2003; Henkin, 1989). Human rights principles are now found in many legally binding laws and national documents, infusing the values standards contained in the UDHR with greater force (Hannum, 1998). Although many of these rights have been provided and protected by individual governments for hundreds of years, the UDHR represented the first attempt at unifying them into a global framework for universal implementation.

The UDHR's stated principles are recommendations rather than legal obligations, although those recommendations have led to the development of binding regional instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). Directly influenced by the UDHR (Osler, 2005), the ECHR, which came into force in 1953, is an example of a "strong regional regime" in that it guarantees personal, legal, civil and political rights to all persons living within the jurisdiction of Council of Europe member states (Donnelly, 1986). It is considered a powerful legal instrument because, unlike the UDHR, it has legal authority to hear cases through the European Court of Human Rights, who are empowered to make legally binding decisions on matters brought before it (Donnelly, 1986; Starkey, 1992).

Spanning just over a decade, the establishment of the UN, UDHR, and ECHR were part of a construction of a new global paradigm, "the postwar creation of human rights as an international issue-area" (Donnelly, 1986, p. 633). Over the next twenty years, UN action would lead to a further solidification of this global paradigm through the establishment of the International Bill of Rights, the informal name used to refer to three texts: the UDHR, the 1966

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic and Cultural Rights, the latter two binding international treaties which came into force in 1976.

A shared global language of human rights has since the 1950s characterised and shaped the development of humanitarian and development discourses into the present age. UN resolutions and treaties promoting human rights influence the actions of governments, advance the scope and reach of international law, and provide a normative values framework for measuring the actions of governments and individuals in global society (Goodale 2006).

### **2.1.2 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The UDHR was the first framework for realising the human rights of all people, where previous human rights struggles had occurred primarily within nationalistic frameworks (Osler & Starkey, 2010). However, even before the UDHR, a manifesto on the universal rights of children had already been written. In the early 1920's, Save the Children founder Eglantyne Jebb drafted the "Declaration of the Rights of the Child," which was first endorsed by the League of Nations in 1924, and by the UN in 1959 (Save the Children, 2007). In 1989, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which 192 countries have ratified. Only two countries, USA and Somalia, have not, although they have signalled their intention to ratify the CRC eventually by signing the convention. The legally binding nature of the CRC distinguishes it from the UDHR, giving the CRC significantly more authority; ratifying countries are obligated to uphold the articles contained within.

HRE scholars have argued that the CRC has been transformative with respect to the way in which children are perceived as members of society. Verhellen (2000) observes that childhood has historically been considered a transitional stage on the road to adulthood, with children made to wait before they can be given the status and rights granted to adults. The CRC reconceptualised children as equals to adults with respect to their economic, social, and cultural rights, transforming them from objects to be cared for into

subjects possessive of individual rights, effectively changing their legal status (Ibid). Whereas previously children were thought to be solely in need of protection, the CRC included the provision of rights and the rights to participation in society in addition to the protections which children must be afforded (Verhellen, 2000). The “three Ps” hold that:

- Children are vulnerable and dependent and thus need **protection**;
- Children have the right to the **provision** of services such as education and health;
- Children have rights to **participation** and citizenship. (Osler & Starkey, 1998a)

The CRC clearly outlines the obligations of states parties to provide children with both the right to education (Article 28) and the right to HRE (Article 29) (United Nations, 1989). Governments, policymakers and scholars have all recognised the critical role of education for securing children the rights contained in the CRC (Banks et al., 2005; Osler & Starkey, 1996).

The UDHR and CRC provide the foundation for promoting HRE in formal education globally, while the ECHR is an additional, legally binding framework for its promotion in England. Educational policy makers, NGOs, and schools have employed these instruments as justifications and guidelines for the promotion of human rights in schools in England. In the following section, I explore the human rights theories and concepts that inform current HRE practices in England and globally.

## **2.2 Elaborating Utopian Cosmopolitanism: Human Rights as Universal Principles for a Better World**

The vision of a better world through human rights is supported by an expansive international regime that includes not just the UN human rights instruments and coordinating bodies, but NGO and civil society actors, states-parties’ legal frameworks for provision of human rights, and an extensive legal, political, and philosophical literature on rights (Goodale 2006). Henkin (1989) argues that since the end of World War II we have lived in “the age of rights,” in which human rights have been the most universally acclaimed political idea of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more so than democracy, capitalism or

socialism (Henkin, 1989, p. 13). Donnelly (2003) refers to the “international normative universality” of human rights as constitutive of the near-universal acceptance of human rights as ideal standards by most governments, who have either become party to international human rights frameworks or expressed support of human rights in national policies or practices (p. 1). Douzinas (2000a) refers to human rights as “a new ideal [that] has triumphed on the world stage...the noblest creation of our philosophy and jurisprudence and the best proof of the universal aspirations of our modernity” (Douzinas, 2000a, p. 1).

Human rights are by their essence utopian and visionary in nature (Donnelly, 2003). They aim to elaborate the higher moral aspirations of individuals and societies, to counter the “real experiences of the inhumane and unjust actions of states and their agents” against individuals and groups (Osler & Starkey, 2010, p. 57). As overarching principles meant to guide the structure and practice of socio-political life, human rights are concerned with the fusion of moral vision and political practice towards the fulfilment of a more just and peaceful world (Donnelly, 2003).

Human rights are fundamentally linked to the development of cosmopolitan perspectives. Cosmopolitanism is the notion that everyone in the world is linked through our common humanity, and that in addition to our affective ties as citizens of a particular nation, we should also feel ties to people from different countries and cultures because we are all citizens of the world (Kymlicka, 2003; Nussbaum, 1994). Universal human rights as articulated in international legal conventions and declarations provide a strong framework for the promotion of cosmopolitan ideals (Anderson-Gold, 2001).

Using the UDHR as the foundation for analysis, this section examines ideas of utopianism and cosmopolitanism in human rights to elaborate the current uses of human rights in education “as a discourse with which to critique and challenge current [global] social and economic conditions” (Osler & Starkey, 2010, p. 43).

### **2.2.1 Human Rights as Utopian**

The notion of “utopia,” coined by Sir Thomas More in his 1516 book, described an ideal society as a prescriptive cure for and a challenge to the perceived ailments of the existing order, creating a new school of political and social philosophy (Halpin, 2001). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars such as Karl Mannheim and the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch have used the concept of utopia to articulate visions of a future world in which inequality, oppression and injustice are eliminated. Utopia has been theorised as a “non-place or nothingness,” an “imaginary domain” that is essentially a “dream of the future, fuelled by the past and immanent in the future” (Douzinas, 2000a, p. 179). The notion of utopia is driven by hope and anticipation for what Douzinas calls “a real humanity still to come” (Ibid, p. 181). In other words, utopia is about imagining what is possible, based on understanding and challenging current conditions (whether economic, social or political), and is fundamentally an unreachable place that in its abstraction motivates us to act in order to improve the world (Osler & Starkey, 2010). However, utopia cannot be overly-idealistic, or too unreal, to be unattainable; it must exist as an achievable aim, even if it is never reached (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Human rights have been called “the last utopia” (Moyn, 2010), having outlasted other utopianisms by virtue of their fusing of ethical and political aspirations to sketch out “a place that has not yet been called into being” (p. 1). Osler and Starkey (2010) note that human rights are framed as a utopian prediction in the preamble to the UDHR, which asserts that universal practice of human rights provides a basis for realising ‘freedom, justice and peace in the world’ (UN 1948, as quoted in Osler and Starkey 2010). Douzinas asserts that human rights “generate a powerful political and moral energy, unlike any other ideology” (Douzinas, 2000b, p. 239), and Donnelly concurs, asserting that the “forward looking moral vision of human nature provides the basis for the social changes implicit in claims of human rights” (Donnelly, 2003, p. 15).

Yet even as human rights can be conceptualised as a utopian vision, there is a profound (and, some would argue, growing) gap between the ideals of human rights as currently expressed on global and national stages, and the

“disaster of their practice” (Douzinas, 2000b, p. 220). As Douzinas notes, “human rights have triumphed globally but no other historical period has witnessed greater violations of their principles” (Ibid, p. 219). Douzinas further contends that past utopian projects such as Nazism and Communism have negatively impacted the potential linking of human rights and utopia by discouraging utopian hope and creating a sense of inevitable permanence about the flawed institutions of democracy and capitalism (Douzinas, 2000a).

Giddens’ (1990) concept of *utopian realism* lays out a framework for understanding how and why individuals and groups work for social change, arguing that utopian ideals and realism must be balanced in pursuit of humanitarian social agendas, because “avenues for desired social change will have little practical impact if they are not connected to institutionally immanent possibilities” (Giddens, 1990, p. 155). He links what he terms “emancipatory politics” with “life politics,” connecting (emancipatory) politics that promote “freedom from” inequality and injustice with (life) politics that promote “freedom to” enjoy a fulfilled and satisfying life (Giddens, 1990, p. 156). Utopian realism is directed towards the realisation of utopian ideals, but must be analysed in the context of the opposing forces working on these actions (local, global, emancipatory and self-actualised).

### **2.2.2 Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights**

Universality is a key element of the utopian vision of human rights. Supporting universal human rights is the political ideology of cosmopolitanism. Current conceptions of cosmopolitanism can be traced back to Immanuel Kant, whose notions of a law of world citizenship and the development of a cosmopolitan condition were tied to what he perceived as the moral duty of individuals and nations to act peaceably towards each other (Anderson-Gold, 2001). The cosmopolitan idea is that we are all citizens of the world with an ethical disposition towards each other regardless of national affiliation. Cosmopolitanism involves a “commitment to multiple affiliations, [and] emphasis on universals and on relationships with the ‘distant stranger’” (Yanacopoulos & Smith, 2008, p. 301). Like the notion of national citizenship, cosmopolitanism is a contested concept, and can refer to a number of

different processes. It can encompass not only a political project aimed at constructing transnational institutions, but also a world-view or attitude that recognises multiple identities, as well as a set of practices or a socio-cultural condition within certain societies (Ibid).

Cosmopolitanism as a political theory has increased in relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to globalization's positive and negative effects on international relations (Nash, 2009; Nussbaum, 1994). Economic, social and environmental challenges in individual countries impact the rest of the world. Held and McGrew refer to a "growing significance of transnational political problems which create a growing sense of the common fate of humankind" (Held & McGrew, 2007, p. 207) to illustrate the importance of a cosmopolitan perspective for addressing global problems.

Cosmopolitanism thus exists in opposition to nationalism. Whilst some scholars argue that "more and more people are facing a transnationalization of their life-world [which will] impact on their cognitive and attitudinal stances" (Mau, Mewes, & Zimmermann, 2008, p. 2) – thus potentially making them more cosmopolitan. Others, meanwhile, have maintained that the majority of people are still "tied to particular localities, and do not have either the desire or the means to become more mobile" (Rizvi, 2008, p. 17).

The emergence of the international human rights regime has played an important role in challenging the boundaries of state sovereignty (Donnelly, 1984, 2003; Nash, 2009), although globalization realists (Held & McGrew, 2007) argue that state sovereignty still remains the status quo for many countries. Universal human rights provide a normative basis for cosmopolitanism and can play an important role in mediating and transforming socio-political practices within and between states (Anderson-Gold, 2001). Nash uses the term *cosmopolitan law* to refer to the set of international customary laws grounded in human rights that "reach inside states to create rights and responsibilities for everyone, regardless of nationality or place of residence" (Nash, 2009, p. 113).

Cosmopolitanism as an active practice is fundamentally concerned with solidarity. Its promotion entails the creation and sustainment of *global* solidarity. Within states, the construction of solidarity is aided by local, regional and national affiliations. Solidarity can also be thought of in hierarchical terms: 'thinner' solidarity can be seen as a result of shared social relationships, values and beliefs (most often expressed in local and national communities), while 'thicker' solidarity is conceived as a 'community of fate' in which all the resources and risks of the community are shared (Nash, 2009, p. 138). Because of the expectation of shared material costs and benefits that creates a sense of communal interdependence, cosmopolitanism is concerned with promoting thicker solidarity, but it must do so in the context of the state and requires thinner solidarity as a foundation. The state remains the locus of activity for the generation of cosmopolitan perspectives and action, as a central agent of societal norms and practices (Nash, 2009).

The international human rights regime provides a framework for cosmopolitanism, with the UN and members of global civil society acting as standard bearers for the promotion of cosmopolitan values and actions. Whilst the UN is an organisation of sovereign states acting in their own interests and not a world government, it nonetheless still plays an important role in promoting the achievement of cosmopolitan goals through what Nash calls its 'global constitution' of principles for constituent states to choose to follow (Nash, 2009). International human rights instruments promoted by the UN give states and their legal systems a shared basis for application of cosmopolitan principles and laws, and act as a key locus for the formation of global solidarity.

Governments are considered primary duty-bearers for the provision of rights to citizens, and the enduring primacy of the nation-state in addressing human rights concerns at the national level illustrates a fundamental tension between universal human rights and national practice. Although as codified by the UN, rights are universal, they are ultimately national in scope because "states are the principal violators of human rights and the principal actors governed by the regime's norms" (Donnelly, 1986 p. 616). The absence of a world

government in an international system of rights means that by definition, human rights must be dealt with on a national level, “as reflected in the purely national implementation of regime norms and thus the absence of policy coordination and even rudimentary mechanisms of international enforcement” (Ibid, p. 617). The existence of the International Criminal Court, and cases such as the conviction in April 2012 of former Liberian President Charles Taylor for war crimes by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, do, however, demonstrate progress towards implementing international regime norms.

The UDHR’s cosmopolitan vision is ultimately utopian in that it envisages a world in which global solidarity is a shared perspective of all people, regardless of national affiliation. In the following section I discuss human rights concepts that animate a utopian cosmopolitan vision of the world.

### **2.2.3 Human Rights Concepts and Principles**

An analysis of the rights contained in the UDHR illustrates the complexity of human rights theory and practice, and the subsequent challenges for human rights educators. The basic concepts of human rights can be categorised in several ways: according to the principles they enshrine; the types of rights they enumerate; their relationships between rights-holders and duty-bearers; and their legality under binding international frameworks (Landman, 2006). For this study I will explore primarily the principles that underpin universal human rights as enshrined by the UDHR, as these principles form the basis of many HRE efforts within formal education, and of the project under study for this thesis.

A visual model of the ECHR developed by Starkey (1992) illustrates the key principles that support a human rights framework in any society:

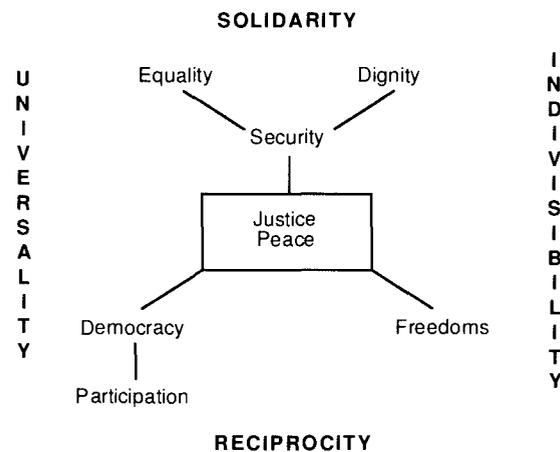


Figure 2.2 The basic concepts of human rights (Starkey, 1992)

According to this diagram, the foundations of human rights, and thus the goals of world society, are **justice** and **peace**.

**Justice** and **peace** are the basis for **democracy**, which must include opportunities for **participation**. And neither **democracy** nor **participation** can exist unless there are **fundamental freedoms** (such as freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly) in place to facilitate democratic processes.

However, **fundamental freedoms** are not unlimited or unchecked freedoms, so **security** must be ensured through the mutual respect of human rights and the law, and the promotion of **equality** and **dignity**.

Framing these ideals are four key concepts:

1. **Universality** – Rights are for everyone and are universally applicable
2. **Indivisibility** – Rights cannot be selectively applied, and an attack on one right is an attack on all rights (attack on part is attack on whole)
3. **Reciprocity** – We are mutually dependent on each other
4. **Solidarity** – Rights must be defended and protected through collective and mutual social responsibility (Carter & Osler, 2000; Starkey, 1992)

Osler and Starkey (2010) employ the heuristic of freedoms in their analysis of the UDHR, drawing on the “four freedoms” speech by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in January 1941 as a way to organise and think about the rights contained within the UDHR. The four freedoms – of speech, of belief, from

want, and from fear – correspond to both the different types of rights contained in the UDHR, and the relationships between and the limits of those rights (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Human rights are based on an outlook of utopian cosmopolitanism, and are fundamentally about moral values and a democratic political system for upholding those values. This study seeks to understand the ways in which key principles and underlying values of human rights have been expressed in the design and implementation of whole-school HRE projects. Having briefly surveyed the modern human rights field and the key concepts underpinning human rights, I turn now to a discussion of formal education and its links to HRE practices. When exploring the relationship between HRE practice and formal education, it is essential to acknowledge both the existing terrain on which moral values are promoted within schools, and the ways in which education prepares students to participate in democracy. The following section looks at both the context for HRE in schools, before moving on to examine the conceptual underpinnings of HRE.

### **2.3 Finding HRE in Formal Education: Exploring the Context**

In this section I explore the past and current context for HRE interventions within formal education. I am concerned primarily with three key areas in which HRE can influence schools: values; democracy; and empowerment/transformation. I begin by reviewing the role of values in education before turning to the field of democratic education, two important areas for promoting human rights in schools, and I then review historical and empirical literatures on HRE approaches in formal education.

#### **2.3.1 The Purposes and Goals of Formal Education**

Philosophers such as Plato have framed the goals of education in terms of two basic and interrelated aims, intellectual and moral development, a view shared by modern educationalists such as Dewey and Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1980), while others have emphasised the role that education plays in preparing young people for the world of work, and to become active citizens and workers driving the economic engines of national growth (Bowles &

Gintis, 1976, 2002). Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century education theory and practices were often nationalistic in nature, as education systems were the most direct means for reproducing social, cultural, and political values and norms to serve a nationalist agenda (Apple, 1982). These so-called reproductive practices in education were considered essential tools for the maintenance of the national political machinery and economy, and for the creation of a core of citizenry to facilitate the continuity of the nation-state for future generations (Ibid). In modern democracies, education is also seen as a driver for strengthening democracy and for equipping young people to understand the civic structures of their country so that they can participate as citizens when they become adults (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

The application of an explicit human rights perspective to the education arena is specific to the last sixty years, although the promotion of moral and democratic values in schools has a longer history.

### **2.3.2 Values in Education**

The aims and purposes of education are inextricably linked to values, which become embedded in the strategies and approaches used to educate young people. Values are “consciously and unconsciously at work in all our interpersonal interaction... thus making education by its very nature a value-based and value-laden phenomenon” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 21). Values inform how we make meaning and choices in life, and are shaped by many competing forces, including family, environment, culture, and society, on a number of conceptual levels, including locally, nationally and globally. There can be no education without values, whether they come from the lessons learned from family and friends at home, or the national learning objectives, teacher prerogatives, or pre-selected curriculum texts used in state schools. If education is widely acknowledged to instil knowledge and skills for participation in democratic society, the values that underpin this philosophical approach must be investigated, for they reflect principles that are actively preserved and reinvigorated over generations of time through the educational process.

Three key questions frame the role of values in education: **whose** values are included; **which** values are included in education; and **how** values are taught (Apple, 2008; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). These questions are central to any discussion of HRE, which aims to promote a distinct set of values that may or may not overlap with the values that are traditionally promoted in schools.

Critical theoretical examinations of education systems (informed by Marxist constructions of power and class relations) have conceptualised the values transmitted through formal education in primarily political terms (See Apple, 1977; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1992). Apple has written extensively about the reproduction of unequal power relations in society and legitimisation of “official knowledge,” or norms and values that are selected and administered from generation to generation by the state and the elite classes in order to preserve ideological and material dominance (Apple, 1978, 1979, 1988, 2001, 1982). This perspective recognises schools as contested spaces where different forms of knowledge (whether local, cultural, historical and/or “official”) interact with and impact one another. Apple argues that “control of cultural institutions enhances the power of particular classes to control others” (Apple, 1977, p. 27), and with respect to education, asserts that “a critical element in enhancing the ideological dominance of certain classes is the control of the knowledge preserving and producing institutions of a particular society” (Apple, 1978, p. 368). This argument has been used to show how schools at an institutional and individual level operate in ways that transmit unstated (and sometimes unintended) values, which has been referred to as the “hidden curriculum” (Jackson, 1968). According to Apple, educators must question not only the intent, but also the cultural biases, of “knowledge producers,” who range from government policymakers or authority figures, to private economically vested interest groups, but importantly, also members of civil society such as NGOs (Apple, 1977).

### **2.3.3 Traditional vs. Progressive Education**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, educationalists began to distinguish between the concepts of “traditional” and “progressive” education approaches, both in theory and in practice. The distinction has historical basis in the work of

Western educators in the US and Europe, who define traditional education as the prevailing model established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that remains a dominant feature of the educational landscape in most countries, what Scharf (1977) describes as “authoritarian, teacher-directed, and often punitive” (p. 89). Dewey offers a definition of traditional education in contrast to other socially constructed organisations in society:

The subject matter consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to the new generation. Since the subject-matter as well as standards of proper conduct are handed down from the past, the attitude of pupils must, upon the whole, be one of docility, receptivity, and obedience. The traditional scheme is, in essence, one of imposition from above and outside. (Dewey, 1938, p. 17-18)

Inherently authoritative, bureaucratic and undemocratic, traditional education represents a “contradiction between means (compulsory school attendance, state-determined curricula, and authoritarian control in the classroom) and ends (autonomous individuals and a democratic society)” (Gray & Chanoff, 1986, p. 182). In most countries, government policymakers determine the structure and content of what schools will teach, and schools operate using authoritarian, hierarchical structures.

In contrast, Dewey defines progressive education as inherently critical of traditional approaches:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (Dewey, 1938, p. 19-20)

Dewey argues that schools should emulate the types of practices that all democracies profess to practice: freedom, justice and participation. Childs (1989) identifies two key changes to traditional schooling advocated by Dewey: the transition from “passive, rote learning” to “active community life” in the school; and the idea of the school as an organisation “in vital interaction with the surrounding natural and social environment” (Childs, 1989, p. 427).

Both of these changes concern the relationship between schools and the wider social world in which they exist. Because it advocates for democratic participation and other entitlements that currently are not a feature of most schools, and because it is fundamentally about empowerment and transformation, HRE stands in contrast to traditional approaches in its progressive, utopian vision.

### **2.3.4 Progressive Education and Democratic Schools**

Progressive educators have sketched a vision of education that acknowledges the role of the school as a holistic organisation in transmitting democratic practices. Dewey is considered by scholars of democratic education as the earliest and foremost advocate and practitioner of the progressive schools movement, embodied in both his philosophical writings and his experiments in the promotion of democratic laboratory schools in Chicago in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Dewey, schools have a vital role to play in fostering democracy, and education is meaningless “as a social process...until we define the kind of society we have in mind” (Dewey, 1916, p. 112). Dewey saw democracy as the ideal organising framework for societies, calling it “the best of all social institutions” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). In defining the purposes of democratic societies to “repudiate the principle of external authority,” Dewey maintains that only education can achieve this (Dewey, 1916, p. 98). For Dewey, traditional education did not adequately address the social realities for which schools must prepare learners. He was particularly adamant about the role of the student in education, and argued for a renewed emphasis on active student participation, maintaining that “there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying” (Dewey, 1938, p. 67).

Dewey linked discourses of democratic participation in Western societies to the organisation and practice of schools, so that education exposed students to the authentic practice of democracy as part of their learning experience, specifically in the “structure of the classroom and school” (Scharf, 1977, p. 89). As discussed earlier in this chapter, recent critical theories about

education, schooling, and power advocate for democratic approaches in education to counteract dominant ideological, political and social reproduction of schools (Apple, 1978, 1982). Cohen (1998) argues that while Dewey was concerned with economic inequality, wealth and power concentration, and other societal ills brought about by capitalism, and sought to address specifically how schools could act to counter the “human and social devastation of industrial capitalism” (Cohen, 1998, p. 427), Dewey did not attempt to determine how schools could “solve the problem of how such countercultural institutions could thrive in the society they were to make over” (Ibid).

Criticism of the progressive school of thought targets approaches that lean too far in the direction of disorganised schooling and adopt a more radical anti-traditional approach. Scharf (1977) illustrates this point using the example of the “free school” movement, which he labels “a most degenerate interpretation” of Dewey’s progressive philosophy because of the absence of structure for students, who at one school he visited in California could choose to attend their classes, how they were graded, and even what their grades would be (p. 90).

Cohen argues that Dewey himself was “dismayed about what passed for child-centered education...at one point he referred to his efforts at child-centered schooling as ‘stupid’” (Cohen, 1998, p. 428). Dewey acknowledged the abstract nature of his progressive philosophies and the potential for their wide interpretation, noting that freedom as an operating principle for an educational philosophy is susceptible to the same tendencies towards dogmatic application as is traditional education (Dewey, 1938). He argued that avoiding this dogmatic interpretation requires progressivism to undergo a “critical examination of its own underlying principles” (Dewey, 1938, p. 22).

Returning to earlier criticisms of progressive education as too “laissez faire,” Scharf identifies other ways in which progressive education has been conceptualised. He highlights the community-based, “activist” school model, which advocates for active student engagement in community political and

social life as a means of gaining and building a knowledge base of democratic practices, and also the self-government model of progressive education, in which students, teachers and administrators work together in dialogue and the democratic ideal is put into practice in the organisation and management of the school (Scharf 1977).

Apple and Beane (2007) contrast the definition of progressive schooling with what they see as specifically a wider objective for democratic schooling. They recognise that both progressive and democratic schooling are “humanistic” and “child-centered,” but argue that the vision of democratic schools should be more expansive, concerned with changing the conditions that create social inequalities in schools and making links for learners between “undemocratic practices inside the school [and] larger conditions on the outside” (Beane & Apple, 2007, p. 13). Apple and Beane’s conception shares similarities to Sharf’s “activist” model of progressive education in its politicised perspective and identification of equality as a key driver for democratic practices in education. In this study, I apply conceptions of democratic education as potentially emancipatory and politically concerned with “questioning the status quo” (Shor, 1992, p. 13) to an examination of Amnesty’s *Human Rights Friendly Schools* project.

## **2.4 HRE in Theory and Practice**

HRE has been implicitly supported since the inception of the UN, which has, alongside NGOs, been a major driver of the development of the field. Article 1 of the UN charter of 1945 states that one of the body’s main purposes is “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights.” Its origin can be traced to Article 26 in the 1948 UDHR, which asserted that:

education shall be directed...to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups (United Nations, 1948).

HRE has been a part of the work of UNESCO since the 1950s (Suarez & Ramirez, 2004), when UNESCO’s Associated Schools Program began teaching human rights in formal education (Suarez, 2007). HRE can be said

to have definitively emerged as a field in the mid 1970s. In 1974, UNESCO refined the concept of HRE by crafting a recommendation concerning *Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, which was the first international education document to explicitly call for HRE to be included in educational curricula (Suarez, 2007). The UDHR, along with the UN Charter, the UNESCO constitution, and the Geneva Conventions, were all framing documents, and the recommendation's call for awareness of the rights and duties that "individuals, social groups and nations" have towards one another reflects universal ideas of human rights (UNESCO, 1974). In 1978, the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights was organised by UNESCO in Vienna. Its final document reaffirmed the UN Charter, UDHR and international human rights treaties as the basis on which HRE should be taught (UNESCO, 1980). In the 1980s, the Council of Europe also began working on the promotion of HRE within Europe.

Major action towards the establishment of global HRE practices began in the 1990s. In 1993, at the World Conference on Human Rights in Austria, 171 countries adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (United Nations, 1993). The declaration reaffirmed the commitments of the UDHR, and the Vienna Declaration called directly for sustained HRE programmes in Section D, Articles 78 and 80 of the Declaration (United Nations, 1993).

What soon followed from the explicit recommendations contained within the Vienna Declaration was the UN's first major initiative to promote HRE, the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, enacted in 1995. The Decade encouraged UN member states to adopt HRE as a major component of education at all levels. In a 2004 UN report on the achievements and shortcomings of the Decade, 28 countries reported on their progress, indicating that HRE was a part of their national agenda and that steps had been taken within their schools systems to integrate HRE into the curricula (United Nations, 2004). Shortcomings included little or no explanation of the types of HRE programmes implemented at national level, as well as a

response from many countries that a decade was not enough time for making significant progress on the goals of HRE (United Nations, 2004).

The UN followed the Decade initiative with a second initiative, the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), which aims to build on the progress made during the first decade. Having completed its first phase from 2005-2009, the WPHRE is currently in its second phase of implementation, from 2010-2014 (United Nations, 2010).

The WPHRE's two published Plan of Action documents for each phase offer a definition for and explain how nations can begin to integrate HRE into the school system (UNESCO, 2006; United Nations, 2010). HRE is "any learning, education, training and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights," that teaches not only the knowledge about human rights and human rights instruments, but also the "skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life," and the attitudes and behaviours that respect and uphold human rights (United Nations, 2010). The WPHRE first phase action plan outlined ambitious targets for national governments to implement HRE holistically in national school systems:

The rights-based approach to education implies that the school system becomes conscious of human rights and fundamental freedoms [and that] human rights are infused and implemented in the whole education system and in all learning environments. (UNESCO, 2006, pp. 37-38)

The plan of action also outlines the aspirations for human rights to be embedded in educational policy and national curricula, and even the country's constitution.

## KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF A “RIGHTS” BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION.



adapted from the world programme for human rights education.

Figure 2.3 Components of the rights-based approach to education (UNESCO, 2006)

This framework is explicitly student-centred and focuses on key areas of school life that share parallels with the key areas designated by Amnesty for HRFS, including school environment and curriculum. The framework was taken from the UN World Programme for HRE Plan of Action (UNESCO, 2006). This model assigns five key areas for a whole-school approach that attend to issues of policy implementation and professional development, conceptualising whole-school HRE as a policy framework. The Plan of Action specifies these five key areas as deriving from “research and experience worldwide” but there is no evidence that the diagram represents a competent conceptual framework for implementing the rights-based approach or five key areas.

In 2011, the field of HRE received even stronger international support as the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (United Nations, 2011). Led by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the Declaration was the result of four years of consultation and development that included efforts by an HRC advisory committee, over forty NGOs, and seven countries with a particularly strong commitment to HRE (Gerber, 2011).

### **2.4.1 Defining HRE**

Although HRE shares similarities to many other educational disciplines that promote cosmopolitan values and democracy, including development education, peace education, and citizenship education (Marks, 1983), it is distinguished by its explicit grounding in human rights principles that emerge from key UN human rights instruments. In other words, HRE is only HRE if it acknowledges explicit human rights as its basis (Flowers, 2004). Thus, the UDHR and other human rights documents such as the CRC act as normative foundations for HRE. As part of a justification for increased HRE, some scholars have conceptualised the field as a natural and necessary extension of the legal obligations of countries to adhere to human rights, arguing that education is the only way to instil human rights values so that they can in turn be promoted and protected by society at large (Symonides, 1998, p. 11).

The aims of HRE are to both increase awareness about fundamental human rights, and to instil in learners the values of human rights so that they in turn become active human rights practitioners in their daily lives; in other words, HRE is about content as well as process (Bajaj, 2011; Flowers, 2004; Tibbitts, 2002). HRE is based on principles that, while actively supporting the development of active citizenship and democracy in schools, are not limited to conceptions of democratisation. HRE also promotes universal standards for human behaviour, which imply global solidarity as well as freedom and equality. HRE can play a vital role in building social structures that support participatory democracy and the resolution of conflict, and can provide a common understanding of how to address political and social differences equitably. HRE can also contribute to fostering understanding and respect between diverse cultural communities nationally and internationally (Osler, 2005).

Because of the expansive scope of universal human rights, the purposes of HRE can be conceptualised on a number of distinct levels. Tibbitts (2002) argues that HRE has a number of different goals:

- **Values and Awareness** – Learning about human rights and developing a knowledge base, and promoting the integration of human rights into community values;
- **Accountability** – Education directed at professionals in which human rights is an element of their work (e.g. lawyers), aimed largely at supporting the application of human rights protections in their work;
- **Transformational** – Education that is meant to empower people to act to defend human rights and prevents rights violations. (Tibbitts, 2002)

Echoing this view, Cardenas (2005) sees “human rights protection, personal empowerment, nation-building, democratic participation, and conflict resolution” as key aims of HRE (Cardenas, 2005, p. 366). Flowers (2004) asserts that HRE in formal school settings must:

- Promote knowledge about explicit human rights documents;
- Use pedagogical methods consistent with human rights values;
- Lead to action in “individual lives and in local and global communities.” (Flowers, 2004, p. 121)

A popular conception similar to Flowers’ categories defines HRE as consisting of three dimensions, with the aim of teaching:

- **For** human rights – Learning in order to be able to practice human rights in one’s daily life;
- **About** human rights – Learning important knowledge about human rights principles, issues, and debates;
- **Through** human rights – Learning must take place using inclusive, participatory and democratic methods. (Lohrenscheit, 2002; Verhellen, 2000).

The concept of an education “through” human rights offers clear support for a whole-school approach that goes beyond teaching human rights in classrooms. The link between HRE and whole-school approaches dates back to a 1985 Council of Europe recommendation, R (85) 7, on the teaching of human rights in schools that stressed the importance of the “climate” of the school (Council of Europe, 1985; Starkey, 1992, p. 132). There is considerable support in the academic literature for the use of whole-school HRE as the main methodology for teaching HRE (Carter & Osler, 2000; Cunningham, 1991; Osler & Starkey, 2005). The UN has also codified its definition of HRE as being for, about and through human rights in both the

WPHRE Plan of Action, and in the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights and Training (United Nations, 1995, 2010, 2011).

Advocates for holistic HRE approaches cite the undemocratic, structural forces of traditional schools as a barrier to achieving HRE through formal curricular approaches:

Any messages on children's human rights presented through the formal curriculum risk being immediately contradicted by the messages transmitted through the structures and organisational practices of the school. (Osler & Starkey, 1998a, p. 313)

Alderson (1999) concurs:

Anti-democratic trends compromise the teaching of human rights. It is not simply that schools do not practise the human rights and democratic equality they preach. It is that many schools consistently contravene them. (Alderson, 1999)

In the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century HRE was characterized as a "collection of interesting and discrete programs" that had yet to evolve into its own "full-fledged field" (Tibbitts, 2002). Yet in the past decade holistic HRE has become the international standard by which HRE is advocated. Gerber (2011) notes that by using the for/about/through framework, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training affirms a definition of HRE as more than knowledge based (about). The Declaration endorses a vision of HRE as transformative, enabled by participatory learning that will develop learners into empowered citizens who promote human rights (Ibid).

The UN WPHRE draws on a holistic conception of HRE in articulating a "rights-based approach" to the implementation of HRE in national education systems (UNESCO, 2006, p. 3; United Nations, 2010). It identifies five key areas for implementing HRE in schools: educational policies; policy implementation; the learning environment; teaching and learning; and professional development of school personnel (Ibid). These areas closely match conceptions of the whole-school approach to HRE advocated by Amnesty International and many other NGOs, including UNICEF UK and ActionAid (both of whom have since 2005 launched high profile whole-school HRE projects).

Bajaj's classification of HRE (2011) is useful for understanding the range of ideologies and potential outcomes for HRE within formal education. Bajaj elaborates three models for HRE that correspond to ideological orientation:

- ***HRE for Global Citizenship*** – emphasis is placed on HRE as a “new global political order,” with desired outcomes of international awareness and interdependence leading to membership in the international community (cosmopolitanism);
- ***HRE for Co-existence*** – emphasis is placed on HRE as a tool for learning to live together, with desired outcomes of inter-group contact and mutual understanding leading to social cohesion;
- ***HRE for Transformative Action*** – emphasis is placed on HRE as a form of “radical politics of inclusion and social justice,” with desired outcomes of participation and activism leading to social change (utopianism). (Bajaj, 2011, p. 491)

Bajaj's models further demonstrate the multi-layered conceptions of HRE that can be applied to its use in formal education, and also illustrate some of the possible tensions between the purposes of HRE (for example, HRE for struggle versus HRE for co-existence).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The UDHR and other UN conventions and treaties on human rights act as a foundation for promoting education about, for and through human rights. The key concepts of utopianism and cosmopolitanism contained within the UDHR underpin my analysis of HRE in formal education.

Analysis of HRE in formal education also requires analysis of the historical and present context for values education and democratic education in formal education. Within formal education, values informing educational practice have been theorised as contested spaces often occupied by “official” knowledge and “hidden” curricula. Values are inherently political, and subjected to power struggles that ultimately influence what is learned and how it is learned in schools.

Within formal education, traditional structures have often served to undermine the potential for democratic practices that can prepare young people to

participate in democratic societies. Democratic approaches to education have sought to counteract dominant approaches and advocate for schools to not only model democratic processes, but to act as emancipatory institutions and to transform society. HRE shares similar foundational principles as many progressive and democratic education approaches, since it is intended to be transformative and to address systemic injustices within and beyond schools.

By virtue of its multi-level approach, HRE aims to empower learners to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to protect and promote human rights in their own communities and globally. The consensus around HRE as being about, for, and through human rights provides a framework for viewing HRE in formal education holistically. The theoretical and empirical literatures demonstrate that HRE must be holistic if it is to be effectively practiced in schools. This approach has been popularised by the major NGOs discussed in this thesis.

This chapter has explored the values that underpin HRE and has outlined a vision of human rights and HRE as utopian and cosmopolitan – aimed at developing values of global citizenship, and at confronting the existing (oppressive, undemocratic) structures of traditional state schools in order to transform society. I have noted how power and politics within formal “traditional” education have largely shaped the type of education that learners receive. HRE proposes a radical agenda that fundamentally challenges the status quo of school life.

In the next chapter I focus on HRE projects in England to elaborate the conceptual framework for this study. I survey the range of educational practices since the 1990s (specifically development education, citizenship education and student voice) that have enabled and supported HRE practices in schools (3.1), and I review frameworks for past and current whole-school HRE projects (3.2). I then explore the challenges that the structure and content of modern state school practices pose to the successful implementation of rights-based policies in formal education (3.3). Finally, I

review literature around educational partnerships to assess their use by NGOs to promote rights-based approaches (3.4).

## **Chapter 3**

### **HRE and NGOs: Implementing Whole-School Human Rights**

Chapter 2 explored how the vision of education contained within the UDHR and CRC provides a normative framework for exploring Amnesty's formal education projects (2.1, 2.2). I discussed the ways in which rights principles were linked to the theory and practice of formal education (2.3), before exploring the concepts that have informed the modern field of HRE theory and practice (2.3).

In this chapter, I examine HRE practices in further detail by focusing on the educational landscape in England in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as on previous research on whole-school HRE and NGO-supported HRE. I review the literature and existing research on whole-school HRE approaches and the challenges that impede their successful implementation.

In focusing on the whole-school approach as the preferred educational intervention for observation, I intend to merge several discursive threads that delineate the theoretical and practical boundaries for exploring Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* (HRFS) project. My analysis aims to connect these separate discourses to the practice of whole-school HRE in schools, in order to develop theoretical frameworks for effective enactment of rights-based educational policies.

In **section 3.1**, I review the range of **educational approaches that share characteristics with HRE**. I discuss the emergence of HRE discourses and NGO-formal education partnership in England through development education practices in the 1970s, and citizenship education and student voice in 21<sup>st</sup> century British educational policy and practice.

In **section 3.2**, I discuss the **development of whole-school HRE practices**, and explore how NGOs adopt whole-school approaches as opposed to

different, less complex and resource-intensive approaches. I then discuss the range of existing whole-school HRE approaches and research on their impact.

In **section 3.3**, I explore how **(1) neoliberal educational policies, (2) discourses of control and behaviour management, and (3) micropolitics** interact with, influence and complicate HRE formal education projects in England. These three areas provide a framework for analysis of whole-school HRE projects:

- The interaction of HRE approaches with dominant conservative and neoliberal policy imperatives;
- The interaction of behaviour management policies and control systems with rights-based policies;
- The relationship between school micropolitics and HRE projects.

Finally, in **section 3.4**, I review literature around **educational partnerships between schools and NGOs**. I consider their perceived purposes, intended outcomes, and how they are operationalised in formal education settings.

### **3.1 Rights-Based Education in UK Schools**

In the 21st century, human rights principles are supported by the majority of British society due to a strong set of legal codes for their implementation in the UK and a large grassroots and civil society sector actively working in the human rights arena (Donald, Watson, & McClean, 2009). Human rights have been popularised in British culture by NGOs such as Amnesty International and Oxfam (both established in the UK), well known organisations with respected and trusted “brands.” Their reputations for rights-based and charitable work and the fact that they have education departments producing materials and guidance to a very high professional quality have facilitated their entry into state schools, where they are viewed as bringing in added good to schools that normally do not possess curricular or pedagogical expertise in human rights.

This section examines practices that have supported and developed HRE in schools as well as the range of factors that can limit its wider practice. In the sub-sections that follow, I look at early examples of NGO work in the field of

development education, and review citizenship education and the movement for student voice in British education to situate to the present context for HRE. My interest is in understanding the ways in which such practices have influenced schools to use the language and concepts of rights as a basis for promoting democratic and cosmopolitan values.

### **3.1.1 Development Education**

Since the 1970s, development education has been a popular form of NGO-supported educational work in British schools, bringing a rights-based, global perspective to classrooms (Starkey, 1994). Schools engage in forms of development education such as conducting fundraisers for local and global development charities, using NGO-produced curricular materials and teacher trainings, or establishing links with schools from developing countries to learn more about international development.

Development education emerged from the progressive socio-political atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. As international development in what was known as the 'third world' gained legitimacy within the international community, intergovernmental organisations, national governments, religious groups, and members of civil society turned to education as a necessary next step to achieving certain development goals (Osler, 1994). Championed in particular by NGOs such as Oxfam and Christian Aid, the movement's initial priorities were to educate the public in industrialised countries about the purposes and goals of development, and to build support for development aid organisations (Harrison, 2008).

Development education raises awareness and understanding of the world by considering how people are connected and the different ways in which they live. Focusing particularly on the differences between developed and developing worlds, development education aims to empower people to take action to make a better world by building skills and values that promote personal and collective equality and social responsibility (Bourn, 2008). Like HRE, development education encourages learners to forge a path from understanding to action for positive global change. Development education

can be described as learning *about* and *for* development, and HRE shares a similarly constructed learning process, based on learning *about* and *for* human rights (Lohrenscheit, 2002). Where development education seeks to illuminate processes that shape international political and social relations around development, however, the purpose of HRE is to raise awareness of and spur action towards promoting universal rights. Whereas development may occur without education for development, “human rights cannot be secured without education in human rights; those who are unaware of their rights are in no position to claim them” (Osler & Starkey, 1998b). Although development education does not explicitly aim to teach human rights, rights are embedded in the processes and intended outcomes of development education strategies.

Development education and HRE are conclusively linked (Starkey, 1994), but the extent to which explicit HRE practices appear in development education approaches and materials appears to be limited. Even so, the rise in popularity since the late 1990s of school linking projects aimed at fostering understanding between British and developing country schools has created prominent spaces for rights learning. One example is PLAN UK’s school linking programme between schools in the UK, Malawi, Kenya and Sierra Leone, which aimed to create dialogues between linked students around the subject of children’s rights in Africa and the UK (Edge et al., 2008). The British Council’s *Connecting Classrooms* programme is another popular example, although it focuses more explicitly on global citizenship than HRE.

### **3.1.2 Citizenship Education**

HRE shares significant parallels with citizenship education. The challenges of globalization, increased migration and urbanisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have compelled governments around the world to increase engagement with citizenship education (Starkey, 2006). Educational policies at the turn of the century promoting citizenship education in England have brought democratic and progressive approaches to the mainstream, particularly regarding student participation in school affairs and the importance of becoming a “global” citizen. The formalization of citizenship as a compulsory subject in the

England national curriculum from 2002 was the culmination of a process that began with the establishment in 1997 of a commission chaired by Bernard Crick to draft recommendations on citizenship education to the government (Crick, 1998).

Citizenship education has provided a space for the increased promotion of democratic and cosmopolitan values and practices within the compulsory curriculum. As a result, HRE practice has grown substantially in formal education in England since 2000 through citizenship education approaches (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Spencer (2000) suggests that because of their emphasis on social and moral responsibility, human rights principles should “lie at the heart of citizenship education” (p. 31). Others argue that citizenship education can provide a platform for multicultural societies to adopt shared democratic values based on human rights, justice and equality in order to create a balance of national unity and cultural diversity (Banks et al., 2005).

Human rights provide a strong theoretical foundation for citizenship and democratic education (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Osler (2008) argues that HRE represents a foundation for and must underpin citizenship education efforts, which links the formation of a citizenship/moral education discourse with the establishment of explicit HRE programmes in schools. For Alderson, the CRC is the ideal foundation for citizenship and democracy education approaches because it outlines clear normative standards for citizenship (Alderson, 2000).

England’s citizenship curriculum justifies inclusion of HRE approaches in schools, and both the Key Stage 3 and 4 citizenship programmes of study directly cite the learning of rights and responsibilities and human rights as overall objectives (QCA, 2007a, 2007b). A close examination reveals that much of the prescribed content on rights contained within the citizenship curriculum is concerned with examining rights in the context of citizen responsibilities, particularly focusing on understanding how and why rights compete or conflict and what can be done to achieve a balance in rights (QCA, 2007a). Although the citizenship curriculum for both key stages 3 and 4 aims for learners to become responsible and positive citizens capable of living

safe and healthy lives, it is not clear that struggles for justice and equality are central to the pedagogical approach of citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Moreover, the citizenship curriculum does not call for schools, as institutions, to model holistic democratic processes that are promoted in some citizenship approaches (QCA, 2007a, 2007b). Scholars have argued that schools teaching human rights and citizenship without reflecting on the role of rights-based approaches to leadership and management may be undermining the goals of citizenship education (Alderson, 1999; Osler & Starkey, 1998a).

### **3.1.3 Student Voice**

The development of citizenship education and HRE practices in England has been aided by a steady growth of initiatives that focus on student participation in the classroom and in the school organisation. *Student voice* as a field of enquiry and practice directly supports HRE practices, addressing power relations, inclusivity, and democratic participation. In the UK, Fielding and others have conducted research and written extensively on the rise of student voice initiatives in British schools (Davies, Williams, & Yamashita, 2007; Fielding, 2004b; Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007; Shallcross, Robinson, Pace, & Tamoutseli, 2007). Student voice initiatives have been present in education since the 1970s (Rudduck, 2006), but have seen a surge in popularity in the UK since the turn of the century (Fielding, 2004a).

Student voice practices can include consultation on school management processes, student-led research, involvement in school councils and other governing bodies, and participation in classroom activities (Fielding, 2007a). Student voice aims to empower students by promoting “a process that allow youths to state opinions and be heard, resulting in meaningful participation in decisions which concern them” (O'Brien, 2010, p. 2)

Whitty and Wisby's analysis of school councils in the UK identify four elements that animate the student voice movement: children's rights; active citizenship; school improvement; and personalisation (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). The notion that children have rights provides the justification for student voice approaches; active citizenship and school improvement are two educational

processes and goals envisioned for students and schools; and personalisation reflects an educational philosophy informed by neoliberal policies that casts students as consumers of education, who are entitled to play a role in its delivery in order to meet their specific, individual needs.

In terms of school improvement, there is considerable empirical support for viewing student voice approaches as providing a means not simply to a more democratic school, but a more effective school (Davies & Yamashita, 2007; Roberts & Nash, 2009; Yonezawa & Jones, 2007). Government support for student voice has legitimised the field as a form of good practice for improving the experiences of children in schools. The UK Education Act of 2002, mandated schools to “have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State or the National Assembly about consultation with pupils in connection with the taking of decisions affecting them” (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2002, p. 105). This regulation was further extended in the 2008 Education and Skills Act (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2008). Government support for student voice extends beyond education policy: the Children Act of 2004 makes several references to the importance of considering “the views and interests of children,” and mandates one of the functions of the Children’s Commissioner as “promoting awareness of the views and interests of children in England” (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2004, p. 1).

In 2005, The Office of Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills (Ofsted), the government’s educational inspectorate, revised its inspection framework and incorporated student voice as an element of schools assessment. In its most recently published framework for student inspection, it states, “inspectors talk to a range of pupils. In addition, they gather a sample of the views of pupils via a pupils’ questionnaire” (Ofsted, 2012, p. 19), and under its list of “principles of school inspection” states that all inspections will be accountable by “striving to inform inspection activities by gathering the views of pupils and parents and those who have a significant interest in the school” (Ofsted, 2012, p. 12). Ofsted’s inclusion of pupil views in its inspection

framework implicitly encourages schools to promote student feedback on school improvement processes.

In terms of personalisation, the government has used the concept of student voice as a rationale to build support for its personalisation policies. The Department for Education (DFE) defines personalisation as a way of understanding the relationship between government and citizens:

It is about putting citizens at the heart of public services and enabling them to have a say in the design and improvement of the organisations that serve them. (DFES, 2004a)

Customer satisfaction is a dominant feature of personalisation discourse (1.2.1), representing a form of conceptual alignment with student voice practices:

Personalised learning builds on the pupils' prior learning and responds appropriately to the 'pupil voice'. The key challenge for personalisation in the classroom is how to cater simultaneously for all the different needs in one class. (DCSF, 2008b)

In this example voice is framed as shaping the development of neoliberal-influenced personalisation approaches.

Whilst supporters of student voice note its potential to improve schools, promote democratic citizenship, and foster active student participation in school life, human rights do not appear to prominently figure in the student voice literature as a potential framework for action. Like development education and citizenship education, human rights principles align with student voice practices, but do not form an explicit basis for their promotion. HRE does not enjoy the type of raised profile or government support of student voice or citizenship education, but has through these three areas become integrated into many forms of teacher curricula and school projects.

### **3.2 Rights-Based Education and NGOs**

NGOs lead the field of curricular and pedagogical development for HRE. The majority of HRE approaches have either been developed to support

citizenship/voice approaches, or as stand alone materials designed to specifically teach human rights as its own subject (the majority of Amnesty's educational development).

The range of NGOs producing HRE materials for British schools include development, children's rights, and human rights organisations with differing primary objectives but overlapping social justice missions. Examples of NGO HRE work used by development agencies to support global citizenship education include Oxfam's teaching and curricular resources for schools (Oxfam, 2005, 2006, 2007), which promote a whole-school framework for integrating global citizenship into all areas of the curriculum. Global children's charity PLAN UK's 2007-2010 school linking programme used a children's rights curricular framework to promote links between schools in the UK and schools in Kenya, Malawi, and Sierra Leone, to share between countries their learning about children's rights (Edge et al., 2008). Save the Children UK has produced issue-specific teacher materials, such as a resource aimed at teaching students about conflicts in Sudan (Save the Children, 2006b), and also broader materials like its 2006 teachers' guide to integrating children's rights across the curriculum (Save the Children, 2006a). Yet the domestic education work of development NGOs has often been perceived internally as peripheral to core organisational objectives, evidenced by the closing of Save the Children's development education department in 2008, and the elimination of PLAN UK's education department in 2011.

Education efforts from human rights NGOs have taken the form of teacher curricular resources, frameworks for using rights in schools, and/or support materials for existing curricula (most often citizenship). The British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) in 2008 produced the key stage 3 resource *Right Here Right Now: Teaching Citizenship through Human Rights*, working with the UK Ministry of Justice (MOJ), DFE, and Amnesty. *Right Here Right Now* illustrates the types of outcomes achieved through NGO-government partnership, which are sometimes subject to political tensions. Bowring (2012) argues that the BIHR resource's presentation of human rights as "timeless [and] always already in existence," (p. 56) omits the critical foundations for

human rights as emergent from revolutionary struggles and conflict. His critique of *Right Here Right Now* ends in an assertion and then a question:

Human rights were born, and come back to life again and again, through an unending struggle against oppression, exploitation, inequality and discrimination. How does the committed teacher put such principles into the practice of pedagogy? (Bowring, 2012, p. 63)

Bowring's criticism of *Right Here Right Now* as disengaged from the politically transformative potential of HRE reflects the tension between the emancipatory aims of human rights NGOs and the potential limitations of official support for aspects of HRE that might cause controversy within the school.

### **3.2.1 Amnesty International and HRE**

In England, Amnesty's educational work has been significantly less encumbered by such restraints. Although Amnesty has been involved in several collaborations with government, their educational output has tended to reflect the campaigns that organisationally are at the heart of its mission: freeing prisoners of conscience, working to end human rights abuses around the world, and fighting for social justice. As a result, Amnesty is perhaps the most clearly recognised NGO in UK schools for their explicitly human rights-focused education work.

Amnesty's UK section has a long history of working in and developing HRE projects and materials for secondary schools. Since the 1980s Amnesty has promoted human rights in schools through the establishment of school youth groups that provide guidance and resources to campaign on behalf of prisoners of conscience, usually in the form of letter writing campaigns. There are Amnesty Youth Action Groups at approximately 700 UK secondary schools, the majority of which are in England (Murphy & Ruane, 2003). Amnesty's support of youth groups at both secondary schools and universities is impressive. They offer groups campaign resources, activist toolkits, an Urgent Action Network to connect youth groups, and regularly distribute campaign, promotional and educational materials and a monthly magazine to each of their groups. This area of work, however, is explicitly extra-curricular,

encouraging the formation of school groups working on Amnesty campaigns during non-classroom time.

Amnesty UK's first school curricular pack, *Teaching and Learning about Human Rights*, was published in 1983, containing a set of 12 lesson units emphasising the rights contained in the UDHR and the range of human rights approaches used by the organisation (Bobbett, 1991). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Amnesty published a number of curricular resources aimed at teaching human rights through individual subjects, including mathematics, history, French and Spanish (Brown, 2002a, 2002b; Brown & Slater, 2002; Wright, 2004). Further examples of Amnesty's curriculum development in the past decade include *Our World Our Rights*, a resource for primary and middle schools that constructs HRE holistically as "knowledge *about*, values *through*, and skills *for* human rights" and offers guidance for how schools can teach human rights across the curriculum and across the whole school (Amnesty International UK, 2010, p. 6, emphasis in original). The resource *Making Human Rights Real* was produced by Amnesty International UK in 2009 as part of its work to teach citizenship through human rights in the Northern Ireland curriculum (Amnesty International UK, 2009).

Outside of the UK, resources and projects from Ireland and the USA have influenced or supported the development of HRFS. Since 2000, Amnesty Ireland and Amnesty UK have collaborated to develop a whole-school approach to primary education that supported a cross-border educational initiative between Northern Ireland and Ireland, *Lift Off* (appendix 15). Amnesty Ireland's most recent publication, *A Whole-School Approach to Human Rights Education*, was developed in partnership with Irish Aid, Ireland's department of foreign affairs, to highlight lessons learned from the Amnesty Ireland section's participation in HRFS, and to create a smaller resource to disseminate to schools interested in using the approach (Amnesty International Ireland, 2011).

In a 2007 curricular resource, Amnesty USA endorsed the UN's whole-school HRE definition of the rights-based approach to education (2.4) (Amnesty International USA, 2007). In 2003 and 2004, it partnered with New Visions for Public Schools to launch a small charter school in Brooklyn, branded an "International Amnesty School." Initial plans for the school focused on promoting human rights through school culture and mission statement, governance and democratic participation, and inclusion of family and community members in the work of the school (Amnesty International USA, 2003). The development of the new school proved short-lived. According to an HRE coordinator at the IS who had been involved in consulting Amnesty USA during development of HRFS, plans to launch the school were abandoned after Amnesty USA determined that use of the Amnesty brand to support a school was too politically controversial for the organisation and for the school.



*Figure 3.1 International Amnesty School Logo (Amnesty International USA, 2003)*

Although its Ireland and USA sections have both previously attempted whole-school HRE, HRFS is Amnesty's first initiative at the international level to outline a holistic vision for HRE in schools.

Amnesty's global HRE strategy, outlined in 2005, framed HRE as a tool for expanding its political movement, and for contributing to core strategies of campaigning for effective human rights (Amnesty International, 2005). Strategic Objective 1.3 declared the organisation's goal of influencing "formal and informal education institutions and through them rising generations," and outlined a key goal of "developing and disseminating models for creating a human rights culture in schools and integrating human rights throughout the curriculum" (Ibid, p. 7). During my work as a consultant with Amnesty developing the HRFS guidelines, I was regularly referred to the global HRE strategy, and through discussions with colleagues it became clear that the development of a holistic framework for Amnesty's HRE work reflected

organisational consensus that the global vision for HRE needed to change from a piecemeal approach. Specifically, this entailed moving beyond initiatives that targeted only teachers or students and linking up Amnesty's substantial resource development in both areas under a holistic framework. Amnesty's decision to work more intensively within formal education reflected several strategic objectives outlined in the global HRE strategy, including 2.3, which framed students as new constituencies of human rights activists.

### **3.2.2 The Emergence of Whole-School HRE**

The Council of Europe (COE) in the mid-1980s first articulated the conceptualisation of HRE as holistic. A 1984 COE-produced resource for teachers asserted that education should be *for, through* and *about* human rights, a multi-level conception of rights learning that implied a holistic framework for schools (Lister, 1984). Recommendation No. R (85) 7 on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools specifically outlined the role of an "appropriate" school climate for promoting "effective learning about human rights," as well as the need for teachers to incorporate human rights into their pedagogical practices (Council of Europe, 1985, p. 3). The recommendation also encouraged schools to promote community and parental participation in school activities, along with NGO partnerships to promote HRE, further supporting the inclusive vision of whole-school HRE.

In England, the idea of a "human rights school" was first articulated in 1991 by a secondary school headteacher in Oxfordshire (Cunningham, 1991). Cunningham captures the essential idea of the whole-school approach by framing the school as a community of practice, which "can, and should be, an example of respect for the dignity of the individual and for difference, for tolerance, and for equality of opportunity" (Cunningham, 1991, p. 90).

For Cunningham, the key elements of an effective human rights secondary school are:

1. **Vision or ethos** based on universal human rights frameworks;
2. **Human rights learning** for all members of the school community, including parents;

3. **Headteacher leadership** (a key factor for success);
4. **Political participation of all school community members**;
5. **A system for dealing with conflict** and offences within the school **based on human rights**;
6. **A school environment that supports** and emphasises the school's commitment to **human rights**, and clearly articulates human rights values across the school. (Cunningham, 1991, 2000)

Reflecting on 25 years of practice in two secondary schools, Cunningham argues that the most important aspect of democratising schools involves a patient, trial-and-error approach to implementation:

We must let [young people] practise. Giving students a real chance to be involved means that they will make mistakes. Coping with the results of these mistakes is an important element of a genuine effort to develop participation. (Cunningham, 2000, p. 133)

This recommendation focuses primarily on how whole-school HRE affects students. Cunningham's work in Oxfordshire prefigured the articulation of a more complex form of whole-school HRE both internationally and in England.

### **3.2.3 21<sup>st</sup> Century Whole-School HRE**

Since 2000, the proliferation of whole-school HRE approaches within and beyond the UK has paralleled an emergent discourse of holistic HRE supported by the UN and the COE. Since 2001, two major UK NGO-supported whole-school HRE initiatives have been implemented and evaluated, providing a significant evidence base to examine its influence in schools. These projects are discussed in the following sub-sections.

#### **3.2.3.1 Rights Respect and Responsibility – Hampshire County, England**

In 2003, Hampshire County Council and the Hampshire Local Education Authority (LEA) launched the *Rights, Respect and Responsibility* (RRR) programme, which by 2010 had been implemented in approximately 400 primary and secondary schools. The approach originated from an initiative in Cape Breton, Canada that created a children's rights curriculum for 13-15 year-old students, and was funded in part by the Canadian government, who supported teacher training, curriculum development and on-going research

evaluation (Covell & Howe, 2001). RRR produced three annual evaluations of thirteen participating primary schools, along with a number of academic articles arguing that whole-school HRE positively impacted schools (Covell, 2010; Covell & Howe, 2005b, 2007, 2008, 2011).

Drawing on the CRC as a framework, RRR's four key principles define rights as:

1. Universal;
2. Current (applicable to all children in the present, not in the future as a reward);
3. Possessing international authority; and
4. Expressing the value of every child. (HIAP, 2012)

In addition to these principles, RRR identifies four specific areas of school life where rights principles should be integrated:

1. Leadership and management;
2. Ethos;
3. Teaching and learning; and
4. Relationships within the school and the wider world. (Ibid)

These principles closely mirror Cunningham's principles of leadership, ethos and learning (3.2.2). In addition to key principles and areas of school life, RRR's project framework highlights four aspects of rights learning across two key areas (teaching and learning, and ethos) that delineate the journey to becoming rights respecting:

## From engagement to transformation – progress to a rights-respecting school

					Rights-respecting school (transforming)	
		Rights lessons (engaging)	Lessons about the Convention	Rights-related lessons	Integrated rights perspectives	Participatory whole-school model
<b>Teaching and learning</b>	<p>Specific knowledge-giving. To build awareness of the Convention and its implications.</p>	<p>Investigative, collaborative and reflective aspects involved in lesson organisation, but lesson remains self-contained. Lesson content identifies situations and behaviour which affirm or deny rights; resulting impacts identified; options for positive change explored.</p>	<p>Rights perspectives permeate planning and delivery; RRR imbues lessons with context and purpose; connections made to childrens' own experiences and perceptions and rights awareness developed from there. Diverse needs and perspectives reflected in decision making, displays, language, resources, visitors, treatment of new arrivals, linking ...</p>	<p>Children given opportunities to identify ways forward in their own learning and to be involved in self-assessment. Teaching style tends towards a shared and optimistic view of education as part of a process for positive personal and social change.</p>		
<b>Ethos</b>	<p>Immersion time and assemblies to share and validate importance of rights for all. Consensual agreements such as charters provide reference points for handling positive and negative behaviour.</p>	<p>Teacher models rights- respecting vocabulary and behaviour with children.</p>	<p>Adults model rights-respecting behaviour; rights-affirming behaviour acknowledged. Children increasingly trusted to assume responsibilities. Perspectives from wider community and world included and valued.</p>	<p>Appropriate decision making and accountability shared and devolved across school community. Wider community and world treated as equals in partnership. Culture of <i>positive change</i> is possible encouraged across the school.</p>		

Table 3.1 Framework for progressing to a rights-respecting school (HIAP, 2007)

The CRC is the foundational framework (lessons about the conventions) beginning the journey. Schools then progress to implementing HRE in curricular and pedagogical practices (rights-related lessons), after which rights are then integrated into policies, governance and community (integrated rights perspectives). Finally, the transformed rights-respecting school (participatory whole-school model) is an educational utopia where students input into their own learning, teaching is positive and collaborative, and democratic practices anchor school decisions, thus creating a “culture of positive change” in the school (HIAP, 2007).

As part of the project, Hampshire County and the Canadian government provided training sessions to teachers in RRR schools. RRR’s project website is the main form of material support for implementation, providing a wide range of primary and secondary curricular and project materials, teacher development and support materials, and research evidence from the project’s evaluations along with case studies of participating schools.

One interesting aspect of RRR concerns its handling of potentially controversial aspects of human rights for schools and teachers:

To gain wider support for the program, the decision was made to include the terms ‘responsibility’ and ‘respect’ in the program name rather than simply ‘rights’. This made the program much more appealing and avoided controversy sometimes associated with the term ‘children’s rights’. (Covell, 2010, p. 123)

This decision acknowledges both the contested nature of human rights in the public sphere and anxieties about the potential politicisation of education. Use of ‘respect’ and ‘responsibility’ in the RRR title coheres with discourses of authority, even if within a human rights framework the words imply an understanding of how entitlements are balanced with collective responsibility. For project organisers, gaining wider support for RRR meant diluting a potentially politically charged concept of rights with the more elastic concepts of respect and responsibility. This pragmatic approach obscures the foundation of human rights as emergent from struggle.

Evaluation of RRR combined qualitative and quantitative approaches over a period of three years and three annual points of contact, using grounded theory (thematically grouping qualitative data) to classify the qualitative responses given (Covell & Howe, 2007). Over an eight-year period, the research outlined a number of significant outcomes and benefits from implementation of the RRR framework, including:

1. Improved social relationships among students of all age groups;
2. Improved behaviour among students of all age groups;
3. Improved achievement among students of all age groups;
4. More respect by students for each other and for the school environment;
5. Higher levels of student participation in the classroom;
6. Higher levels of student participation in extra-curricular activities;
7. Enhanced academic engagement;
8. Empowering and boosting teacher morale;
9. Increased understanding of rights and responsibilities amongst students;
10. Improved school ethos that emphasises mutual respect and positive relationships. (Covell & Howe, 2005a, 2007, 2008; Covell, Howe, & McNeil, 2010)

The findings assert that students in schools where the RRR approach was successfully implemented experienced “improved critical thinking skills, confidence in tackling new tasks, increased SATs scores, [and] increased self-regulatory capacity” (Covell & Howe, 2007, p. 1).

The 2005 evaluation interviewed 11 headteachers and 12 classroom teachers across 18 schools, and primarily aimed to gauge perspectives on training, implementation challenges, perceived success factors, impact on student behaviour and attitudes, and teachers’ experiences within the classroom. The 2007 evaluation sampled 16 of the original 18 schools consisting of 15 headteachers, 16 teachers and 96 students. Drawing on results from the 2005 evaluation that highlighted significant differences between schools based on levels of implementation, the researchers divided the schools into two groups where RRR was either fully implemented (FI) or partially implemented (PI), using criteria of two-thirds teacher respondents and the headteacher in a given school self-rating their implementation of children’s rights at the maximum level (8 on a scale of 1 to 8). This allowed a comparison of FI and

PI schools in order to generate insights into what aspects of RRR were implemented by each, and how. The final evaluation in 2008 sampled 13 of the original schools, concluding that five of these schools had completely implemented RRR. The final evaluation, which surveyed headteachers, teachers and students, supported evidence from previous evaluations and highlighted findings suggesting areas for future research. In particular, the research found that children in PI schools where responsibilities were taught instead of or as more important than rights led to “children’s misunderstanding of rights as contingent on fulfilling responsibilities or as synonymous with rules” and use of RRR as a tool for managing behaviour (Covell & Howe, 2008, p. 3). The use of HRE as an element of behavioural strategy is discussed further in Chapter 6. The evaluation also found that schools in the most disadvantaged areas where RRR had been fully implemented exhibited more pronounced positive effects than their less disadvantaged counterparts (Ibid).

Data from the RRR evaluations supports claims that whole-school HRE leads to positive student outcomes and improved schools. The authors contend that the longitudinal nature of the study demonstrated “increasing improvements in children’s behaviors and attitudes over a three-year period” (Covell et al., 2010, p. 121).

The study identified several key factors influencing project success:

1. Leadership, commitment, and planning;
2. Teacher attitudes;
3. Resources and training;
4. Perceived fit with existing policies and programmes;
5. Depth of whole-school involvement. (Covell et al., 2010)

Leadership appeared to be a critical factor influencing successful implementation:

Implementation was most sustained and progressive where headteachers were fully supportive of RRR, were strategic in its implementation, and were able to use RRR as an overarching integrative framework into which all other initiatives were fit. (Covell & Howe, 2007, pp. 17-18)

Although RRR is a whole-school project, evaluation focused primarily on student outcomes. The evaluation acknowledged the challenges of teacher buy-in but did not solicit views on the role of teachers in development of RRR.

The RRR evaluations are potentially problematic in terms of verifiability. Grouping schools as fully or partially implemented based on self-selected answers rather than any sort of evaluative criteria is potentially misleading, as the definition of fully implemented may be conceived differently by both respondents and the researchers. Furthermore, the researchers used the distinction of schools that were fully implemented versus partially implemented schools in order to highlight a range of positive outcomes for the fully implemented schools that appear to be markedly different from those of the partially implemented schools.

The evaluations do not present a methodology, although they do share some statistical data, interview questions, and participant responses. Many of the interview questions solicit attitudes towards (e.g. “does having rights mean you can do what you want?”) and knowledge of (e.g. “what rights should children have?”) human rights, but neglect areas of policy and do not appear to be structured in relation to RRR’s four key principles and four areas of school life. The evaluations eagerly validate the transformative potential of whole-school HRE, but explain little about the processes schools used to progress through the RRR project framework. Due to this, it is difficult to link the findings to the RRR framework for understanding how schools can become more rights-respecting. Nonetheless, RRR is a significant example of successful whole-school HRE, and its popularity and contribution to empirical knowledge on whole-school HRE has directly influenced the development of the two largest NGO-led global whole-school HRE approaches, HRFS and UNICEF UK’s *Rights Respecting Schools Award*.

### **3.2.3.2 UNICEF UK’S Rights Respecting Schools Award – England**

In 2004, working with several schools in Hampshire County, UNICEF UK launched the *Rights Respecting Schools Award* (RRSA) pilot programme (UNICEF UK, 2008). In 2007, the DFE funded RRSA expansion to five LEAs,

and also impact evaluation over a three-year period. In 2008, the project expanded to Canada.

RRSA uses the CRC to support delivery of England's citizenship curriculum, and also contributes to goals outlined in existing government programmes, including the Every Child Matters agenda and the Government's Children Plan (UNICEF UK, 2008). RRSA is a reward scheme in which schools implement a rights-respecting ethos into school culture, and are then judged to have earned the award at two distinct levels. Since 2004, over 1600 primary and secondary schools have registered for RRSA (Sebba & Robinson, 2010).

UNICEF outlines four standards schools must work towards in order to receive the RRS award:

1. Leadership and management embed values of the UNCRC in the life of the school;
2. All members of the school community know and understand the UNCRC and how it informs school ethos and curriculum;
3. Teaching and learning takes place in rights-respecting classrooms;
4. Students actively participate in decision-making throughout the school. (UNICEF UK, 2010b)

This framework of leadership, explicit human rights knowledge, pedagogy and active citizenship is essentially the same as RRR, the only exception being that strand four in RRR is "rights-respecting relationships," and in RRSA is "active citizenship". The similarities reflect the outcomes of collaborative partnership between Hampshire County and UNICEF in piloting both approaches.

The projects differ mainly in terms of implementation structure. Within each of the four standards, UNICEF provides guidance to schools outlining the requirements in each standard for achieving Level 1 and Level 2 status. Schools are given benchmarks, validation statements, and an action plan to implement RRSA (UNICEF UK, 2008; Waller, 2007). Like RRR, the overall goal is for schools to find "ways to embed the UNCRC in their ethos and curriculum so that a rights-respecting culture" (Ibid, p. 18), but the method

used by UNICEF involves internal (school) and external (UNICEF) accreditation. Between 2004-2007, over 30 schools had achieved Level 1 status while five had achieved Level 2 (Waller, 2007). By 2008, 102 schools had achieved Level 1 and 13 had achieved Level 2.

The key elements of the RRSA 'journey' have been developed over eight years and consist of fourteen steps across three phases (UNICEF UK, 2010a). They are outlined in the following diagram:

## JOURNEY TO THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD (LEVEL 2)

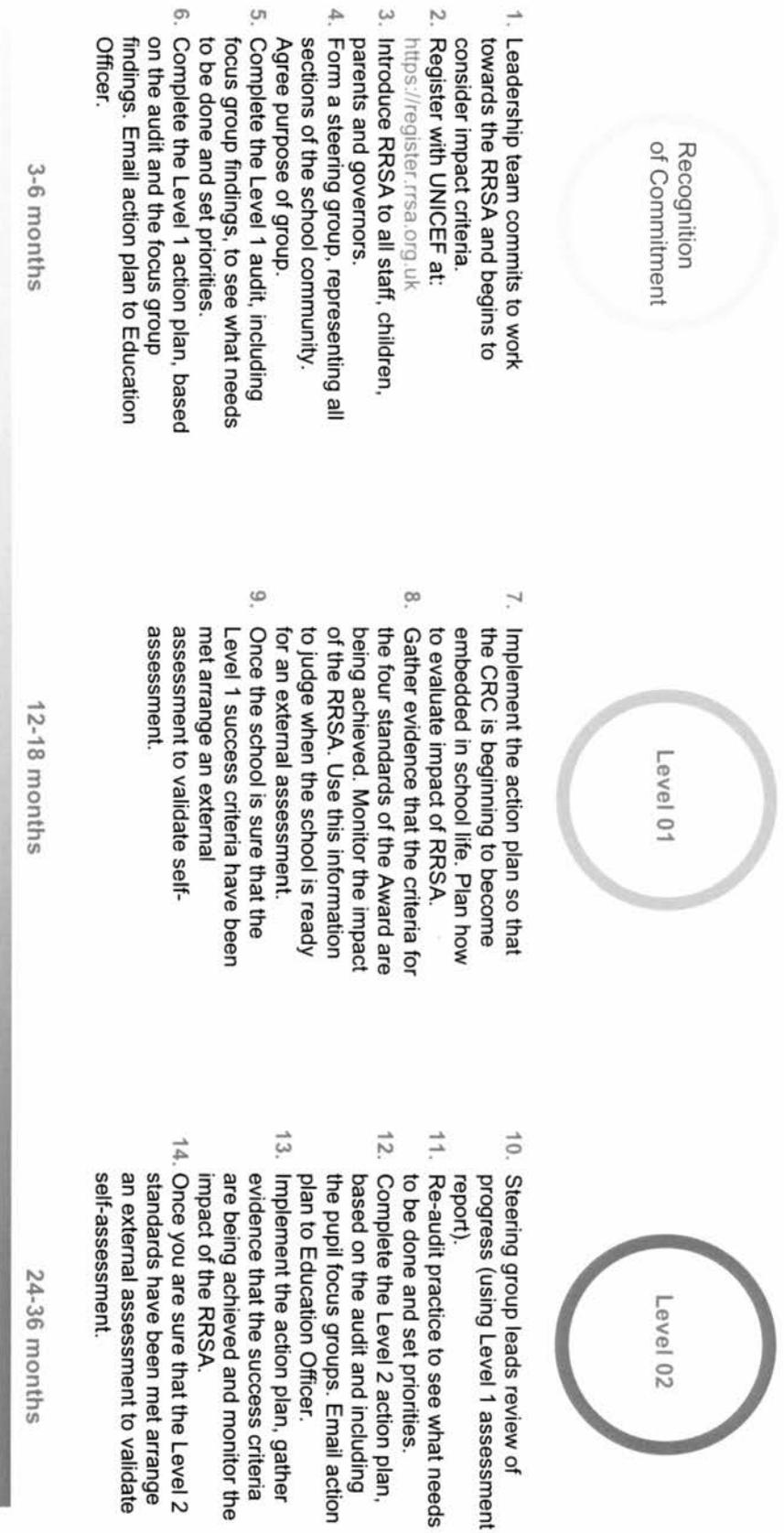


Table 3.2 UNICEF framework for attaining the RSSA (UNICEF UK, 2010)

Unlike RRR, RRSA offers schools approximate timelines for gauging the extent of commitment and action necessary to achieve the award at Levels 1 and 2, and also imposes requirements for schools that are intended to provide structure and support for whole-school implementation. The establishment of a Recognition of Commitment phase gives interested schools a clear set of initial goals to work towards and guidelines for considering time needed to achieve them. The use of a Level 1 audit and action plan in particular offer schools in the initial phases of implementation mechanisms for strategic planning and for reflecting on practice in the first 3-6 months.

UNICEF charges schools costs associated with RRSA professional development, school visits, LEA support and even assessment. It supports schools through regional education officers responsible for working with local school clusters, who provide on-site training, support visits, and partner with LEA officials. RRSA also provides a comprehensive project website and virtual learning environment (VLE) that offers training, support and curricular resources, evidence on RRSA impact, and self-assessments for measuring progress (UNICEF UK, 2008).

Researchers from the Universities of Brighton and Sussex undertook a three-year study of RRSA in 31 schools between 2007-2010 (Sebba & Robinson, 2009, 2010). 12 schools were visited annually; in addition, 19 schools were visited once each in 2010. By 2010, three of the longitudinal study schools had achieved Level 2 and seven had achieved Level 1; of the 19 schools visited in 2010, six had achieved Level 2 and 11 had achieved Level 1.

The RRSA evaluation consisted primarily of interviews with headteachers, teachers, students, parents, and governors, assessing impact on “well-being and achievement of children and young people in the participating schools (including measures of academic attainment and gains in emotional and social skills, knowledge and understanding)” (Sebba & Robinson, 2010, p. 9). The evaluation did not assess RRSA impact on other members of the school community, focusing only on student well-being and achievement.

Impact was measured across six UNICEF-developed indicators:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the CRC;
2. Improved relationships and behaviour;
3. Students feel empowered to respect the rights of others locally, nationally, and globally;
4. Students show positive attitudes towards diversity and inclusivity;
5. Students are active participants in school decision-making processes;
6. Students demonstrate improved learning. (Sebba & Robinson, 2010)

In each of these categories, the evaluation found significant progress towards integrating human rights into school life in both Level 1 and Level 2 schools.

The study reported:

1. Evidence of extensive knowledge of the CRC amongst students and staff in all but one of the 31 schools;
2. Positive relationships between students and teachers and a strong sense of belonging in all schools;
3. Positive student contributions “on local and global issues as a result of increased awareness” (p. 4);
4. Positive and improved attitudes towards diversity across all schools;
5. Evidence of student participation in decision-making in 11 of the 12 longitudinal study schools;
6. Improved student engagement with learning in the majority of schools (Ibid).

Support for the RRSA approach was evident at the government level. In several individual school reports, Ofsted inspectors described the benefits of RRSA for improving schools. One inspector wrote that RRSA

has enabled pupils to grow in maturity and develop a positive understanding of their rights and responsibilities. (Sebba & Robinson, 2010)

Another inspector, speaking about a different school, commented that

The “Rights, Respect and Responsibilities” project is very successful in promoting these core values. The three themes are incorporated into lessons well, modelled very well by teachers, and provide a strong link to the Every Child Matters outcomes. (UNICEF UK, 2008)

RRSA’s evaluation supports previous findings on RRR. However, analysis is largely drawn from individual interview anecdotes contained in the data. The study’s claim to robustness is derived from its large sample size, but exposure to each school was limited to either one or a handful of visits to the school (or

in some cases, delivery of a survey only), which prevents a view of the complexities of whole-school HRE, and presents a static picture of schools that may not reflect daily realities. However, the study highlights several themes reinforcing claims that whole-school HRE can be transformative in terms of both human rights learning and school improvement.

In this study I argue that despite the benefits of multi-school research for understanding the range of outcomes of whole-school HRE projects, deeper engagement is required in order to truly gauge the influence of the approach. This thesis differs from previous studies in presenting a multi-year case study of one school, and in examining the influence of whole-school HRE on entire schools rather than simply students and teachers. In the next section I review the development of the project on which this thesis focuses.

### **3.2.3.3 Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* (HRFS)**

The HRFS approach shares essential characteristics with and was directly influenced by RRR and RRSA. Development of the HRFS pilot programme at the Amnesty Secretariat involved consultations with national Amnesty sections as well as external HRE experts and other NGOs (appendix 5) occurring during a period when key actors working in England from UNICEF, BIHR and Amnesty were collaborating on government-funded projects (e.g. *Right Here Right Now*) and new collaborative initiatives (e.g. the *Rights Respecting Approach to Initial Teacher Education*) that incorporated holistic HRE approaches. This community of practice informed and supported development of HRFS.

The project's main resource, *Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools* (hereafter *Guidelines*) presents a policy framework centred around ten global principles and four key areas of project implementation (Amnesty International, 2009). The global principles were developed from the UDHR, the CRC, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These four recognised international rights frameworks

underpinned the HRFS approach in order to establish legitimacy and universality across transnational contexts, and to indicate that the project was not simply meant to recognise the rights of children. This expands on the RRR and RRSA approaches, which relied exclusively on the CRC.

The ten global principles are separated into five strands:

<b>STRAND 1: HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK</b>	
<b>Principle 1</b>	A human rights friendly school embodies an atmosphere of equality, non-discrimination, dignity, and respect in all aspects of school life.
<b>Principle 2</b>	A human rights friendly school provides a rights-respecting learning environment.
<b>Principle 3</b>	A human rights friendly school strives to ensure that basic economic, social and cultural rights are respected.
<b>STRAND 2: PARTICIPATION</b>	
<b>Principle 4</b>	A human rights friendly school encourages free, active and meaningful participation by all members of the school community in the daily life, policies and practices of the school.
<b>Principle 5</b>	A human rights friendly school ensures access to information that is necessary for full participation.
<b>STRAND 3: ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	
<b>Principle 6</b>	A human rights friendly school upholds the principles of fairness, accountability and transparency in its planning, processes and policies.
<b>Principle 7</b>	A human rights friendly school protects members of the school community by making safety and security a shared priority and responsibility.
<b>STRAND 4: HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	
<b>Principle 8</b>	A human rights friendly school integrates human rights into all areas of the curriculum and teaching practices.
<b>STRAND 5: EMPOWERMENT</b>	
<b>Principle 9</b>	A human rights friendly school works to empower all students to reach their full potential through education, in particular students who are marginalized due to their status.
<b>Principle 10</b>	A human rights friendly school embraces inclusivity in all aspects of school life.

*Table 3.3 – HRFS Global Principles (Amnesty International, 2009)*

Four key areas of school life were considered critical for successful implementation of the ten global principles. Amnesty felt that **school governance** should be rights-based and promote democratic participation, whilst **community relations** attended to the relationships between all members of the school community, not only teachers and students. Finally, **curriculum** and **extra-curriculum** areas address the processes and practices occurring within and outside classrooms, extending to informal activities and interactions in the school environment as well as formal teaching and learning practices.

<b>FOUR KEY AREAS OF SCHOOL LIFE</b>	
<b>Key Area 1</b>	<b>School participation and governance</b> (the policies of the school and the democratic processes that drive school management)
<b>Key Area 2</b>	<b>Community relations</b> (the human rights-respecting tenor of relations between all of the members in a school community)
<b>Key Area 3</b>	<b>Curriculum</b> (the human rights content and context of teaching and learning)
<b>Key Area 4</b>	<b>Extra-curricular domain and school environment</b> (the human rights content and context of non-classroom extra-curricular areas and activities, such as school clubs, hallway socializing, team sports, and other events and programs).

Table 3.4 – Four Key Areas for HRFS Implementation (Amnesty International, 2009)

*Guidelines* offers detailed guidance for implementing the ten global principles across each of the four key areas of school life, including case studies, key considerations, and possible strategies. Within each key area, there are several key area components for implementation (e.g. for Key Area 1: school policies; school values; leadership; participation; and accountability and transparency). *Guidelines* includes a ‘stages of development’ matrix for each of the key areas and components meant to help schools assess their progress:

<b>KEY AREA COMPONENT</b>	<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>STAGE 2</b>	<b>STAGE 3</b>	<b>STAGE 4</b>
<b>Key Area 1: School participation and governance:</b>  Key Area Component 1: School Values	The school does not have a vision statement.	The school has a vision statement but human rights values are not explicit.	The school’s vision statement explicitly reflects human rights values, but they are not actively promoted or made real in the life of the school.	The school has a vision statement that reflects human rights values, and the values are made real in the day-to-day life of the school.

Table 3.5 – Stages of Development for Key Area Component (School Values) (Amnesty International, 2009)

The stages of development rubrics (appendix 13) were created to help schools on the HRFS journey, and specific global principles were linked to each key area to assist schools in linking the global principles to practice in the key areas. In total, there are 14 key area components across 4 key areas. The stages are meant to guide schools in assessing their starting point, but they are not explicitly linked to an evaluation framework.

Like RRSA, HRFS uses a rubric that provides benchmarks for self-assessing progress, and involves completion of an action plan to guide implementation. Participating HRFS schools completed the Amnesty-designed *Year One Action Plan*, corresponding to the stages of development for each key area,

which were primarily meant to help schools set implementation targets. I draw on Buckingham's use of the *Year One Action Plan* and its self-assessment of its progress in the stages of development in my analysis of HRFS (Chapters 5, 6) but do not evaluate the school's implementation against the rubric as it was not used by Amnesty or Buckingham to assess progress, but rather simply as a starting point. I discuss Buckingham's *Year One Action Plan* self-assessment against the HRFS stages of development in section 6.1.1.

In developing the *Guidelines*, Amnesty sought to outline a utopian vision for human rights in schools whilst also highlighting how whole-school HRE could improve school performance. The following diagram summarises school improvement benefits of HRFS:

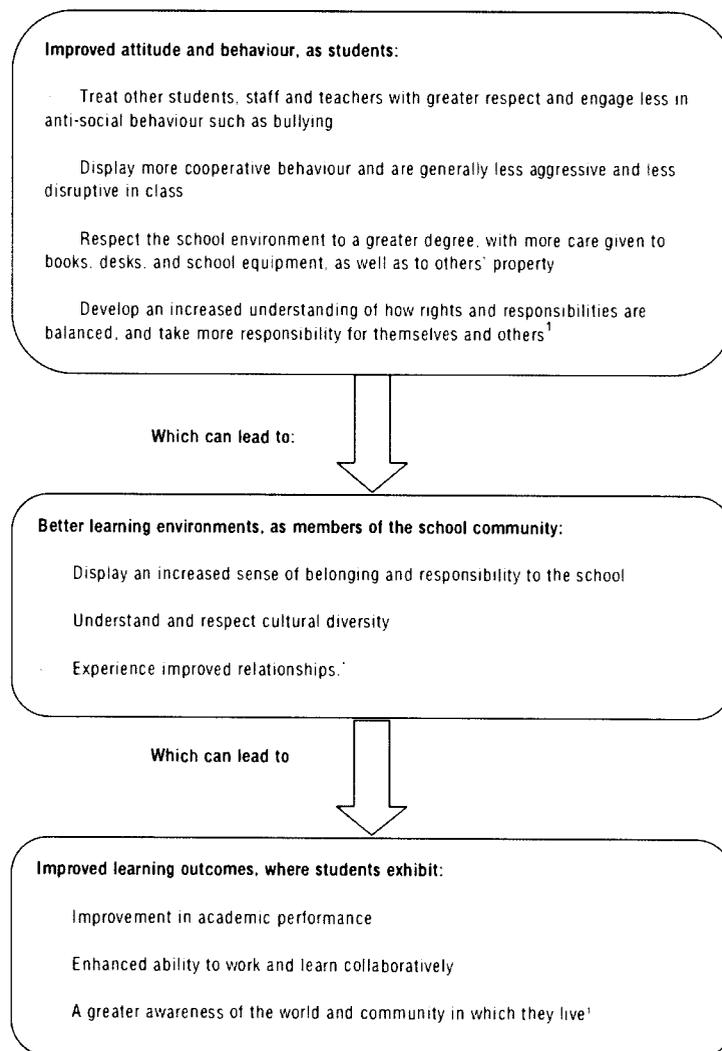


Figure 3.2 Benefits of a human rights friendly approach (Amnesty International, 2009)

It is possible to observe tensions between a construction of whole-school HRE for utopian realisation of human rights, and for pragmatic means such as improving behaviour and school performance. Whole-school HRE is described as a method for improving “attitude and behaviour,” leading to “better learning environments” and eventually “improved learning outcomes.” Although the characteristics described in each stage reflect human rights principles (e.g. “understand and respect cultural diversity”), the diagram presents these characteristics as serving the wider interests of school improvement, framing whole-school HRE as pragmatic in this instance.

In the next section, I explore potential challenges for implementing HRFS that frame my analysis.

### **3.3 Challenges to Rights-Based Education**

Whole-school analysis requires an organisational, macro-level framework. This chapter explores how structural and political forces outside and within formal education interact with whole-school HRE aims, processes and outcomes. I am interested in the aspirations and imperatives of schools, their policies and organisational practices, and their micropolitical interactions.

To construct a framework for analysis, I focus on the wider context for whole-school HRE, posing two questions:

1. What is required of schools to effectively implement HRFS?
2. What potentially disruptive educational policies, organisational practices and institutional forces challenge HRFS?

These questions delineate the areas where this thesis intends to make a contribution to existing literature.

Whilst there is a significant literature on school improvement that could also potentially inform analysis of HRFS (Dalin, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 2010), this thesis focuses on partnership enactment, and collected data demonstrates that key informants did not use school improvement discourses when discussing HRFS.

My analysis defines HRFS as:

- Policy framework; [How does HRFS align/diverge from neoliberal orthodoxy and behaviour management systems?]
- Political transformation; [How does HRFS interface with ideas of power, control and micropolitics?]
- Organisational partnership [How does HRFS reflect or diverge from understandings of partnerships?]

I next review four areas of influence for schools corresponding to the above definitions:

1. Government educational policies informing school practices; (3.3.1)
2. Discourses of control and behaviour management systems; (3.3.2)
3. Micropolitical relationships; (3.3.3)
4. External partnerships for school change. (3.4)

Conceptually, I relate these four areas of influence to the theoretical concepts of *utopianism*, *pragmatism*, and *micropolitics*. I discuss utopianism in Chapter 2, and theorise educational innovation emerging from HRFS as a form of utopian enactment. My conceptual use of pragmatism is linked to the way in which schools manage whole-school HRE in the context of the (often neoliberal) policy imperatives under which they operate, and how they use whole-school HRE to reinforce or challenge school-wide control systems.

### *Pragmatism as a Conceptual Framework*

This study employs a pragmatic perspective to explore the everyday enactment of educational policy by school-based actors, and the forces that animate and underpin enactment. I use pragmatism together with utopianism as heuristics for analysing how these key actors interpret and clarify the HRFS concept and project.

The philosophical tradition of pragmatism, which is primarily concerned with connections between theory and practice, dates back to the 1870s and to the work of key American philosophers such as Peirce, James and Dewey. For James, pragmatism sought to address the philosophical dilemma between religion and empirical science, providing a way of mediating competing worldviews or “settling metaphysical disputes that might otherwise be interminable” (James, 1907, p. 14). The main tenet of this pragmatic tradition

was the pragmatic method or maxim, which was intended to clarify theoretical concepts and hypotheses as they related to their practical viability and consequences. Peirce's pragmatic maxim stated:

Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (Peirce, 1878, p. 291).

A pragmatic framework requires examination of the effects of a concept (in this case, HRFS) in order to fully understand the concept. This study applies the concept of pragmatism to link inquiry into the conceptualisation and implementation of HRFS with the practical effects of its implementation in Buckingham School. Pragmatism is used in the thesis to refer to two key strands: (1) the everyday, practical considerations of implementing school policy, managing the school, and teaching; and (2) the predominant neoliberal educational policies and practices that circumscribe state schooling in 21<sup>st</sup> century England. In the case of both strands, I use pragmatism to explore how these practical realities of school life at Buckingham affect conceptualisation and implementation of HRFS.

I suggest in my analysis that a key element of HRFS implementation in Buckingham school was the pragmatic vision and integration of existing school practices into the HRFS framework. My analysis explores how utopian and pragmatic approaches to partnership influence planning and implementation processes (Chapters 5, 6), as well as partnership (Chapter 7). Finally, I draw on literature elaborating micropolitical perspectives in education to frame the highly charged political events at Buckingham emerged from conflicting micropolitical discourses of control and rights (Chapter 8).

In this thesis I use the concept of **discourse** to explore policies and practices of control and rights that existed at the school before and during HRFS implementation. Generally speaking, discourse refers to various forms of speech or communication, but the term has assumed many theoretical meanings. Foucault offers three classifications intended to explain discourse as either "the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an

individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (Foucault, 1972, p. 80). As an individualizable group of statements, discourse refers to “groups of utterances which seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to them in common” (Mills, 1997, p. 7). Under this definition, it is possible to talk about discourses of control and rights as collections of statements anchored around common themes or principles.

Foucault’s explanation of discourses as “regulated practice” refers to “the rules and structures which produce particular utterances and texts” (Ibid, p. 7). This conception of discourse, as reliant on social context and generated within power relations, also underpins this study. As Mills states, discourses are:

groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence. Institutions and social context therefore play an important determining role in the development, maintenance and circulation of discourses. (Mills, 1997, p. 11)

Following Foucault and Mills, I use discourse in my analysis to refer to the ways in which notions of control and rights are both externally situated and internally negotiated, in order to present a clear view of how discourses within schools are socially constructed (4.2.1). I also draw on Fairclough’s use of textual analysis to include the range of policy texts informing school practices (Fairclough, 2003). Discourses of control (specifically, state educational behaviour policies and school enactment of management systems and practices) and rights (including rights-based policies represented by HRFS, teacher union practices, and school-wide rights practices) are key themes of this study.

### **3.3.1 Neoliberalism and HRE**

#### *Neoliberalism in Education*

Since the 1980s, the influence of neoliberal perspectives on education in Western nations has increased, as US and European policymakers frame educational goals using performance-related terminology, while promoting

policy approaches reflecting the principles of market-based capitalism. School policies become soaked in economic, managerial language. The decision for where to send children to school is presented as a choice for parents to make based on performance of the school 'product' (Apple, 1988). These parental choice initiatives argue that schools should be accountable for improving their performance to state standards or risk losing students, and subsequently, government funding (Whitty & Power, 2002). Whitty and Power (2002) assert that neoliberal political ideologies have produced a marketisation of education systems typified by the quasi-markets of parental choice and school autonomy, coupled with an increased focus on public accountability and government regulation. The use of league tables in England and the importance of Ofsted inspections for schools (7.4.4, 8.2) demonstrate how competition and results have become the benchmarks for success, and thus, strategy. Critics of the marketisation of education assert that "narrow curricula, results-driven pedagogy and the myopic tyranny of externally imposed targets" prevent schools from providing quality education for all (Fielding, 2007b, p. 56).

Apple argues that educators must address the disjuncture between "our theoretical and critical discourses on one hand and the real transformations that are currently shifting educational policies and practices in fundamentally rightist directions on the other hand" (Apple, 2004, p. 13). Apple describes an emergent *conservative modernization* of education driven by four interconnected forces shaping educational policy:

- Market solutions to educational problems;
- Neoconservative calls for higher standards;
- Religious conservatives calling for preservation of "tradition;" and
- Ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and "management."

These forces influence how progressive school reform is introduced, understood, and used in schools. For my analysis, I draw on the first, second and fourth aspects of Apple's framework to focus on the close relationship in England between neoliberal and managerial perspectives in the delivery of educational policy.

### *Neoliberalism in British Educational Policy*

Politically mainstream, the tenet of neoliberalism is strongly supported by both Conservative and Labour political parties in England, and has become the dominant educational policy innovation of the past decade. The most recent UK schools white paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, the first produced after the shift in political power between Labour and Tory parties in 2010, demonstrates the continuity of neoliberal policy between governments. Unquestioned support of neoliberalism is evident in the first paragraph, as David Cameron and Nick Clegg inform us that “what really matters” in education is the competitiveness of England versus its “international competitors” (DFE, 2010). Parker argues that “school reform is linked directly to success in today’s world, which is defined in economic terms” (Parker, 2011, p. 491).

The white paper applies a neoliberal frame and interpretation of wealth inequality, asserting that

no country that wishes to be considered *world class* can afford to allow children from poorer families to fail... for far too long we have tolerated the moral outrage of an accepted correlation between wealth and achievement at school; the soft bigotry of low expectations. (DFE, 2010, p. 4, emphasis added)

One can interpret the conservative-led coalition leaders’ decision to prioritise equality as an encouraging sign that moral values consistent with rights discourses are at the forefront of a discussion on the future of British education. Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove’s foreword echoes progressivist and even rights-based rhetoric, calling educational reform “the great progressive cause of our times,” the “route to liberation,” and calling for children to have “full and equal share in citizenship” (DFE, 2010, p. 6). Yet this rhetorical usage of moral language operates in tension with an undercurrent of neoliberal thinking that blames poor people for their inability to become successful and achieve equality:

In far too many communities there is a deeply embedded culture of low aspiration (Ibid, p. 4).

This statement informs us that the gap between the rich and the poor in England is not simply due to education, but also to a particular “culture” in which low aspiration somehow contributes to poverty. This perspective assigns negative values to marginalised peoples to justify an economic course of policy action. The solution to the problem of educational inequality is presented as “the Pupil Premium,” money that follows poorer children to their schools on an individual basis. This is similar to the voucher system that has become a popular conservative educational policy in the US, a market-based solution to poverty, which posits that increasing competition for schools to attract voucher finances will engage the invisible hand of the market to improve delivery of education services to poor students. The white paper’s other key recommendation to focus on expansion of academies reflects this perspective, arguing that increased freedoms given to academies will make them more efficient and competitive (Morris, 2012).

#### *Neoliberalism and HRE: Disjunctures and Possibilities*

Government prioritisation of neoliberal perspectives in education can influence how HRE is taught in schools, particularly as relates to debates about the role of the free market in a globalized world. The example of the global dimension in British schools is instructive. A cross-curricular theme in the national curriculum, the global dimension shares thematic parallels to HRE. Yet neoliberal constructions of globalization have influenced the way in which educational policies engage the global dimension specifically and the purposes of education more broadly. DFE’s 2004 report *Putting the World into World-Class Education* represented a type of neoliberal blueprint for global citizenship education in England and outlined the goals of education as “equipping young people for life in a global society and work in a global economy” and “maximising the contribution of education for overseas trade and investment” (DFES, 2004b, p. 3).

Scholars appear to generally view neoliberal educational policies as threatening or appropriating rights-based approaches (Apple, 2004; Ball, 2003; Bowring, 2012; Ravitch, 2011). Critics argue that a heightened emphasis on economic performance and standards undermines education by

shifting discursive emphasis from curriculum and instruction, to markets and choice (Ravitch, 2011). Ball (2003) and Apple (2004) assert that neoliberal policies produce “differential realities” that favour the privileged classes of society by reproducing traditional power structures in schools. Schattle links the development of global citizenship discourses to emerging economic globalization discourses, arguing that neoliberalism is one of several “ideological currents” in a contested discursive space around global citizenship education, where global citizenship education can help make individuals more competitive (Schattle, 2008, p. 74). Parker concurs, asserting that “globalisation makes demands on schools, mainly because they are held responsible for national economic anxieties about outsourcing” (Parker, 2011, p. 488). Leal (2007) fears that participation as a counter-hegemonic term has been claimed by the neoliberal agenda (e.g. the government’s use of student voice to promote personalisation) (Rudduck, Brown, & Hendy, 2006). For Hartley (2008), personalisation is “a stronger insinuation of the market into schools,” with a “conceptual vagueness [offering] something for most people to agree with” (p. 378). He asserts that the lack of a strong pedagogical foundation accompanies an absence of any academic evidence-base for the use of personalisation in education.

There is less support in the literature for HRE as potentially cohering with neoliberal educational policies. However, literature on the links between human rights and public services provides a means of exploring potential intersections. Gavrielides (2008) argues that amongst British policymakers, implementation of the UK Human Rights Act (HRA) has stirred debates over the role of human rights in influencing delivery of public services. He notes that human rights and the HRA are “viewed as drivers that could improve the experiences and overall satisfaction of users of health, social, prison, transportation and other public services” (Gavrielides, 2008, p. 190).

The influence of the HRA on government policy is explored in a critical review of the law’s first ten years (Donald et al., 2009). The authors argue that the mandatory integration of the HRA into public policy served the function of turning rights into compliance checklists. A logical outcome of government

bureaucracy, this nonetheless packages human rights neatly alongside other government protocols in an unreflexive pose. This demonstrates some of the effects of mainstreaming rights-based policy into national law, as rights concepts become co-opted to neoliberal agendas.

The relationship between human rights and a public services discourse reliant on neoliberal managerialism highlights the intersecting and potentially complementary ways to envision HRE as contributing to neoliberal conceptions of student 'customer' satisfaction. The influence of neoliberal educational policies on whole-school HRE is a key area explored by this thesis, and is further discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **3.3.2 School Discipline and Behaviour Management**

In England, school discipline and classroom behaviour management are key areas of concern in formal education policy and practice (Maguire, Ball, & Braun, 2010; Osler, 2000). Managing behaviour has become part of the current neoliberal construction of effective education, as schools emphasise strong behavioural and disciplinary policies to make themselves more attractive to parents who wish for their children to attend 'safe' schools (Maguire et al., 2010). Parental concerns about school discipline have in the past decade been justified and amplified by a growing policy literature declaring the ill effects of poor behaviour on schools and arguing for improved measures for managing behaviour (DCSF, 2010; DFES, 2003; NUT, 2006; Ofsted, 2005; Steer, 2009). Such policy documents link improved student behaviour to increased student achievement, aligning discourses of control with discourses of school improvement:

In England, the thrust of [behaviour-focused] macro policy is tightly articulated with the raising standards agenda through controlling any potential student 'disruption'. Even better behaviour, it is believed, will lead to even more 'good passes' at GCSE. (Maguire et al., 2010, p. 156)

Thus, macro-policy activity around behaviour has increased government micro-management of schools, making links between behavioural policy and curriculum standard procedure for many schools in England (Rowe, 2006).

The 2010 schools white paper reveals the extent to which authoritarian constructions of behaviour management occupy a key pillar of current government education policy. It presents behaviour as the most important factor for recruiting and retaining teachers, justifying an expanded focus on increasing teacher authority and disciplinary powers. It argues that “among undergraduates considering teaching, fear of bad behaviour and violence is the most common reason for choosing an alternative career” (DFE, 2010, p. 3). In this quote and throughout the white paper, teachers are framed as potential victims who must be protected by government in order to feel capable of working in schools:

The number of serious physical assaults on teachers has risen. Unless we act more good people will leave the profession. (pp. 9-10)

We need to act to restore the authority of teachers and head teachers, so that they can establish a culture of respect and safety, with zero tolerance of bullying. (p. 32)

Here, teachers are assumed to be under attack (sometimes literally). Increasing authority is presented as the means with which to retain teachers and create more effective schools. The very notion that authority must be ‘restored’ implicitly suggests a breakdown of order in schools, which is meant to bolster the argument for increased discipline. The white paper’s aggressive policy changes aim to give teachers better tools for disciplining in schools, including:

- Increasing teacher authority “by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue same day detentions and use reasonable force where necessary” (p. 32);
- Strengthening head teachers’ authority “to maintain discipline beyond the school gates” (p. 32);
- Restructuring the exclusion appeals process so that “head teachers no longer have to worry that a pupil will be reinstated when the young person concerned has committed a serious offence” (p. 10);
- Protecting teachers “from malicious allegations” (p. 10);

The paper also expands existing powers for teachers to exercise force or physical restraint, elaborating permissible reasonable force powers and granting increased discretion to monitor such powers, ostensibly in response to “over cautious ‘no-touch’ policies” put in place by many schools (DFE, 2010, p. 33). Finally, new policies granting teachers power to search and

seize student property “which may be dangerous or cause harm” (Ibid, p. 33) signal a dramatic expansion of authority that appears to undermine privacy rights:

We will give teachers a more general power to search for any item which they reasonably believe is going to be used to cause harm to others or to break a law so that, for example, teachers can search for items such as phones or cameras which they believe are going to be used in this way. (p. 34)

This vague new policy gives teachers rights that stretch into students' private lives in intrusive new ways. Phrases such as “reasonable force”, “bad behaviour and violence”, “serious offence” and “malicious allegations” suggest that current government policy around behaviour relies on a rhetoric of crisis and fear in order to justify increasing surveillance and control powers.

The white paper even invokes race to support the proposed policy changes, citing a need to use discipline to address racial inequality:

Both black boys and pupils receiving free school meals are three times more likely to be excluded than average. Giving teachers the power to intervene early and firmly to tackle disruptive behaviour can get these children's lives back on track. (p. 32)

The notion that increased discipline can help to solve inequality in schools is highly contentious and ignores a significant literature on structural inequalities in education in favour of a prescription for tighter control of ‘problem’ students.

In 2009, a five year government-commissioned review of school behaviour and discipline outlined a series of lessons learned meant to assist schools in implementing recommendations into their school policies and practices (Steer, 2009). The report uses as its basis six ‘core’ beliefs about behaviour; the first belief is that “poor behaviour cannot be tolerated as it is a denial of the right of pupils to learn and teachers to teach” (Steer, 2009, p. 3). Behaviour in this and other policy documents is regarded as a matter of ensuring the rights of others. Here, the discourse of rights is invoked to support authoritarian policies and practices that sometimes directly challenge other rights.

The 1997 Education Act for the first time legally obliged schools to promote “good behaviour and discipline” (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1997, p. 9). The Act also required Ofsted to begin inspection of school behaviour, transforming school discipline into a measurable assessment standard. Yet despite the existence of extensive policy on school discipline and behaviour in the past fifteen years, there appears to be little consensus about what actually constitutes ‘good’ behaviour, the way in which schools attend to promoting what is deemed to be good behaviour, nor of the values underpinning school approaches to discipline. In 2003, DFES issued advice to schools on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy, which included recommendations for consistent application of school values and expectations for school-wide behaviour through both school conduct codes and through curriculum (DFES, 2003). It directed schools to use the National Curriculum Statement of Values as a basis for developing principles for whole-school behaviour policy. The Statement of Values outlines a number of areas (including self, relationships, societies and environment) in which it recommends the application of particular actions (DFEE, 1999), which leaves schools with a task of interpreting a complex policy document to develop their own behaviour policy frameworks.

There is little theory on what constitutes the values basis for ‘good’ behaviour. Rowe (2006) asserts that school discipline policies are morally ambiguous and do not attend to moral development, and suggests that schools can create clear links between behaviour management, citizenship education and moral development in order to develop more “self-directing” learners (p. 519).

He notes:

The process of attaining responsible behaviour from students according to government, local authority and school policies, is to be achieved through the process of information giving and agreeing codes of conduct with student bodies. But this is problematic, if becoming responsible is to be thought of as more than mere compliance. (Rowe, 2006, p. 521)

Goodman (2006) contends that school disciplinary policies cannot effectively deliver moral messages because they conflate moral violations such as violence and vandalism with school-specific violations, such as attendance

and dress codes. For Goodman, school disciplinary codes can become morally instructive only when they differentiate violations as moral, derivatively moral (context-specific rules such as ‘bad’ language that, while not necessarily immoral “become imbued with moral attributes” in schools), or conventional (rules developed specifically for managing schools) (Ibid).

Rowe (2006) argues that recent student voice practices in schools have been used to validate school-wide behaviour policies; if students are consulted in the discussion of behaviour policies and practices, the systems that emerge are presumed to be both fair, and also tacitly approved by students. However, this is not considered to be a sufficient basis for students to internalise shared rules. As Rowe notes, schools that claim that all rules – even controversial ones such as dress codes that restrict make-up, jewellery or piercings – are agreed by staff and students gloss over the complexities of achieving moral consensus:

Even when students appear to understand what they have ‘done wrong’, it cannot be assumed that this amounts to internalisation of these rules or their underpinning values. (Rowe, 2006, p. 521)

For Rowe and Goodman, moral education should underpin teaching for behaviour, as top-down approaches to school discipline (which may or may not include tokenistic consultations of students) create moral ambiguities and miss opportunities for developing self-directing students.

What is particularly interesting about the increasing policy reach of school behaviour management legislation in England is the extent to which it has been framed in terms of both whole school culture, and in terms of rights. The white paper argues that good discipline can be achieved through the creation of a “whole school culture that promotes respect” and that maintaining a “culture of good behaviour” in schools requires giving head teachers rights to exercise school discipline policy beyond school walls (pp. 34-35). The NUT’s 2006 behaviour charter for schools is explicitly framed in rights terms:

All children and young people have a right to high quality education. Fundamental to these principles is the right of teachers to teach and the right of children and young people to learn. That is the basis of the NUT's Charter. (NUT, 2006, p. 3)

Two sentences later, the document states “the charter clearly defines behaviour that is unacceptable” (Ibid, p. 3), creating its own moral standard that shows how the language of rights is used simply to justify authoritarian discourses. HRE theorists in recent years have pointed to the use of HRE to justify student behaviour strategies that emphasise responsibility-contingent rights. Research in Hampshire (3.2.3.1) found that teachers implementing whole-school HRE focused disproportionately on student responsibilities as a pre-condition for having rights (Howe & Covell, 2010). In some schools, HRE has primarily been used for behaviour management, prioritising responsibilities and “equating human rights with good behaviour and obeying rules” whilst ignoring the political and power dimensions of HRE (Trivers & Starkey, 2012, p. 137).

As this thesis will show, human rights as a form of moral education has become conflated with the school discipline agenda in ways that undermine utopian rights aims. Following Rowe and Goodman, I argue that whole-school HRE can provide a strong foundation for building positive and respectful student-teacher relationships that attend to the concerns of government discipline policy, without necessitating authoritarian approaches. However, it must be noted that HRE efforts take place in the context of government pressures on schools to increase discipline, which challenges the moral basis of rights-based approaches.

### **3.3.3 Power and Micropolitics**

Alongside neoliberal educational policy directives, micropolitical activity can influence policy enactment and school outcomes (Ball, 1987; Blase & Anderson, 1995). *Micropolitics* refers to the “daily interactions, negotiations and bargains” taking place within schools, driven by informal networks and communications of individuals and groups (Lindle, 1999, p. 171). Anyone affiliated with a school – including students, teachers, leaders, parents and

members of the local community – participates in micropolitical activity. Micropolitics addresses the negotiated realities of everyday life for teachers, students and leaders, offering a foundation for examining policy enactment and organisational management practices. Micropolitics is fundamentally interested in *power, conflict* and *cooperation* (Blase, 1991). It explores how both informal and formal power is used to influence actions in schools, how conflict creates competition for resources, and how people cooperate to achieve individual and collective goals.

Framing schools as “arenas of struggle,” Ball relates micropolitics to three intersecting elements of organisational practice:

1. Interests of actors;
2. Maintenance of organisational control;
3. Policy conflict. (Ball, 1987)

Schools are “riven with actual or potential conflict between members” (Ball, 1987 p. 19), and thus efforts to understand how they function as organisations must interrogate the nature of political conflict. Micropolitics attends to stakeholders’ use of power (either through authority or influence) to manage conflict, mobilise support, enact agendas, circumscribe behaviour and maintain discipline (Blase, 1991; Hoyle, 1988). It focuses on strategies of “persuasion, compromise, bargaining, and destabilization.... the conflictive interests that swirl around schools” (Mawhinney, 1999, p. 168).

Micropolitical theorists acknowledge that conflicts are not necessarily a daily part of school life, and are also often hidden, “only occasionally bursting into full view as issues or events of particularly significance (social dramas) occur” (Ball, 1987, p. 20). Most schools are driven by the everyday, ordinary tasks that constitute an “uncontroversial running of the institution” and that are more fundamentally concerned with the “practical necessity of survival” (Ibid).

Micropolitical activity can thus be both conflictive and cooperative (Blase, 1991). Micropolitical research aims to illuminate the hidden and unspoken interactions that occur at the social level and to explore their influence on the work and culture of schools.

### *Power, Authority and Leadership in Schools*

Power is the central concept in micropolitical analysis (Blase & Anderson, 1995). In micropolitical analysis, power can be seen as an “active, penetrating and flexible” (Ball, 1987, p. 25) concept that implies position and capacity as well as performance, achievement and struggle (Ibid). Power can be both a means (capacity) and an end (outcome). Viewing power in this way acknowledges the variances in contexts amongst headteachers across different schools.

Understanding the role of the headteacher is central to micropolitical analysis. The head is the primary focus of micropolitical activity, occupying a singular position of “licensed autocracy,” (Ball, 1987, p. 81) and responsible for the development and maintenance of the school organisation. Blase and Anderson (1995) outlined a tripartite model for understanding the power of school leaders, as either authoritarian (power ‘over’), facilitative (power ‘through’) or relational (power ‘with’). For Ball, leadership in schools is a micropolitical catch-22, as headteachers must balance the need for control (domination) with the encouragement of social order and buy-in (integration). This is a tricky balancing act:

At times, heads will be cast in the role of villain. They are caught between audiences, and the demands those audiences make may be very different and are often contradictory and irreconcilable. Local authority advisers may be pressing for innovation, parents for improved examination results and the staff for peace and quiet. When all goes well in a school, whatever that may mean, the head is ‘successful.’ When things go wrong it is usually the head who is blamed. (Ball, 1987, p. 86)

Ball’s analysis of the micropolitics of leadership categorises headteachers as one of four style types:

- (1) Interpersonal (reliant on personal relationships);
- (2) Managerial (invested in the formal procedures of organisational management, e.g. committees and memos);
- (3) Political adversarial (using argument and confrontation to maintain control); and
- (4) Political authoritarian (avoiding and stifling dissent).

He identifies within the *political adversarial* style type the need for headteachers to cultivate a network of allies in order to navigate the particular challenges generated by this leadership style, arguing that

The head's allies, and opponents, come to be recognized as a part of the normal terrain of competing interests and ideological divisions among the staff. Allies must be encouraged, at times rewarded; opponents must be neutralized or satisfied, as the occasion demands. (Ball, 1987, pp. 106-7)

In one study, British teachers at different schools reported that they felt that headteachers unfairly used their authority to make promotions and appointments that would support their policies and actions (Blase, 1991). Chapter 8 further explores these themes as they relate to HRFS implementation.

### *Micropolitics and Human Rights Frameworks*

Studies on school micropolitics have drawn direct links between effective leadership and moral influence, citing evidence showing that moral education promoted “cooperative political relationships between the principal and teachers and also among the teachers themselves” (Blase, 1991, p. 3).

Exploring micropolitics in the implementation of HRFS, I focus on how political activity between members of the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), teachers, and students directly influenced the teacher and student strikes that destabilised Buckingham School and ousted a key senior leader (Chapter 8). I also examine how micropolitical activity and struggles for justice in the school led to engagement with Amnesty. Micropolitical framing of schools as sites of struggles over interests and ideologies is particularly suited for examining HRFS as a form of school-wide policy enactment.

Although micropolitical theories can provide rich insight into the reality of daily school life, they do not articulate leadership models that can help leaders “survive politically *and* create a democratic, humane environment” (Blase and Anderson, 1995, p. 11). In my analysis, I consider the potential for whole-school HRE to act as a leadership model for supporting positive micropolitical relationships and promoting democratic and rights-friendly school

environments. I link this pursuit to existing literature on micropolitics demonstrating a causal link between unfair and inequitable treatment of teachers and increased teacher stress, alienation, and conflict (Blase & Anderson, 1995).

### **3.4 Envisioning and Enacting NGO-School Partnerships**

Whilst not attempting to generalise all NGO-school partnerships, this study offers insight into the dynamics of school partnerships in an increasingly competitive and resource-deprived educational climate in England. Here it is possible to observe the influence of neoliberal approaches on school partnerships. Educational policies in England, particularly those implemented during the period of New Labour government under Tony Blair, heralded the importance of partnerships in education as part of a politically-centrist “third way” approach (Cardini, 2006). Partnerships in this sense were conceived as prioritising collaborative and participatory practices alongside market-based principles.

#### **3.4.1 Organisational Partnerships Between NGOs and Schools**

Since the 1990s, organisational partnerships as an element of British public policy have become key policy approaches. In certain public policies partnerships with external organisations are government-mandated, either as a requirement for funding, or to support practice with external expertise (Cardini, 2006; DCSF, 2008a; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998). An example of partnership structures used in the public arena are public-private partnerships, a type of organisational arrangement reflecting the neoliberal idea that private enterprise can assist in making public services more efficient (Bult-Spiering & Dewulf, 2008).

The literature offers some theoretical frameworks for examining stages and forms of multi-organisational partnerships. Reporting on UK-based research, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) identify a four-stage partnership life cycle consisting of pre-partnership collaboration, partnership creation, partnership programme delivery, and partnership termination. Using governance modes to characterise organisational partnerships, the authors assert that within each

stage of partnership there are three possible modes at work: market, hierarchy, or network. The normative basis for a market mode is financial agreement; for hierarchy, it is employment relationship; and for network mode it is complementary strengths. The authors assert that the features of these modes exhibit different degrees of flexibility and commitment, but that they “frequently overlap and coexist throughout a partnership’s life cycle” (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 320). Under this framework, HRFS can best be characterised as a partnership operating primarily in a network governance mode, typified in ideal type by loyalty, trust and reciprocity (Ibid). Lowndes and Skelcher argue that collaborations are more likely to be sustained via network modes (rather than market or hierarchical modes) because of collective will based on the perception by partners of mutual benefit.

In an analysis of UK educational partnerships, Cardini (2006) argues that a significant disjuncture exists between the framing of partnerships rhetorically, where all parties benefit from increased efficiency and participation, and their practice, where they fail to promote “inclusive, symmetrical and democratic social practices” (Cardini, 2006, p. 393). Cardini characterises working partnerships as **ambiguous**, often lacking clarity about roles and responsibilities; **complex**, involving different organisations, differential and distinct relationships, increasing bureaucratic structures; and **dynamic** in nature, often subject to “external pressures, diversity of motives and purposes amongst partners as well as variations and curtailment of funds,” which can lead to “instability, conflict and premature dissolution” (Cardini, 2006, p. 397).

Calling theoretical definitions of partnerships “benign” relative to the “contradictory and paradoxical context” of their actual enactment (Ibid), Cardini’s analysis of the relationship between rhetoric and practice in educational partnerships provides a useful platform from which to analyse the envisioning and enactment of the HRFS partnership. I examine the utopian rhetoric associated with both partnerships and with the transformative potential of HRE, before exploring the practice of the HRFS partnership, which replaces utopianism with a bureaucratically-driven, pragmatically-enacted partnership structure.

Vangen and Huxham's concepts of *collaborative advantage* and *collaborative inertia* provide further frames for exploring vision and enactment of the HRFS partnership (Chapter 7):

Collaborative advantage relates to the desired synergistic outcome of collaborative activity suggesting that advantage is gained though collaboration when something is achieved that could not have been achieved by any organization acting alone. Collaborative inertia relates to the often-pertaining actual outcome, in which the collaboration makes only hard fought or negligible progress. (Vangen & Huxham, 2003, p. S62)

Analysis focuses on constructions and enactment of collaborative advantage, and the inevitable and unforeseen instances of collaborative inertia.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the development of whole-school HRE approaches in England and globally, discussing potential challenges for schools and partners implementing such approaches. The literature review chapters delineated the conceptual boundaries for this study, focusing on how utopianism animates an NGO-driven whole-school HRE movement (2.2.1) that must navigate the pragmatic (often neoliberal or behaviourist) and micropolitical frameworks driving the work of schools. I suggest that, analysed in the context of educational practice, the concepts of *utopianism*, *pragmatism* and *micropolitics* provide theoretical and empirical support for exploring schools' enactment of NGO partnerships. These three key theoretical concepts scaffold my analysis of partnership behaviours and outcomes observed during fieldwork. I intend to illuminate the tensions between forces that motivate rights-based change, and those that inhibit and disrupt such transformations in schools. In doing so, I demonstrate that the potential of whole-school HRE to act as a policy framework is contingent on factors that often are omitted from or obscured by the process of project implementation. In Chapter 4, I outline the methodological and analytical frameworks for the implementation of NGO-school whole-school partnerships for HRE, drawing on several previously established paradigms, while modifying them slightly to account for the specific context of this research.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology used for this study. Research is informed by our perspectives on the world and by how we frame the construction of knowledge (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Keeping this in mind, I first discuss the research questions (4.1) and then the epistemological framework (4.2) that guides the research, before turning to the research setting (4.3) and methods (4.4 and 4.5) for investigating HRFS. Next, I address the issues of researcher positionality (4.6) and ethical considerations (4.7) for the study. Finally, I present the analytical framework (4.7) to be used to make sense of the collected data, and discuss the process of transcription, coding, analysis and writing up (4.8).

#### 4.1 Research Questions

The main research question for this study asks:

*How is partnership enacted between Amnesty and a London secondary school in jointly developing whole-school approaches to HRE?*

To answer this larger research question, I include several thematic sub-questions that emerge from a review of the relevant literature, addressed in data collection and analysis:

Sub-question 1 (Chapter 5)

- Drawing on their experiences in and perspectives on HRE, how was the HRFS **project** constructed (envisioned and prepared by key actors)?

Sub-question 2 (Chapter 6)

- How was HRFS implemented, and what were the key opportunities and challenges during the implementation process?

Sub-questions 3 & 4 (Chapter 7)

- How was the HRFS **partnership** envisioned and enacted?
- What were the observable outcomes of partnership enactment?

Sub-question 5 (Chapter 8)

- How did micropolitical relationships at Buckingham school influence and/or become influenced by HRFS?

Sub-questions 1 and 2 investigate the ways in which HRE can meaningfully impact participating schools based on background, motivation, and practices of Amnesty and Buckingham. Sub-question 4 explores the partnership process, and sub-question 5 focuses on the political context for HRFS implementation.

This study is further guided by supporting questions that emerge from the literature review and correspond to analysis of partnership, NGO, school, and outcomes:

### ***PARTNERSHIP LEVEL***

- **What is the nature of NGO-school partnership for whole-school HRE?**
  - How do Amnesty and Buckingham individually and collectively conceptualise the purposes of such projects?
  - How is partnership operationalised?
  - What does the implementation process look like?
  - What are the main opportunities and challenges of the partnership?

### ***NGO LEVEL***

- **How does Amnesty promote HRE at Buckingham?**
  - What is their rationale for school interventions?
  - Why and how is the whole-school approach used?
  - What are the mechanisms available to Amnesty for engaging schools in partnership?

### ***SCHOOL LEVEL***

- **How does Buckingham engage with Amnesty?**
  - How is a working relationship established with Amnesty?
  - What benefits are expected?
  - How do schools “use” Amnesty?
  - How do actors at the school level receive, interpret and implement HRFS?
  - To what extent does engagement with Amnesty contribute to organisational goals and school improvement?

## OUTCOMES

- **What are the observable outcomes of the project and the partnership?**
  - What is the gap between the intentions and design of HRFS and its implementation in practice?
  - To what extent do participants develop an understanding of human rights and of its applicability to their lives?
  - What are the opportunities and challenges for HRFS to create lasting institutional changes in school culture?
  - What are the unintended or unanticipated outcomes of HRFS?
  - What changes on the Amnesty side when implementing whole-school HRE?

### 4.1.1 Research Focus

The table below illustrates the main areas of investigation by field of research in order to depict the range of research included in data collection.

<b>Field of research</b>	<b>Key Areas for Investigation</b>
<i>Human Rights Education</i>	(1) Existing forms and methods for promoting HRE, and the prevalence, quality and influence of certain forms (whole-school approaches) (2) Experiences of school community members interacting with HRE in NGO partnerships, and also in school policy, the formal curriculum, informally and throughout the school community
<i>Educational Change and School Micropolitics</i>	(1) Experiences of the school as a system undergoing change in political contexts (2) Experiences of the school and school community members implementing rights-based school reform through NGO partnerships
<i>NGOs and Civil Society</i>	(1) Motivation and rationale for NGO HRE strategies (2) Experiences of NGOs and civil society actors in providing HRE to various stakeholders within formal education systems via inter-organisational partnerships

*Table 4.1 – Research Field and Key Areas for Investigation*

### 4.1.2 Methodological Approach of the Study

The methodological approach is organised in five sections. The first section (4.2) discusses the guiding conceptual framework for the overall methodology, outlining the main research design for the study. The second section (4.3) discusses the research setting, and the third section (4.4-4.5) describes the research methods to be used in the study for both NGO and school-based research. Finally, the fourth section (4.6-4.7) considers ethics and the role of the researcher in this study, and the fifth section (4.8) discusses the analytical framework that will be used to make sense of the collected data.

## 4.2 Epistemological Framework for Research Design

A wide range of epistemological and theoretical perspectives are applicable to the three main areas of investigation of this study: HRE, school development, and NGOs. I have employed *social constructionism* as the guiding epistemological framework because it is crosscutting and has been successfully applied by academics and researchers in the past to each of the areas of investigation. A fundamental premise of social constructionism – that people actively construct reality and the world around them through social interactions – is a key element and driver of discourses advocating the universal practice of human rights. Amnesty’s mission for schools is aimed at building a human rights culture (Amnesty International, 2009); the notion of “building” a human rights culture involves active social construction. Social constructionism underpins key aspects of Amnesty’s work and provides a foundation for exploring the implementation of ambitious projects for social change.

A social constructionist perspective is particularly suited for both an examination of whole-school projects, and also for investigating the NGOs who design and promote them. As this study primarily seeks to better understand the social interactions between the actors in schools and NGOs, a qualitative approach to data collection (incorporating a case study framework and using ethnographic methods that include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and classroom workshops) is preferred, and is more appropriate in elaborating the social dimension of whole-school HRE programmes than a positivist approach, which would not enable the research questions for this study to be answered. Unlike positivist approaches, this study does not intend to arrive at objective, quantifiable conclusions about the nature of NGO-school partnerships, but instead aims to illuminate the processes underpinning and energising such projects. The case study approach is appropriate as a research method guided by social constructionist principles because case studies can be richly descriptive and analytical and suited to the dynamic and unique nature of schools through the observation of interactions taking place in a naturalistic environment and everyday contexts (Cohen et al., 2007). In the next section, I discuss social

constructionism as it relates to the fields of study this thesis explores before elaborating the specific research methods and design to be used.

#### **4.2.1 Social Constructionism**

*Social constructionism* is a theoretical strand within the larger field of constructivism, the general school of thought that metaphorically likens knowledge acquisition to “a process of building or construction” (Fox, 2001, p. 23). Social constructionism is the idea that the interactions between social actors within a given system (here, NGO and school development projects) play a crucial role in how knowledge and reality are constructed, and thus require analyses of the ways in which those actors perceive and understand the world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In other words, elements such as language, culture, and traditions unique to different countries, societies and educational systems are critical to understanding the construction of knowledge, as reality is *externalized* (made tangible by the actions of people), *objectified* (rendered objective by virtue of their existence), and finally *internalized* (made internal because of their existence as socialised objects) (Ibid). Under social constructionist perspectives, knowledge is constantly negotiated and is thus subject to multiple interpretations or constructions of the world that are largely contingent on culture and historicity (Burr, 2003).

Although it enjoys widespread usage in sociological research, social constructionism initially functioned as a “marginal oppositional perspective” (Fine, 1993, p. 61) to the established sociological paradigm of *positivism*, with the former using primarily qualitative research methods and the latter quantitative. Positivism is rooted in the pursuit of verifiable, objective “scientific” knowledge that can be measured; “in [positivist] analysis, social, cultural, and historical dimensions of understanding [are] regarded as extrascientific and hence irrelevant to any valid epistemological account of what constitutes genuine scientific knowledge and its justification” (Schwandt, 2003, p. 304). In contrast, social constructionism is primarily concerned with an analysis of social, cultural and historical factors that contribute to the formation of knowledge in social contexts.

Social constructionism as epistemology underpins many of the established pedagogical approaches to HRE found in formal education, by empowering learners to actively participate in constructing their learning experiences, and by promoting tolerance and understanding amongst students regarding their individual and cultural differences (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Tomasevski, 2004; UNICEF, 2007). Recognising and supporting the dignity and equality of differences in cultural knowledge and experience is a crucial element of HRE. A social constructionist paradigm is similarly useful for examining whole-school HRE because the approach demands active social construction and negotiation of a new, rights-based framework for education. A participating school's transformation from traditional, authoritarian institution to democratic, rights-respecting school is a product of the increased social interactions and knowledge construction of all the stakeholders in the school working towards attainment of a shared, rights-based vision.

In the case of several of the NGOs discussed in this study, it is already possible to observe the social construction of a discourse of HRE best practices in England, which has translated in practice to the promotion of whole-school approaches across organisations (3.2.3). As this study explores HRE concepts and how teaching and learning a culture of human rights is promoted through organisational partnerships, a social constructionist paradigm is most appropriate for providing a framework for collection, analysis and interpretation of data for this study.

### **4.3 Research Setting**

This study observes the practice of whole-school HRE in the following settings: (1) Amnesty International Secretariat in Clerkenwell and the Amnesty UK section office in Shoreditch, (2) Buckingham school, and (3) the non-NGO, non-school places in which partnership is facilitated. An example of this third category is a project conference that takes places at a neutral setting (e.g. hotel, university). One of these settings was a Burnham hotel where both Amnesty and representatives from all fourteen participating countries and schools gathered for the first major meeting of HRFS.

Buckingham School was chosen to be the London and England pilot school for HRFS because of its existing relationship with Amnesty, who in 2008 provided support for the school's Annual International Student Conference (6.2.1). At the time, Buckingham had been interested in integrating a whole-school approach to HRE and had already begun working with UNICEF UK on the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA, 3.2.3.2) when approached by Amnesty. According to the school's assistant head, the school's leadership felt that HRFS would be more beneficial than RRSA because of the international dimension of the project, and because of the prestige of being the sole pilot school in England. Amnesty's decision to select Buckingham was, according to Amnesty's lead coordinator for HRFS, based on Buckingham's existing and progressive work around student voice and democratic education (6.2), and because of its commitment to exploring international issues through its annual conference. Amnesty felt that the school had already put in place a strong foundation for successfully implementing HRFS.

#### **4.3.1 Researcher/Consultant/Volunteer: Negotiating Roles**

During this study I assumed several different roles as a participant-observer, which gave me an inside perspective on Amnesty's organisational processes during the piloting of HRFS. The level and type of access granted to me was influenced by my role as an Amnesty consultant between 2008-2009. Because of my status as an Amnesty consultant during the first project meeting, some participants may have viewed me as an Amnesty employee rather than as a critical researcher. At both the site of the first meeting and during one event at the school (the school's 2009 international conference) I assisted in scheduling, event management, and IT support, all tasks more readily associated with an employee than an external researcher. Assuming these various roles gave me an opportunity to construct a stronger description of HRFS implementation from an NGO perspective. On the other hand, my role may have played a part in how I was perceived by participants, as a non-neutral ally of the project and Amnesty, which may have affected how participants responded in interviews. However, I do not believe that this impacted my ability to solicit the views of school participants on the potential

of HRFS, particularly as many of the respondents had a strong level of knowledge about HRE.

#### **4.3.2 Institutional Settings**

Data for this study was directly collected from Amnesty either at their London offices or at locations where Amnesty conducted HRFS events. Data was also collected at the school during officially sanctioned research visits. The school was selected via opportunity sample, as it was the only school in England participating in the project and most directly accessible via the strong links to Amnesty offices developing the project. Appendix 3 details the research subject, settings, areas of inquiry and date collected.

#### **4.3.3 Human participants**

Participants in the study were involved primarily through opportunity sample, based on access granted to me by school and Amnesty personnel. Specific school leaders and Amnesty staff were selected because of their role or status at project leaders, or because of their direct connection to the project.

I collected data from:

- Amnesty full-time staff including education officers, managers and project coordinators, and volunteers;
- Participating school personnel and other adult members of the school community, including administrators and teachers.
- Students;
- Parents;
- Where possible, experts associated with Amnesty or other NGO HRE projects.

#### **4.4 Methodological Approach to Data Collection**

This study examines the social and participatory nature of both learning and collaboration among key stakeholder groups implementing HRFS. Using a social constructionist framework, I conducted an exploratory study of HRFS, with the intention of capturing the social reality of partnership participants through a combination of qualitative and ethnographic research methods. I frame the overall thesis as a case study of the NGO-school partnership.

I construct the case study primarily using ethnographic methods of participant-observation and interviews in multiple settings over time. In addition, I employ

qualitative techniques not typically associated with ethnography, specifically classroom research workshops and focus groups. In the sections that follow, I discuss the benefits and limitations of both case study and ethnographic research before detailing the data collection methods used in the study.

#### **4.4.1 Case Studies in Educational Research**

A case study approach can sufficiently capture the social construction of NGO-school partnerships by observing processes and effects in natural, “real life” contexts (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2003). Case studies are empirical inquiries implicitly focused on how actors within a given context construct reality in their natural environment (Ibid). Case studies enable the delineation of boundaries around each case, whether by geography, time, or individual and group characteristics, offering a useful method of defining a phenomenon under study (Ibid).

The key features of a case study are:

1. Investigation into a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident;
2. Use of multiple sources of evidence to attend to multiple variables of interest;
3. Use of previously developed theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2003, pp. 13-14)

This thesis incorporates a case study approach that utilises a mixture of ethnographic and qualitative data collection methods, which include participant-observation, video recordings of events, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus groups.

I selected a case study approach to facilitate a robust elucidation of the challenges of NGO-school partnership and whole-school change, which requires a deeper level examination of complex organisational environments to understand change processes. Research on whole-school HRE (3.2.3), which has enlivened the school improvement literature with evidence of the potentially transformative benefits of whole-school HRE, illustrates the types of surface-level and medium-term changes possible.

One weakness of the case study approach is the inherently subjective and interpretive nature of case construction, which can be criticised as biased (Cohen et al., 2007); a corresponding weakness concerns the difficulties in generalising such cases, despite the fact that case studies are meant to suggest potential generalisations about a particular phenomena under observation (Ibid). I do not aim to generalise about whole-school HRE in schools, but I believe a case study can assist in uncovering the practices that obstruct or promote whole-school HRE.

I constructed this study using primarily ethnographic methods. Case studies and ethnographies have been considered by some to be non-complementary research methods. Court (2003) argues that each method has different intentions: ethnography is essentially inward looking, aimed at capturing particular phenomena in depth from an “insider” perspective, while case studies, even those that use ethnographic methods, are outward looking, or in other words aimed at making wider generalisations about knowledge or the world. However, this framing of ethnography as inward-looking ignores the potential of ethnographic research to contribute to a wider understanding of a particular phenomenon by relating an insider perspective to larger, more generalisable observations.

Another significant difference between case studies and ethnographies is the use of hypotheses or propositions in research design. Case studies often incorporate hypothesis as part of their exploration; Yin (2003) argues that only through the use of propositions can a researcher know where to begin looking for relevant evidence. However, Yin acknowledges that case studies do not necessarily need to incorporate propositions, particularly if they are exploratory in nature. Nonetheless, several theoretical propositions underpin my case study. In focusing on whole-school HRE as a policy framework, I locate my study at the level of organisational analysis, and present three theoretical propositions:

1. NGO-school partnerships for whole-school HRE are driven by utopian idealism for a better world.

2. NGO-school partnerships occur because schools and NGOs share mutual goals.
3. NGO-school partnerships for whole-school HRE will encounter challenges to sustainability.

My research question is primarily concerned with elucidating the nature of NGO-school partnerships, and I contend that this thesis can provide needed insight into how organisational partnerships are managed while also highlighting patterns and themes that frame these complex processes.

#### **4.4.2 Ethnography in Human Rights and Educational Research**

Because the study involves two distinctly separate organisational cultures (NGO and schools), as well as the interaction of NGO and schools in partnership at non-neutral sites, I employ an ethnographic qualitative research paradigm to construct the case study, an approach consistent with previous studies on human rights NGOs (Hopgood, 2006) and on HRE in schools (Cunningham, 2000; Hantzopoulos, 2008; Kelly, 2003). Ethnographers are actively involved in constructing “versions of social reality” (Atkinson, 1990, p. 57); in other words, ethnographic researchers seek to understand how a particular social reality is constructed by its participants, and become shapers of this reality themselves through the reporting of fieldwork. This method builds on a tradition of many studies in the fields of social movements, HRE and school development.

Ethnographic methods describe and analyse specific social settings by capturing perspectives and behaviours of those under observation. Ethnography links to both anthropological research traditions and to social constructionist epistemologies. Focused on an inductive (using data to inform theory) rather than deductive (testing hypotheses) method, ethnography was traditionally concerned with the observation of research subjects in a “natural” social and cultural environment, where the researcher is part of the research environment and uses field notes and observations as a main data collection source (Scott, 1996). Traditional ethnographies emphasise extended periods of time spent observing research subjects in their environments, creating descriptive accounts of the research environment; Geertz’s phrase “thick description” refers to the process of capturing highly detailed information

about the research setting to construct a fuller picture of the phenomena under study (Swidler, 1986). In contrast, alternative ethnographic approaches may include semi-structured interviews and other so-called “artificial” methods and settings for data collection, and may not necessarily devote an extended period of time to observation of research subjects in their natural environment (Scott, 1996).

Ethnography is particularly suited to this study because observation of the natural environment is unpredictable and changeable, due to the nature of the social worlds inhabited by teachers and school leaders, students, and NGO workers. The intentions and actions of many of these actors and systems of practice are always subject to improvisation and adaptation; ethnography provides a descriptive account of the dynamic processes that frame NGO-school interactions around whole-school HRE. Furthermore, the nature of the processes that drive whole-school HRE projects from conception to implementation can be better understood by researching over time the events and interactions that make up the partnership.

The position of the ethnographer can also be subject to change. Research studies can be enriched by personal interactions that lead to different forms of access, such as social events or impromptu meetings. Additionally, participation in NGO networks around HRE provides further means of contextualising the whole-school HRE projects of the NGOs, by allowing access to cross-NGO forums on whole-school HRE where particular approaches and ideas were debated and discussed.

It is necessary to identify some of the limitations of ethnographic approaches, and to explain how this study will adjust for them. McLaughlin’s (1986) assessment of reliability and validity issues in school ethnographies provides a useful checklist of questions that raise important points about the ability of ethnographic, qualitatively collected data to accurately represent the reality of school situations. The issues McLaughlin raise include: the effect of the researcher on the subjects under study; the choice of representative vs. non-representative subjects; usage of different methods for triangulation;

assessing “strong” and “weak” data; replicability of findings; and participant feedback (McLaughlin, 1986). These issues are considered in sections 4.6 and 4.7.

One particular study provided inspiration for my research approach. Hopgood’s study of Amnesty International Secretariat, *Keepers of the Flame* (2006), is a relevant and important example of an ethnography of a human rights NGO and is particularly useful for this study because of its focus on the International Secretariat and the organisational culture of Amnesty’s global headquarters. Hopgood’s fieldwork illuminated the complex processes underpinning Amnesty’s humanitarian work and the disjunctures between Amnesty’s identity as a neutral moral authority and its aspirations to work for political and social change. His ethnography included document analysis of past and current organisational materials, interviews with staff, and observations of the organisation in practice.

Approaching his study from an anthropological perspective, Hopgood finds that Amnesty as an organisation attempted to build a distinctive culture of moral authority that is akin to a “religionless Christianity” (Hopgood, 2006, p. 62). Using in-depth, descriptive accounts of his observations of the organisation in practice, as well as interviews with Amnesty staff, he outlines a key tension between the “keepers of the flame” – those inside Amnesty committed to its initial remit to objectively research and report on human rights violations worldwide – and “reformers,” who wanted to advocate for social change in pursuit of human rights. The study exposed a tension “between speaking the truth and deploying that truth in an argument for social change” (p. 5), reflecting the dual processes of “bearing witness and political agitation” (p. 65).

Hopgood also captures the daily organisational discourses permeating through Amnesty that often contradict the moral authority and assuredness of purpose that are two of the organisation’s strongest assets, if not their main source of credibility. He relates the often disaffected nature of many employees who find contradictions between the mission of Amnesty and the

conditions under which that mission is implemented, and in doing so, presents a perspective that brings to the fore several key themes that may potentially be relevant to other humanitarian NGOs with similar missions. Drawing on Hopgood's approach, I analyse HRFS to learn more about how humanitarian NGOs negotiate complex partnerships in the context of their challenging work.

#### **4.5 Data Collection**

My intention in constructing the research design was to not only capture multiple perspectives using participant-observation and interviews, but to also provide participants with means of individually and collectively sharing their experiences. In addition to observing and interviewing school community members and NGO practitioners, I led students in an interactive classroom workshop designed to provide a forum for critical reflection on learning about and for human rights, and I led teachers and students in focus group exercises. The main data collection methods are further outlined in this section.

Ethnography was used to gather qualitative data. Qualitative approaches to the research entailed:

- Participant-observation of HRFS in progress in the school, at Amnesty and at neutral settings
- Participant-observation of school environment and NGO environment;
- Semi-structured interviews of:
  - Headteacher
  - Teachers (4)
  - School personnel, including leaders, administrators and other miscellaneous staff (3)
  - Amnesty staff involved in implementing HRFS (2)
  - Individual students (4)
- Document analysis of Amnesty organisational and curricular materials, including:
  - HRFS curricular and project documents
  - Historical and organisational information, e.g. archived materials, brochures or programme information on past and present initiatives
- Document analysis of school materials, including:
  - School documentation on the project, such as brochures for HRFS events, memos, and curriculum

- Materials in the school environment related to HRFS, e.g. school mission statement, signs, posters, and student exhibits and presentations
- School policies
- Text from webpages on the school's website
- Document analysis of media coverage of the school
- Document analysis of Facebook pages, YouTube videos, and online comments on both sites
- In-classroom participatory workshops (1 class)
- Teacher focus groups (3)
- Student focus groups (2)

Appendix 4 details the data collection visits and meetings during the two-year study.

#### **4.5.1 Participant Observation**

Gold (1958) identifies four types of participant observation roles that can be assumed by the ethnographer: complete participant (identity of researcher is hidden), participant-as-observer (researcher participates in activities but makes open their research focus), observer-as-participant (researcher is more detached and does not participate), and complete observer (researcher is completely passive and seeks to avoid “contamination” of the research setting). The range of roles highlights the many ways in which a researcher can conduct ethnographies; I have selected the second role, participant-as-observer, as I actively conducted research in partnership with project participants whilst observing the project in development. I view the extremes of complete participant and complete observer as unrealistic for investigating HRFS; it was neither possible nor desirable to hide my identity as a part of this study. Furthermore, I do not believe that it is realistic to presume that I could conduct the range of qualitative data collection outlined above as a complete observer.

#### **4.5.2 Interviews**

The use of interviews is supported in both case study and ethnographic approaches, and is relevant to a study using a social constructionist framework because it allows for the generation of knowledge via social interaction (Cohen et al., 2007).

For this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews primarily with the key actors involved with coordinating HRFS at both Amnesty and Buckingham. At Amnesty, I interviewed two staff members directly responsible for developing, implementing coordinating the project; Amnesty's lead coordinator of the project (hereafter "Amnesty's lead coordinator"), and Amnesty's UK section project coordinator (hereafter "Amnesty's secondary coordinator"). At Buckingham, I interviewed the headteacher (hereafter "headteacher"); the school's assistant headteacher for student voice (hereafter "assistant head"), tasked with implementing HRFS at the school; the head of citizenship, also tasked with implementing HRFS at the school (hereafter "head of citizenship"); and two teachers, a maths teacher (hereafter "Beth"), and a positive behaviour mentor (hereafter "Dawn"). I also interviewed several students who were part of the school's Junior Leadership Team (JLT). I felt that for the purposes of constructing the case study it was important to have detailed data from the project coordinators in particular, especially with regards to perspectives on the policy implications of implementing HRFS.

Although I was a key participant in the development and implementation of HRFS and a potential source of data, I elected not to complete a questionnaire or be interviewed for the study, and instead selected from an extensive record of field notes to contribute my perspective and voice as a participant-observer.

Transcripts of interview questions and a full transcript of a completed interview are included in appendices 7 and 8.

#### **4.5.3 Document Analysis**

An important element of this study involved examining both Amnesty and Buckingham document materials. This study analyses relevant resource materials, and also considers documents not directly related to the project, including general Amnesty and school materials such as marketing brochures, mission statements and organisational strategies, and correspondences (where available).

Appendix 5 provides a list of Amnesty organisational documents related either directly to HRFS or to Amnesty's HRE policies, which were analysed as part of the study.

#### **4.5.4 Classroom-Based Research Workshops**

This study solicited views from students in a classroom setting in order to support the methodology of whole-school HRE projects to provide opportunities for active participation. Specifically, I was interested in understanding students' knowledge and awareness of human rights and to query attitudes towards NGO partnerships and whole-school HRE.

Students were encouraged to discuss their participation in HRFS, and were also asked questions on human rights issues. These questions intended to give learners opportunities to comment on a specific human rights situation in an open-ended fashion. I had envisaged collecting data from several classrooms, but access to classrooms during my fieldwork proved limited; thus, only one classroom workshop was conducted during the study. The data generated was insufficient to make a robust contribution to the thesis; thus analysis of this workshop has not been included.

#### **4.5.5 Focus Groups**

Focus groups were used to solicit the views of students and teachers at the school about their participation in HRFS and their understanding of HRE. I conducted three focus groups with teachers and two focus groups with students.

The teacher focus groups consisted of questions designed to gauge perspectives on project aims, existing knowledge of human rights, and opportunities and challenges for success. For student focus groups, school leaders arranged for me to meet with students who were part of the Junior Leadership Team (JLT) – in other words, students who had been elected by their peers to provide student representation on school matters and input into school policy. I felt that because of the experience of these students participating in democratic processes, they were a particularly appropriate group to speak with. My focus groups with students on the JLT were

facilitated as a discussion of the students' experiences at the school as members of the JLT, and with HRE.

Transcripts of focus group questions and a full transcript of a completed focus group with a teacher cohort and a student cohort are included in appendices 9 and 10.

#### **4.6 Researcher Access and Positionality**

I gained access to the research sites primarily through communication and partnership with Amnesty and Buckingham. I established a research partnership with Amnesty specifying the terms of my participation and expected outputs and outcomes of collaboration (appendix 1), which granted me access to Amnesty offices, staff, and other formal and informal events. I was able to access Buckingham in an official NGO capacity because of my status as an Amnesty consultant; once the consultancy ended, I received permission from the school's leaders to visit Buckingham solely in my capacity as a researcher. From September 2008 to March 2009, I was employed as an Amnesty consultant to draft the HRFS global standards and guidelines. The professional and personal relationships I developed with Amnesty and Buckingham staff facilitated access to Buckingham for the duration of the study.

It is important to address how my status as a doctoral researcher was influenced by my professional relationship with Amnesty. Before collecting any data I reiterated to informants aware of my former consultant role that my doctoral study was completely separate from my work developing the HRFS guidelines. In general, the school regarded me as an Amnesty associate who supported the school's HRE work. Whilst a consultant, Amnesty staff expressed their support for my research, acknowledging its usefulness for organisational learning.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

This section discusses various ethical issues around the research study.

### *Voluntary informed consent*

School leaders, teachers, and Amnesty staff involved in the study completed and returned signed consent forms before participating in the research (appendix 2). The headteacher and the participating teacher approved classroom data collection with students in advance; this consent was substituted in place of gathering individual student signatures. In place of consent forms, all students were given a participant information sheet that clearly explained the nature of research, from whom data was collected and how, identified the researcher and provided contact information, and gave information on their right to not participate or have their names used in the research (appendix 12). This information was also explained to students orally at the beginning of the workshop.

### *Risks to participants*

Composed of observation, interviews, focus groups and classroom learning activities, the research poses low risk of physical or psychological harm to participants. However, there are several, more basic potential risks to participants. The research could take up classroom time that might be better used in other ways (e.g. to make progress in advancing the prescribed school curriculum). Another risk to participants concerns students electing not to participate, and their inability to benefit during school hours from normal classroom activities.

### *Benefit to participants*

The proposed research examines whole-school HRE, which promotes increased participation and engagement of all members of the school community. For students in particular, the classroom learning activity as a method of data collection is designed to facilitate active student participation in constructing knowledge about human rights. Working in small groups to generate written responses to photographs depicting human rights scenarios (appendix 11), students appeared to be spirited and engaged, contributing insightful comments about their understandings of human rights.

In keeping with both the aims of HRE and the requirements of BERA, the research complies with Articles 3 and 12 of the CRC: the best interests of the child will be the primary consideration of the research (Article 3), and children will be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them (Article 12). This includes informed consent of children participants, as well as encouraging active participation during data collection. After each student focus group and classroom session, I asked students to comment on what they thought I should do with my findings.

For school personnel and Amnesty staff, the intended benefits of the research include increased knowledge about practices relating to HRE in NGOs and schools, and insight into the successes and challenges of whole-school approaches to HRE that can inform future practices.

#### *Incentives*

The research offers intrinsic incentives by way of providing Buckingham with critical feedback on a school-wide initiative and on external partnerships. The completed study can serve as an important resource for Amnesty personnel and Buckingham leaders interested in learning more about the process of implementing HRFS and whole-school approaches.

#### *Presence of other adults during data collection with students*

Data collection of students occurred without the presence and supervision of adults during the student focus groups, or of the classroom teacher during the classroom activity. Prior to beginning the workshop, the classroom teacher introduced me to students, and then left during the session. Although adults would periodically enter the room during different parts of the session, their presence was either brief or discreet, ensuring that activities were uninterrupted and that students did not modify their responses. This maintained student confidentiality and a sufficient supervisory presence during my time with students.

### *Sensitive data*

Where possible, the research captured data anonymously, and the only data requested of a sensitive nature was gender. No data of a personal nature other than the views of participants on their experiences at the school or Amnesty was solicited.

### *Anonymity*

All participants are anonymous. Names and places have been changed to protect the identity of participants.

### *Reporting on the research*

Upon completion of my research, I provided an executive summary report on the use of data collected and recommendations for action to Buckingham School (headteacher, teachers and students), Amnesty International Secretariat, and Amnesty's UK section, and invited comments and feedback. All participants have been asked if they wish to receive copies of the final research thesis and will be provided a copy upon request.

## **4.8 Analytical Framework**

For the construction of my analytical framework, I adopt a sequence of analysis that includes:

1. Aggregating information and looking for themes, patterns, similarities and relationships;
2. Creating a categories matrix and placing evidence in respective categories in order to isolate patterns and catalogue frequency of events;
3. Outlining initial generalisations consistent with cross-case similarities and/or differences;
4. Mapping generalisations against existing conceptual frameworks (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Yin notes that case studies must incorporate some type of strategy for data analysis that prioritises what is analysed and why (2003). In order to understand the HRE work of two distinct types of organisations in partnership, I have developed three key units of analysis that emerge from the research questions and the literature review:

1. The *utopian* visions and actions of NGOs and schools implementing HRFS;
2. The *pragmatic* visions and actions of NGOs and schools implementing HRFS;
3. The relationship between school *micropolitics* and HRFS.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed the concepts of utopianism, pragmatism, and micropolitics as key perspectives framing the research study. I have selected these three guiding concepts because they represent key forces acting on Amnesty and Buckingham in the implementation of HRFS that correspond to (1) the aims of whole-school HRE (utopianism); (2) the neoliberal organisational policies and school change processes directing the work of schools, to which teachers and leaders must respond (pragmatism); and (3) the discursive tensions between school political climate and policy change (micropolitics).

The table below outlines the ways in which these three concepts interact with the research study:

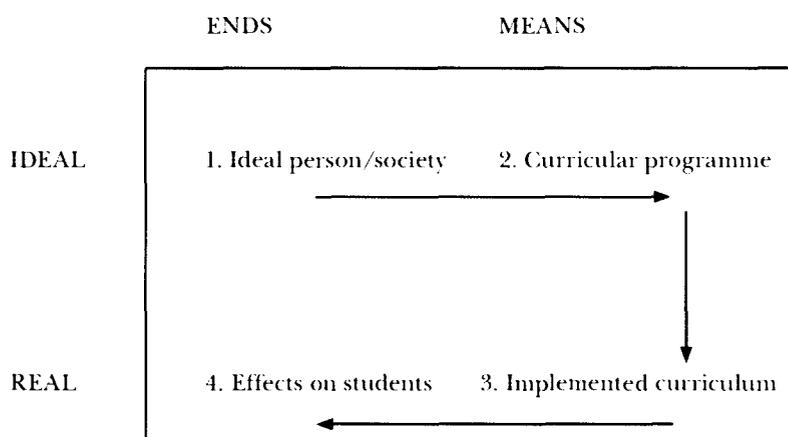
<b>Utopianism</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>	<b>Micropolitics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides momentum for school innovation</li> <li>• Empowers struggles for social justice and systemic change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to neoliberal educational policies</li> <li>• Responds to organisational change and/or school reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to organisational change</li> <li>• Influences whole-school HRE</li> <li>• Is influenced by whole-school HRE</li> </ul>

*Table 4.2 Key Theoretical Concepts*

In exploring ideas of utopianism, pragmatism and micropolitics as guiding concepts for analysis, I frame them as emerging from processes that schools undergo when implementing school-wide policy projects. McCowan's model for curricular policy analysis, *curricular transposition*, used to analyse citizenship education projects in Brazil, provides a strong analytical framework for HRFS, illuminating the three key analytical themes across the stages of a policy implementation.

Curricular transposition focuses on how the 'leaps' between stages of change indicate transitions between ideal to reality, and between ends and means (McCowan, 2009). McCowan's four stages of curricular transposition, which

can be linked to the guiding analytical concepts I employ for this study, involve (1) ideals motivating educational policies (*utopian*); (2) the curriculum emerging from those ideals (*utopian and pragmatic*); (3) their implementation in practice (*utopian, pragmatic, and micropolitical*); and (4) the effects on students and schools (*utopian, pragmatic, and micropolitical*) (McCowan, 2008). Between these stages are three 'leaps' (each of which is represented in the diagram below by an arrow) that draw attention to the ways in which ends become translated into means and the ideal is shaped into the real, providing spaces for analysis of the dynamics of educational change and the disjunctures between educational aims and outcomes.



(Source: McCowan 2008)

**Leap 1** represents the journey from ideal ends (in the case of HRFS, a culture of human rights in schools) to ideal means (Amnesty's whole-school HRE model), offering opportunities to analyse the ways in which international human rights frameworks become translated into educational policy frameworks for schools by non-state, non-educational policy actors (human rights NGOs), and to discern the gap between the utopian vision of a human rights school culture and the programme of study meant to achieve this. This leap is explored in Chapters 2 and 3 through a review of the development of the whole-school HRE field.

**Leap 2** explores the conversion from ideal means (HRFS curriculum as created by Amnesty International Secretariat) to real means (the implementation of HRFS by Amnesty International UK section and Buckingham). My data collection in schools focused primarily on this leap, in

terms of how Amnesty and school personnel received, interpreted and implemented HRFS. This data is analysed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

**Leap 3** investigates the transition from real means (how HRFS is implemented) to its real ends, or effects, on the school (the outcomes of the pilot partnership). Concerning my data analysis, this leap can help examine the influence of whole-school HRE on schools and the extent to which that influence reflects the ideal end envisioned at the beginning of the HRFS journey. Through discussion of a series of teacher- and student-led strike events during the second pilot year (Chapter 8), I explore the extent to which HRFS implementation influenced and was influenced by micropolitical action at the school.

McCowan's model of curricular transposition, when applied to his research on citizenship education in Brazil, found that superficial implementation of the teaching programme under study "appeared to be reflected in the superficiality of development of the students" (McCowan, 2008, p. 165). McCowan's research found that many students "absorbed the discourse" but did not necessarily internalise the values being taught (Ibid). By showing that what teachers choose to focus on in implementing curriculum can play a significant role in what students learn, McCowan's research highlights the potential for curricular reform around values (such as citizenship or HRE) to be transferred as superficial information and skills without a meaningful link to a values framework for action. The curricular transposition framework further illustrates the disjunctures between the formulation and enactment of curricular policy. Exploring HRFS through examination of the leaps between ideal to real and ends to means can give insight into the process of HRFS as policy enactment, and can also help to elaborate the roles of stakeholders on Amnesty and the school sides in affecting the implementation process. Jerome notes that curricular transposition is particularly useful for bringing attention to the perspectives and agency of students and teachers "in shaping, interpreting, selecting, and even ignoring aspects of policy according to their abilities, interests, experiences and beliefs" (Jerome, 2012, p. 24). This provides an additional benefit for this study as it seeks to better

understand the ways in which all members of a given school community become involved in understanding and enacting whole-school HRE.

Using McCowan's model, I focus in the subsequent data analysis chapters on exploring the second and third leaps (having addressed the first leap in the literature review), using the themes of *utopianism*, *pragmatism*, and *micropolitics* as key analytical themes within the curricular transposition framework.

#### **4.9 Analytical Process**

This section briefly discusses the process that followed data collection, including transcription, coding and analysis and writing up.

##### *Transcription*

For all data collection where I spoke directly to members of the school community or Amnesty staff, I captured data with an audio recorder, which was then transcribed in its entirety. This meant transcription of entire recorded interviews in full length, including transcription of everything said by both myself and the interviewee. However, I did not transcribe details of timing, intonation, laughter or breathing, and when presenting quotes in the data analysis, I removed some speech errors to make the quotes easier to read. I believe that has no negative impact on the meaning inferred from and analysis of this data, which is assisted by a record of full, unedited transcripts of all interviews and focus groups for reference. An example of a completed interview transcript is provided in appendix 8.

##### **Developing Codes for Thematic Analysis of Data**

Before beginning to analyse both documentary and interview data for this study, I required a system that would enable me to make sense of and categorise the data. Using the three units of analysis described above, I developed from the research questions and literature review four themes for categorising the collected data that can be located within each of the paradigms elaborated for this study: (1) Expectations; (2) Opportunities and Challenges; (3) Understanding of Human Rights and HRE; and (4)

Conceptions of NGO/School Partnership. These four themes are meant to generate insight into how partnerships for whole-school HRE are conceptualised and enacted by project participants.

### *Writing up*

The process of writing up was first begun with the organisation of captured data. I did not use research software, and chose to review transcriptions myself. I did initial readings of all of the transcripts and searched through the data for key themes that arose from both the literature review and the research questions, and categorised those themes within the broad set of codes described above. I used multiple string searches within text in order to find similar themes and codes in the varying pieces of data. My next step was to group data from different interviews and focus groups into code clusters, in order to be able to aggregate the data corresponding to different codes as part of the analysis. This allowed me to begin to generate themes that corresponded with my conceptual and analytical frameworks.

### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the methodology of the thesis by linking the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 to the methods I have chosen to use to investigate whole-school HRE partnership between Amnesty and Buckingham school. In the following four chapters, I present the data analysis for the study.

## Chapter 5

### Vision, Promise and Challenge: Constructing *Human Rights Friendly Schools*

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines key elements of the **preparatory phase** of the *Human Rights Friendly Schools* (HRFS) project between February and October 2009, before the official project launch in the 2009-2010 academic year. I investigate how the project was conceptualised and prepared by project partners, illustrating the development of the project prior to its launch as one facet of the greater partnership continuum. I wish to illuminate the intersecting and contrasting ways that key actors (1) envisioned the potential of HRFS, and (2) began the process of partnership.

The literature review suggests two broad reasons why Buckingham School might engage with Amnesty: for progressive (*utopian*), values-driven reasons, or for neoliberal (*pragmatic*), performance- and policy-driven reasons. Similarly, Amnesty's mission and its bureaucratic, multi-national organisational structure and respected brand name balances utopian aims with pragmatic approaches. However, where Amnesty's mission shapes its work from a utopian perspective, the work of state schools is sanctioned by official policies to achieve increased attainment, which has tended to prioritise pragmatic approaches to learning within school organisations that emphasise reforms aimed at improving outcomes. I frame Amnesty as a primarily utopian organisation attempting to influence a primarily pragmatic institution, and intend through analysis to identify the ways in which Buckingham balances the utopian aims of implementing HRFS against institutional structures that encourage pragmatism.

The chapter specifically addresses **research sub-question #1**:

- Drawing on their experiences in and perspectives on human rights education, how was HRFS constructed (envisioned and prepared) by key actors?

Using the theoretical and analytical frameworks outlined in Chapter 4 (methodology), this chapter explores elements of the second 'leap'

(McCowan, 2008) between the HRFS project design and the school's preparation and implementation of the project, focusing particularly on the ways in which participants *conceptualised* the curricular and policy programme of HRFS. How participants *enacted* both the project and the partnership as a function of the second leap is discussed in Chapters 6 (project) and 7 (partnership). Throughout this stage I employ two distinct notions for exploring the responses of Buckingham school community members and Amnesty staff involved in organising the project: *utopianism* and *pragmatism* (see Chapters 2 & 3). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with students, teachers and leaders, field notes and project documentary materials (3.2.3) are the main data sources presented in this chapter. The data reveals a range of responses expressed by project partners identifying utopian possibilities and pragmatic challenges.

## **5.2 Partnership Context**

This section provides information on the project partners' respective contexts prior to partnership in HRFS in order to frame data analysis for the research study.

NGO-school collaborations are often small-scale projects meant to address one area of the school's curriculum, or to provide one type of discrete service such as teaching training or materials. Furthermore, implementation of NGO-led education initiatives often involves just a few key figures at both NGO and school level. Within schools, these actors are generally teachers and leaders, while within NGOs these are typically the staff directly working on the project. HRFS' whole-school framework thus poses distinct challenges in terms of both significantly expanding the nature of NGO educational work in schools, and in terms of expanding access to NGO partnerships to a wider percentage of students and teachers.

For HRFS, Amnesty staff members drove the project in terms of conceptualisation, provision of materials, scheduling of in-school meetings and visits, and support for planned and special events and other initiatives. But sustained implementation of the project happened day-to-day within the school, and was less contingent on partnership and more reliant on school-

side enactment. School leaders were primarily responsible for introducing and operationalising HRFS, and whilst headteacher and school leader support are considered fundamental to the successful realisation of new initiatives (Ball & Maroy, 2009), equally and perhaps even more important are the actors in schools who actually drive projects forward on a daily basis, namely teachers and students. Thus, in exploring the HRFS partnership, I have focused on outlining how both partners constructed the project (Chapter 5), how the school put HRFS into practice (Chapter 6), how the expectations and enactment of the partnership itself affected implementation (Chapter 7), and how the project interacted with existing micropolitics at the school level (Chapter 8).

### **5.2.1 Amnesty International**

Amnesty International Secretariat (IS) primarily coordinates organisational policies and programmes at the global level, and has since the publication of its 2005 global HRE strategy been seeking ways to expand its movement through increased HRE initiatives. HRFS represents Amnesty's attempts at innovating and expanding its HRE remit by testing a new method of working in secondary schools in any country. Amnesty's lead coordinator for HRFS explained that:

For a long time we've had this rhetoric of [HRE] being about, for and through rights. About it not being proper HRE unless children experience it in the way that they're taught, they experience it in the wider school community, they have opportunities to take action for human rights. But teachers currently see it as something which is about teaching and learning, or about extra-curricular campaigning type work. Our goal is to develop a model whereby we can demonstrate that it can be something which permeates through the life of the school.

HRFS was developed because of Amnesty's interest in expanding its global HRE work whilst directly contributing to on-going UN initiatives aimed at promoting HRE in national education systems. In this sense, Amnesty policy aligned itself with contemporary conceptions of how HRE should be delivered in schools, specifically, through holistic approaches as advocated by the WPHRE as part of a "rights-based education" (2.4). Amnesty's commitment to promoting the WPHRE is expressed in multiple organisational documents

(particularly its global HRE strategy) and HRFS documents, including the partnership Memorandum of Understanding (appendix 6) and the *Guidelines* document (3.2.3).

Since late 2007, Amnesty has made considerable effort to formulate and launch HRFS as a pilot project. The scope of the project indicates its ambition, in terms of: (1) Amnesty's vision for schools (transforming school policies and schools); (2) the global nature of the project (developing a model for international usage); and (3) the organisational effort required by Amnesty to launch the project (including global coordination and a lengthy consultation process). Documentary materials reveal an extensive process encompassing design, consultation, and refinement of the project (appendix 5). The planning process for HRFS' launch in February 2009 was highly intensive; during my post as Amnesty consultant, I attended ten planning meetings during a six-month period leading up to the official launch of HRFS.

### **5.2.2 Buckingham School**

Buckingham School was in many ways an ideal candidate for piloting HRFS. It had strong support from the school leadership for human rights, student voice and international education as part of its school-wide work. Prior to partnering with Amnesty, the school had implemented initiatives aimed at fostering understanding of international issues (e.g. an annual international conference that invited students from around the world, fair trade awareness-raising campaigns in the school's cafeteria), as well as democracy and student voice (e.g. democratically elected student leadership teams and house councils providing peer mediation, and events such as an annual "democracy week"). School leaders directly linked participation in HRFS to an expansion of these existing initiatives as a way to support and integrate the project. The school also had experience working with external partners (such as Imperial College and British Airways) and had already begun work on the UNICEF RRSA in 2008 (3.2.3.3). Finally, the school's demographic profile was distinctly international and culturally diverse, with 98% of students from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, and many from immigrant families from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The school's Somali, Sri

Lankan and Afghani students, in particular, come from war-afflicted backgrounds and areas where human rights are under threat every day.

### **5.3 Utopian and Pragmatic Visions of a Human Rights Friendly School**

#### *The First Meeting of HRFS*

For the first official activity of HRFS, Amnesty International Secretariat (IS) convened a three-day launch event in February 2009 that brought together participants from fourteen countries, representing the culmination of over a year of work by the IS HRE team. According to Amnesty, the meeting was intended to introduce participants to the project and supporting materials (primarily the *Guidelines*), to allow Amnesty sections and partner schools from each country to begin planning for pilot implementation, and to provide a forum for international exchange between Amnesty staff and educators from each participating country. Because the meeting was convened outside of London, Buckingham School was able to send four school representatives, and Amnesty's UK section HRE team were able to offer more support than foreign sections (who sent a maximum of two Amnesty staff each). Two Buckingham participants were interviewed for this study, the assistant head, and one of the school's two positive behaviour mentors (named "Dawn").

The meeting involved a significant input of financial and human resources. In setting up the meeting, Amnesty encountered significant logistical hurdles. Arrangements had to be made to allow both Amnesty and school participants from all fourteen countries to attend, and in some cases this required negotiating last minute visas for participants from certain countries. Up until the week before the meeting, IS staff members were still uncertain about full attendance (and one section's school representatives ultimately were unable to secure visas in time to attend). In addition, language issues needed to be addressed. Amnesty hired language interpreters and installed booths in the main conference room for French- and Spanish-speaking representatives.

The meeting was held in a hotel where participants also resided during the three days. Upon arrival, all participants were given materials that included a detailed meeting agenda, participant list and biographies, evaluation form, consent forms to use participant information for research and Amnesty promotional materials, and most prominently, the *Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools* and the *Human Rights Friendly Schools Workbook*, the two key documents on which the majority of activities during the meeting were based.

Over the course of the three days, Amnesty staff facilitated ten 60-90 minute workshop sessions designed to prepare participants to return to their countries with the tools to begin implementing HRFS. In addition, each country was asked to give a presentation to participants on HRE work in their country. External experts were also invited to give keynote talks, which were interwoven with the ten main workshop sessions. The workshop sessions were either (a) logistical/overview in nature (2 sessions); (b) meant to explore the project materials (5 sessions); or (c) practical and conceptual guidance for implementation (3 sessions).

In addition to workshop sessions, Amnesty IS staff also focused on promoting networking and interaction between participants. Evening activities were planned to allow participants from different countries to socialise and interact. This included an HRFS “marketplace,” where each Amnesty national section displayed resources and educational approaches developed in their country, and a “cultural night” with cuisine from each of the participating countries served, and where each country representative was asked to either wear clothing specific to their country or culture, or share an aspect of their culture (such as a song or a dance) with the rest of the group. These activities were largely aimed at creating a convivial and social atmosphere and to facilitate intercultural sharing, and were successful in that many of the participants left the meeting having established partnerships with international colleagues.

During my participation in the meeting, I was granted privileged access to witness the event planning and meeting implementation process by virtue of

my role in assisting the Amnesty IS HRE team. I participated in informal discussions about how to address logistical issues that arose during the meeting, and I was witness to the small frustrations and triumphs that can often accompany the execution of complex organisational events. From my position as a participant-observer, I worked with a small team of Amnesty staff (roughly six people, including interns) who were simultaneously responsible for resource development, event coordination, network facilitation, and troubleshooting. There were often moments of stress, uncertainty, relief, and joy. When things went “right,” Amnesty staff could be seen to be relaxed and optimistic about the project. During the few moments when things went “wrong” – such as when materials were in short supply, or technical complications arose – there were concentrated efforts made to course-correct and keep the meeting functioning according to schedule. Often, it was possible to observe the visible strain on some staff members of being constantly “on call,” alert and attentive whilst running the meeting.

The meeting proceedings provided ample opportunities to observe NGO processes for partnership and project building in action. There were moments of inspiration (Amnesty IS senior staff members giving speeches about the importance of the project), collaboration (during the many group work activities designed to help participants brainstorm or work together on developing project ideas), and relaxation (during coffee breaks, meals, and especially during the cultural night). Likely due to their shared experiences either as school leaders, Amnesty staff, or educators with an interest in HRE, participants were very friendly and intermingled with each other. Like many conferences on specific projects or issue areas, participants brought a certain level of commitment to and interest in the topic at hand, which likely impacted the social dimension to the meeting.

Amnesty facilitated the process of partnership development by bringing together project participants in an environment where collaboration and exchange was supported, and where there was emphasis on developing familiarity with the project and its resources for both NGO and schools. Amnesty operationalised the partnerships between schools and NGO in each

of the participating countries by providing a major international event to “kick off” the pilot project, and by outlining a clear set of expectations for how the partnership should commence. Further, Amnesty made a conscious decision to hold a large, global event to bring together all participants rather than to let the project commence in each individual country, which was initially considered. Amnesty IS HRE team coordinators felt that the launch should generate enthusiasm and momentum for the project and support the development of an international network of human rights friendly schools.

The considerable amount of material and financial resources needed to stage this event constituted, along with the development of the pilot project materials, the International Secretariat’s key contribution to the project. As a way to launch its largest global HRE project, Amnesty drew on the strength of its global network to create a sense of utopian possibility and collective partnership amongst all participants. As a direct outcome of the meeting, Buckingham School representatives had arranged for the first international exchange opportunity between global HRFS participants, hosting student and teacher delegations from HRFS schools in Denmark, Israel and Mongolia at their International Conference (6.2.1).

### *The School Research Visits*

Key data for this chapter was collected at the start of the first pilot year during two research visits to the school. In semi-structured interviews with school leaders, teachers, students and Amnesty staff, common themes emerged highlighting a tension between the utopian vision of the project espoused by Amnesty and HRFS’ supporters within the school, and the pragmatic concerns and possibilities that both schools and Amnesty identified. From the very outset of the partnership it was clear that there were tensions about the purposes and perceptions of the project. The two project partners had somewhat differing perspectives: data showed that Amnesty was mainly focused internally on HRE innovation and organisational capacity building, while the school’s focus was more centred on using the project to bolster existing initiatives, and to suit its identity as an innovating school offering choice to students. Whilst there are clearly shared goals between the partners

regarding the overarching utopian vision of embedding rights values across the school, there are some divergences between Amnesty and Buckingham's pragmatic visions of the project, mainly regarding the school's use of the project as a way to improve school performance and regulate student behaviour, and Amnesty's use of the project to drive its global HRE agenda forward. The following sections present data highlighting the themes emerging from interviews with key project stakeholders, exploring in particular perspectives on utopianism and pragmatism.

#### **5.4 Shared Utopias: The Potential of a Human Rights Friendly School**

Across the school, teachers and leaders agreed that HRFS was particularly relevant for the school's profile and existing work. One teacher commented that the school's approaches to student voice, multiculturalism and internationalism created a favourable environment for the project to succeed, specifically in terms of student engagement and teacher buy-in:

We have quite a lot going on which gives students the right to participate in the way that the school is run and the way the teaching happens. Most of the staff are quite open to this kind of approach, and that will be a really positive thing in terms of making sure this pilot works really well.

This general perception that the school was already doing much that could be characterised as "human rights friendly" was shared by most school leaders and Amnesty staff members, and was also reflected in the focus groups with students who displayed a basic awareness of rights concepts, particularly mutual respect. This was unsurprising, however, as throughout the development and implementation of the project Amnesty staff expressed that their choice of Buckingham as a pilot school was based on the school's existing student voice work, which it was believed would create a favourable environment for project success.

Both partners shared a utopian vision of HRFS as a potential framework for creating a culture of human rights at Buckingham. HRFS was seen by both Amnesty and Buckingham as a means of addressing challenges for schools around community cohesion, bullying, youth engagement, and democratic participation. Amnesty's lead coordinator framed HRFS as a way of

reasserting the rights of students, in opposition to recent government educational policy discourses (3.3.1):

There's a lot happening at the minute in terms of education policy that is relevant to human rights. For example, the new white paper is saying that headteachers have the power to stop and search pupils effectively, and to take their possessions. They're increasing their powers to actually take people's possessions from them, and that includes deleting or looking at and deleting content on mobile phones, which I think is a privacy issue, and they're talking about powers of headteachers and teachers to discipline pupils out of the school grounds.

Here HRFS is seen as utopian in terms of empowering students to claim their rights and to oppose external policies undermining rights. The lead coordinator also argued that HRFS supports "the broader view of what education is for" that is not addressed by the government agenda for school achievement:

There's a real drive for schools to focus on curriculum and achievement and attainment, and university places. And especially [on] league tables that people judge schools on. But I think it's widely recognised that education is more than just what you learn in a classroom and what qualifications you get. It's about learning to interact with other people, learning what you're good at and what your skills are, both in the classroom and kind of outside the classroom. It's about the community that the school is situated in.

Here utopia is represented by ideas of learning to live together in a community, and the values that promote these outcomes.

Data collected from school representatives reveals a strongly positive perception of the potential for HRE to be transformative for learners. Buckingham leaders generally spoke of two areas in which HRFS could contribute to larger utopian aims: changing the ethos of the school, and promoting community cohesion to support the school's diverse cultural demographics.

#### **5.4.1 Changing the School Ethos**

"A human rights friendly school is a community where equality, non-discrimination, dignity and respect underpin all aspects of school life." (Amnesty International, 2009, p. 19)

The first of Amnesty's ten global principles for HRFS acts as a mission statement, a foundational notion around which the other nine global principles are framed. In developing the global principles, Amnesty viewed the establishment of a rights-friendly ethos or culture as a core element of the partnership meant to "underpin" the work of schools. Interviews with the key Amnesty coordinators working on HRFS, as well as the many policy and pedagogical documents developed for the project (appendix 5), echo a conception of HRFS as primarily aimed at transforming the ethos and culture of Buckingham from its current mission to one where human rights underpin school life.

The school's current ethos, as explained to me by school leaders, was connected to its motto. The school's motto, found on its website, in the school's literature and letterhead and signed around the school itself in hallways and classrooms is an acronym of the word "STARS": **Smart; Talented; Adventurous; Respectful; Students**. STARS plays on the notion of students as individual 'stars', and the school's explanation of the motto on its website confirms this, explaining "students are at the centre of all our work: they are STARS." It is interesting that of the four qualities envisioned for students in the STARS motto, "respectful" is included. It is not possible to know how the motto's authors intended to conceptualise a "respectful student." The concept of respect – as in respect through equality and dignity for fellow humans – is strongly linked to human rights. Yet in this context, respectful can also be viewed as an authoritarian principle; e.g. a successful student is one who shows respect to teachers. The school's mission statement builds off the STARS acronym, stating the mission of the school as "creative professionals inspiring new STARS." When asked by Amnesty's lead coordinator during a mid-year evaluation meeting if the school had worked to develop a rights-friendly mission statement, the assistant head replied that they had left the STARS motto unchanged, but that human rights was "in our motto already...[although] it might not explicitly have the sort of rights in it, the responsibility element is there." This quote suggests that the assistant head

saw the “respectful” in STARS as implying rights and responsibilities but being subject to interpretation.

Stakeholders from both sides believed that HRFS could positively change the ethos of the school. All of the key leaders interviewed (Amnesty and Buckingham) referred to changing ethos as a goal of HRFS. In an interview, the headteacher asserted that HRFS should “become built into the ethos of the school, and into many dimensions of the school work so that everything is framed through the idea of human rights.” In a speech at the school’s International conference in October 2009 – the first major HRFS event in the school (6.2.1) – the head announced to the school the aims of the conference as they related to HRFS:

What we’re hoping to do these two days is for all of us, staff and students, to find out a lot more about what it is to have a school that really takes the human rights of every single individual in that school community, really takes the human rights of those, all of those community members seriously, and tries to run the school with regard to the human rights of all participants in the school community.

The head’s description of the goal of HRFS closely matches Amnesty’s conceptualisation in HRFS documents. Interviews with the assistant head, the head of citizenship, and a positive behaviour mentor also espoused this view, as the key actors promoting the school displayed familiarity with the language of human rights and principles of whole-school HRE, and made direct connections to how HRFS and HRE could positively influence the school ethos. The assistant head stated:

Not just students and teachers but all people within the school community, whether it’s cleaners, dinner ladies, or secretaries or police officers or parents, everybody is given the opportunity to buy into a shared ethos about what education should be for young people. The project could provide a sort of shared language that hasn’t always existed before that everybody can feel as a result of that.

During interviews, school leaders also expressed confidence that HRFS could potentially become a framework under which other efforts to change the school could be linked, although when asked on the *Year One Action Plan* if the school’s mission statement reflected human rights values, school leaders wrote, “the schools’ motto and values are linked to human rights and have

some reference.” Presumably, as discussed above, that reference is the word “respectful” in the STARS motto. Neither the headteacher nor assistant head commented on making changes to their existing motto and mission statement but spoke more generally about embedding a human rights ethos as part of the partnership. In an interview, the assistant head commented that using HRFS to impact the school ethos was about tapping into “the core of what people believe in,” by changing the culture of the school to “bring up citizens who will go with that feeling of what is right and wrong into society and into communities, and take on [leadership] roles in society that therefore have this knock on effect.” Buckingham’s headteacher similarly described a goal of HRFS to “become built into the ethos of the school, and into many dimensions of the school work so that again everything is framed through the idea of human rights.” Both comments underscore a conception of HRFS as an agent for transformative cultural change in the school. Furthermore, the assistant head’s claim that HRE could have a ‘knock-on’ effect of creating future citizen leaders is evidence of the link school leaders make between HRE, achievement, and active citizenship.

This utopian vision of the school as becoming a single, shared community based upon human rights illustrates how school leaders responsible for the project understood the transformative potential of HRFS as intended by Amnesty and expressed through the HRFS *Guidelines*. However, there is a clear disjuncture between rhetorical support for using HRFS to shape a new school ethos, and the decision to leave the STARS motto unchanged.

#### **5.4.2 Increasing Tolerance, Intercultural Understanding, and Support for a Diverse Population**

One of the ways in which school leaders conceptualised the potential of HRFS related specifically to the demographics of the school, the surrounding community, and its impact on school community cohesion. The school is over 98% BME, and over 50% Asian Indian background, with the rest of the students from African, Eastern European, and other Asian countries, including post-conflict countries such as Somalia and Afghanistan. In a diverse ethnic context, HRFS was conceptualised as promoting community cohesion in a

multicultural society by teaching cosmopolitan perspectives to support values of inclusivity and shared dignity. Data captured during this study revealed tensions between some of the ethnic groups in the school, particularly students who had recently emigrated from Afghanistan and Somalia. In interviews, teachers discussed the ethnic and cultural politics that were a part of their school experience, and frequently referred to human rights as a way to address some of these challenges. Human rights was seen by respondents primarily as a way to create ideal conditions for different cultural groups to co-exist, reflecting a utopian conception of HRFS for diversity.

The unique and internationally diverse composition of Buckingham poses opportunities and challenges. In terms of opportunities, the school's diverse population acts as a sort of mini-UN, in which young people from different countries and backgrounds must work together in the pursuit of knowledge. School leaders and teachers interviewed emphasised the potential of HRFS to create cultural cohesion throughout the school. One teacher felt that HRFS could help students with different backgrounds to have a "multicultural view of the world, and to be tolerant and understanding of where others come from," while the assistant head noted that "there is a huge cross section of society within our school that reflects the local community" and identified cultural diversity as both an opportunity and challenge for the project's implementation.

Speaking about students from post-conflict countries, the headteacher expressed concern that many of them came from "traumatic" areas and events and could thus benefit from being able to reflect on their past experiences and current education within a human rights context. The headteacher revealed a deep concern for students from "war torn parts of the world," particularly Somalia and Afghanistan, when discussing how HRFS could impact the school community:

These children come having not been to school before, not speaking English, and in some case they have themselves experienced extreme trauma. Or members of their family have been killed, for example their parents are dead...some of these people are effectively all alone in the world.

The headteacher's remarks demonstrate either an assumption or knowledge of the specific educational backgrounds of some Buckingham students. The comments further show an understanding of and concern for the need to assist students from foreign and traumatic backgrounds in adjusting to British life and its education system, and a belief in the ability of HRE to address these issues. The head's comments are interesting because they reveal an assumption that HRFS could be specifically employed to assist children from traumatised backgrounds, when in fact HRFS provides a framework and principles for exploring human rights as a part of education. Implementing HRFS would provide a set of principles and actions for working with all students, but the project itself does not offer guidance for working with students who have either experienced human rights abuses or been exposed to conflict. This interpretation demonstrates the ease with which human rights is uncritically linked to issues such as war, and it also affirms the essential nature of HRFS as a policy framework.

The head of citizenship approached the question of the role of HRFS in addressing diversity from a different perspective:

The fact that our student population is very diverse and they come from all over the world, they may not be aware, so I think education on human rights is necessary, so that everybody's aware of what their rights are as a sort of starting point, it's quite crucial.

This quote implicitly suggests that there may be different levels of understanding and awareness about human rights issues in different countries, and that HRFS can help to give students from different countries a "starting point." This suggests a familiarity with the principles of universality espoused by modern human rights language and doctrine, but it also indirectly implies that non-British students may be less aware of human rights than their international counterparts. This view reflects a deficit model in terms of its adherence to notions that countries where human rights issues are more pronounced are places where there is less support for HRE, or where there is greater need.

In terms of challenges, conflicts between students from different ethnic groups have caused significant problems and even legal accusations involving incitement of racial hatred (6.2.1). Speaking about racial and ethnic conflict at the school, Dawn, the school's positive behaviour mentor, said:

There's a lot of inter-racism because there's a lot of different young people from different backgrounds. One of the problems I find is that they don't see it as racism, that really worries me. On a broader level it's about a lack of respect. With some of our young people, the common parlance is denigrating to anyone who's not you. So it's Tamil this, or Black that, or Somalian that. They're identified by where they've come from. That's something that I'm quite keen on combating, and using [HRFS] to do that.

Whilst a desire to use human rights principles to mediate and celebrate cultural differences can be seen as a utopian aim, preventing conflict between different ethnic groups is highly pragmatic, and all teachers and school leaders interviewed for this study referred to the challenge of managing cultural diversity. Thus the promotion of cultural diversity via HRFS in Buckingham can be conceptualised as both utopian and pragmatic.

### **5.5 Old Problems, New Fixes: HRE as a Pragmatic Tool**

Whilst the overarching vision of HRFS espoused by stakeholders is utopian, data collected during the preparatory phase reflected a pragmatic outlook by both Amnesty and Buckingham in framing the potential of the project.

Amnesty's conceptions of HRFS in pragmatic terms were found in strategic and policy documents, and in the HRFS guidelines (3.2.3). Interviews with Amnesty project coordinators further elaborated the organisation's pragmatic intentions for HRFS, which corresponded to three categories:

1. *Organisational Development*: HRFS was intended to create a global model for implementing whole-school HRE, regardless of context, as a way of driving Amnesty's international work in formal education;
2. *Effective HRE*: HRFS was intended to drive the organisation's own learning and practice on effective HRE, defined by the organisation as *holistic* HRE;
3. *Resource Efficiencies*: HRFS was intended to consolidate and unify various Amnesty-developed educational methods, materials and approaches under a larger framework in order to repurpose significant HRE material resources.

These pragmatic goals are primarily inward facing. Speaking at the launch event in February 2009, Amnesty's secondary coordinator explained:

[We want to] see how the project can integrate with our wider work on human rights education, [and] to see how the Human Rights Friendly School project can support that work.

Whilst Amnesty documents and key staff members identified several pragmatic goals of HRFS for the organisation, HRFS was also seen by Amnesty stakeholders as providing pragmatic approaches to school improvement for schools. Echoing perspectives of school leaders on the use of HRFS to support community cohesion, Amnesty's lead coordinator explained:

A lot of [British] schools are working in a very multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious context, and I think HRFS can support schools to develop or to have a set of fundamental values which underpins all of those religions. It isn't just somebody saying, actually I think fairness and peace is really important, it's internationally recognised treaties and charters which countries all over the world have signed up to. So I think that gives it a really strong basis for developing an ethos based on that.

HRFS is framed as providing an internationally agreed-upon, and therefore rational and legitimised approach for schools to address some of the challenges faced in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural educational environments.

Finally, Amnesty's conceptions of HRFS as pragmatic corresponded to idea of preparing young people in England to participate in global society. Amnesty's secondary coordinator commented:

You watch the news any night of the year and there will be stories and people will be talking about human rights. Unless young people have an opportunity within school to learn about that, to understand what it means in relation to them, in relation to other people, I think it's very difficult for them to then engage with what's going on in the world.

School leaders' conceptions of the pragmatic purposes of HRFS corresponded to three categories. HRFS was seen as

1. Contributing to improved *behaviour*,
2. Giving students more *choice* in terms of their status as educational "consumers"; and
3. Adding *value* to the school's profile through partnership.

To a lesser extent, there was evidence that school leaders viewed HRE as being linked to an overall improvement in student performance.

In the following sections, I analyse documentary materials and explore responses from school leaders to elaborate the ways in which HRFS was seen as pragmatic.

### **5.5.1 Rights, Responsibilities and Behaviour**

When elaborating the potential for HRFS to inform the school's ethos, the headteacher drew parallels between the embedding of a school ethos of human rights and improved student behaviour:

There are obviously clear rules that students have to follow, they have to behave in lessons and interact politely towards each other. If we could kind of frame the whole of our ethos in terms of human rights, so whenever we're following up [behavioural] issues with students we'd do so in that framework of human rights. We're going to do some work with the students in September on behaviour as part of the curriculum and [it would be good] if that work had a very strong human rights focus to it, so that it was always in the consciousness of [students].

This quote is particularly interesting because it begins with an authoritative list of what students should "obviously" do (follow clear rules, behave in lessons, interact politely), before framing these requirements as being enforceable through human rights. Here the headteacher clearly conflates the language of control and the language of rights, a theme explored throughout this thesis.

The link between HRE and improved behaviour was commonly expressed amongst school leaders, who asserted the need to balance responsibilities with rights in such a way that students were not simply taught that they have rights without responsibilities. The repeated expression of this concern by school leaders and teachers shows a de-emphasising of the importance of expanding rights knowledge and a greater emphasis on the ability of HRE to facilitate positive behavioural outcomes. This section explores data from school stakeholders linking HRFS' aims to improved behaviour and linking good behaviour to the notion of responsibilities paired with rights.

The emergence of a strong discourse of responsibilities was a key finding of school leaders' and teachers' understandings of the potential of HRE and HRFS. Citing research conducted in the UK on citizenship and HRE, Osler and Starkey note "a tendency in discussions on citizenship education to emphasise the responsibilities of young people rather than their rights" (Osler & Starkey, 2005, p. 154) and point to an established 'responsibilities' rhetoric in contemporary UK political discourse. The authors suggest that "the word 'responsibilities' can be used as a bland and de-politicized device" which can serve to undermine the political dimension inherent in HRE and orient it towards controlling students (Ibid).

In separate interviews, both the headteacher and the assistant head repeatedly used the phrase "rights and responsibilities" to discuss the potential of the project and the development of students' understanding of human rights, explaining that they hoped HRFS would help students to better understand their responsibilities as well as their rights in the context of interactions with other people in the school community. The headteacher commented that HRFS should "explore the whole area of what are our rights as an individual but what are our responsibilities towards other people, so [that we have] a much greater consciousness of that in the school." The headteacher also linked student satisfaction and a safe working environment to positive behaviour, asserting that "it is very important for students to be safe, happy and proud of their school, so we insist on the highest standards of behaviour to ensure that all students can feel comfortable and able to learn."

Further discussion revealed that HRFS was conceptualised instrumentally as a way in which behavioural issues at the school could be addressed and dealt with. When asked how human rights could be linked to school behavioural issues, the headteacher responded:

When one child calls another child a name, [or] when one child starts spreading malicious gossip about another child, or when one child interferes with another child's learning in a lesson, it's deeply hurtful to that child. It's those sorts of things I think are important to help the young people take responsibility for their behaviour towards others. I'm expecting students to be much more conscious of their actions as individuals and to be much more considerate of others.

The notion of responsibilities and behaviour are linked by the headteacher in a moral dialectic, as the headteacher is essentially equating the responsibilities that go along with rights to a sense of empathy and self-regulation about moral actions by students towards each other. The data generally found that in conversations with school leaders the importance of responsibilities was emphasised at the expense of discussion on the importance of students' authentic understanding of rights.

The head of citizenship echoed the potential of HRFS to give both students and staff a greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities, offering an example:

Everyone has the right to education, but also they have the responsibility to make sure that they don't take that right away from somebody else by disrupting a lesson, for example. And also from a teacher perspective, being able to talk to students in an appropriate manner, I think it's gonna impact behaviour massively, hopefully.

Just as both headteacher and assistant head reported, discussion of rights and responsibilities was immediately linked to behaviour. However, this teacher's perspective on "appropriate" behaviour extends beyond a conception of what HRFS can do to improve students' behaviour and actually applies it to teachers, who through HRFS may learn to themselves "behave" by talking to students in an appropriate manner. This was a unique response amongst school leaders and teachers interviewed, and when asked in a follow up question to define "an appropriate manner," the head of citizenship responded, "not shouting."

The idea that behaviour was not simply about students was supported in an interview with the Amnesty lead coordinator, who said:

[HRFS] supports schools with developing positive behaviour management strategies. I have to be quite careful about what I mean by that, but [it's] supporting schools to focus on developing positive relationships between pupils and teachers that are based on mutual respect. When I went into teaching it was very much, you're in charge, you're the boss, students should do what you say, and there wasn't this sense of a dialogue between pupils and teachers which I think that actually is really productive when it comes to learning.

In this quote the Amnesty lead coordinator actually describes HRFS as means of managing behaviour but quickly clarifies that, in the vision of HRFS, a “positive behaviour management strategy” does not focus exclusively on student behaviour; rather, it focuses on “developing positive relationships...based on mutual respect.” This re-conceptualisation of a pragmatic strategy for schools – to manage behaviour – reflects the emphasis of HRFS on relationships between members of the community rather than simply students.

When discussing rights and responsibilities, teachers offered wry comments about their students’ clever invocation of their rights as a means for evading some of their normal classroom responsibilities, and one teacher, claiming that students in the school were actually *too* exposed to human rights, offered an example which elicited laughter amongst the other teachers present during a focus group conversation:

I asked [Jonathan] to sit in his chair this morning, [and] he said ‘miss that’s against my human rights,’ so they know all about their human rights.

Ironically, despite implying that students are “too exposed” to human rights, this comment reflects a typical misuse of the discourse of human rights by the student, drawing on the concept of entitlement without a more nuanced understanding of how rights work in balance with each other. When presented with this type of logic from students about rights in the classroom (even if said in jest), it is clear that the issue is not simply a misunderstanding amongst school leaders and teachers about HRE being used to balance rights and responsibilities; it is also about the way in which students may be understanding rights education as a form of sanction-free, general empowerment to behave freely, and how teachers connect such concepts to student behaviour issues. This suggests that the ‘rights and responsibilities’ paradigm in schools has encouraged pragmatic visions of HRE as a form of behavioural control rather than as positive and mutually respectful student-teacher relationships.

### 5.5.2 The Student as Consumer

Like many of the school's other external partnerships and initiatives, Buckingham's school leaders report that HRFS is used as part of an agenda to improve the school's performance. School leaders used results-driven, neoliberal language when talking about how the project could contribute to school-wide goals. Specifically, the notion of providing choice to students, framing students as "consumers" of the school's services, was a strong theme emerging from interviews with school leaders. The headteacher commented:

We're looking at how we can create a curriculum that is more suited to the 21st century and to the particular needs of our students. It focuses on choice, on students making informed choices. So it's about students taking responsibility for their own learning and the choices they make in relation to their own learning and their own future.

The school's progressive work on curriculum is encapsulated by its 'personal development curriculum,' which is meant to give students the skills for succeeding in a 21<sup>st</sup> century globalized world. Here it is possible to identify the tension between education for neoliberal globalization and education for cosmopolitan or global citizenship (Camicia & Franklin, 2011). Part of the changes for the second year of the pilot involved scheduling an additional five hours of citizenship lessons every fortnight for all students, which the school planned to use in order to integrate more HRE work related to HRFS. When discussing a new change in school curricular policy for the 2010-2011 academic year that would give students an option to select from a number of innovative curricular options (including the increased citizenship lessons that would contribute to HRFS implementation), the assistant head commented:

We're trying to give kids as much choice in the curriculum as possible...that kind of trend of trying to introduce choice, kind of a structured form of choice. And a sort of realisation that actually as a curriculum is it [the current curriculum] meeting the needs of our students? Possibly not. What are the needs of our students?

Buckingham's website offers students and parents a downloadable "course options booklet" which explains the way in which courses can be selected at the school. The introductory note from the headteacher immediately frames the document in terms consistent with a neoliberal discourse of individualised consumer choice specifically for Key Stage 4/GCSE learners, offering a

“curriculum that tries to achieve a balance between a core curriculum for all and a variety of options to meet the individual needs and interests of students.” Although the school’s materials stop short of referring to students as customers, they explain that students are given an option to choose some subjects because

The choices students make are important because they influence their success at school and they can affect career choices and future studies. It is important that students choose subjects that they enjoy as well considering what is relevant for future career options.

This reminds students that, while they might want to choose subjects that they enjoy, it is important to think about the effect the choice has on their career. Use of the word “choice,” repeatedly emphasised in school’s literature suggests that school leaders believe their students should be empowered to select aspects of their own education. Nonetheless, they remind students that making choices should not be done just for personal enjoyment but for good reasons, i.e. in order to provide future career options. This is an interesting example of a kind of gentle paternalism, which can be found elsewhere in Buckingham school literature. For example, in the school’s printed material (workshop and programme schedules) for its 2009 rights-themed international conference, students were automatically assigned different human rights workshops they would be required to attend, and told in two places (on the programme schedule of events front page, and on the workshop list with individual student names), “you are not allowed to change workshops.” The reason for this rule is likely due to logistical challenges in scheduling students into workshops and the potential for students to leave their workshops and wander the school halls – nonetheless, it is still an interesting juxtaposition between the content of the conference and the stern directive and lack of choice for participating students.

In summary, HRFS was envisioned by school leaders as a way to feed into the school’s curricular innovations offering enhanced choice to students and is clearly pragmatic, driven by a neoliberal and authoritarian undercurrent in the school’s work.

### 5.5.3 Adding Value to Buckingham School through Partnership

A finding of interest was the notion espoused by school leaders that external partnerships add value to the school's work and profile. The headteacher explained that the benefits of external partnership include "skills and expertise that partners will bring to the school that are very different from those of teachers." The headteacher continued:

I also think that for young people to meet other people who are not teachers and to interact with those other people is quite powerful and it can be very inspiring to people and it can give them an insight into the sort of career they might want to have in the future. And I think in terms of staff CPD [continuing professional development], it's very powerful.

The headteacher's comment identifies two elements of value added by HRFS: (1) the potential for students to learn about potential careers through exposure to Amnesty representatives; and (2) the benefit of professional development received through school-wide HRE training for all teachers. Each of these benefits merits discussion. The idea that an Amnesty staff worker could inspire a student to a career in human rights reflects the headteacher's focus on careers for students. Similarly, the value of using Amnesty to give staff continued professional development also reflects an emphasis on teacher career development. In comments about other external partnerships the school had engaged in during recent years, the headteacher noted the benefit of these partnerships primarily as being a way in which to support their existing work and to expand students' horizons by exposing them to real world professionals and "experts" in their respective fields. The school's head of citizenship echoed this sentiment:

Amnesty are the experts on human rights and human rights education so we would use Amnesty as kind of the advisors and the experts in such, helping us train students and giving us advice and maybe using case studies, giving us examples and talking through the appropriate way for our school to go forward with the project.

The framing of external partners as experts, while logical in terms of Amnesty's ability to provide significant expertise on HRE to the school, reflects managerial and performance-driven frames of reference, as does the notion of adding value to the school.

## **5.6 Beyond Utopianism and Pragmatism: Envisioning Opportunities and Challenges to Successful Implementation**

Data revealed some common perceptions amongst Buckingham and Amnesty coordinators of the challenges for successful project implementation. Amnesty's lead coordinator outlined three specific challenges: (1) fitting in with the school's existing initiatives, (2) adding to an already full workload for teachers and senior members of staff, and (3) buy-in. Speaking about the relationship between teacher buy-in and workload, the Amnesty lead coordinator commented:

[The challenge is] making sure that they [teachers] can see the value of the project and that it helps them to do what they need to do anyway rather than giving them extra workload. So, challenge of motivation, and finding the time are the core big, key challenges I think.

Buckingham's headteacher acknowledged that a particular challenge for project implementation would be translating the "bursts of activity" relating to HRFS and human rights (such as the annual international students conference, the international and democracy weeks, and the school pledge on rights) into a sustained ethos that impacted the way in which school community members experienced daily life in the school. Citing the positive effects of these higher profile initiatives related to human rights, the headteacher identified the importance of maintaining a high profile for the project and the need to build human rights into "all aspects of our practice so [that] whenever we deal with anything where someone's human rights have been violated, that that is how it's framed, the follow up."

Despite these challenges, many respondents said that Buckingham was ideally placed to attempt to implement HRFS. One teacher commented that Buckingham's student voice initiatives had created an awareness and acceptance amongst teachers of the main elements of the HRFS approach. The teacher commented:

We've got quite a lot underway already which I think will really help this to run quite smoothly. Most of the staff are quite open to this kind of approach, and that will be a really positive thing in terms of making sure this pilot works really well. The school takes on lots of new ideas and runs with them, and so the kids are quite flexible in that kind of

way. Based on what the school already does [it] should be quite successful.

This comment reveals a high level of confidence about how existing structures in the school, staff familiarity with and openness to HRE, and a school profile where running with new ideas is encouraged in that could support a “smooth” implementation of HRFS. This confidence potentially indicates a form of complacency, as schools with functioning structures supporting democratic participation and human rights may see themselves as already “doing enough” to meet HRFS requirements. I relate this specifically to the school’s integration of HRFS into its existing initiatives, and their subsequent reporting to Amnesty on their school’s progress midway through the first pilot year (Chapter 6).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

There are clear parallels, but also clear tensions, between conceptions of the project’s value amongst both partners. The school’s definition of value, both on utopian and pragmatic levels, is wider than Amnesty’s, focusing on developing academically successful students who value and promote human rights. From the interviews and documentary data, Amnesty appears concerned primarily with the value of HRFS for improving the ability of schools to act as places where human rights are taught and practiced. Although Amnesty staff identified challenges to sustainably implementing HRFS in Buckingham, they have not yet worked with the school to understand how HRFS may correspond to some of the pragmatic visions outlined by school leaders and teachers.

On the school side, there is a much broader conception of the potential of HRFS. Consequently, this may have a positive impact on buy-in and motivation. If the school’s leaders define the value of HRFS as not only spreading a human rights ethos and addressing cultural issues, but also improving behaviour, offering enhanced choice to students and adding value to the school, it may be easier to convince school community members of its merit. On the other hand, envisioning and implementing HRE as a form of behavioural control or simply as school improvement risks undermining the

larger purpose of the project to promote a human rights culture and positive, respectful relationships. Applying concepts of “added value” and “enhanced choice” also potentially risks marginalising the utopianism of a human rights agenda for action to align with a dominant neoliberal discourse.

The next chapter explores the way in which the HRFS project was implemented to further understand how the partnership became a site of creative tension between Amnesty and Buckingham.

## Chapter 6

### Integration and Innovation in the Implementation of *Human Rights Friendly Schools*

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the HRFS **implementation phase**, specifically focusing on the ways in which Buckingham school leaders (and to a lesser extent, Amnesty project coordinators) enacted the project. This chapter primarily explores the experiences of teachers, students and leaders participating in project implementation. HRFS was piloted in the school over two academic years between October 2009 and June 2011. Drawing on data collected primarily during the first pilot year, this chapter addresses **research sub-question #2**:

- How was HRFS implemented, and what were the key opportunities and challenges during the implementation process?

Analysis focuses on how Amnesty and school stakeholders enacted elements of the project across the school, particularly in the context of the agreed upon implementation framework, the *Year One Action Plan* (see below and appendix 14). The *Year One Action Plan* was developed to complement the HRFS guidelines (3.2.3), and includes a “stages of development” matrix for implementing HRFS in each of the four key areas (school participation and governance; community relations; curriculum; and extra-curricular areas and school environment). Prior to the beginning of the 2009 school year, the school consulted with Amnesty and used the stages of development matrices in the HRFS guidelines to complete and submit their *Year One Action Plan*.

The implementation of HRFS during the pilot phase was observed primarily through qualitative (interview/focus group/classroom workshop) and documentary (project documents/memorandums/strategic plans and evaluations) data on the following occasions (Table 6.1/appendix 4) and from the following documentary sources (Table 6.2/appendix 5):

*Figure 6.1  
Amnesty/Buckingham Partnership Case Study  
Key Implementation Data (Qualitative)*

<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Buckingham School International Student Conference	All students participated in a two-day conference featuring workshops on human rights and keynote speeches from the chief executive of CARE International, a Burmese former prisoner of conscience freed with support from Amnesty, and the director of human rights NGO Liberty.  All teachers at the school attended a day-long human rights training workshop co-facilitated by Amnesty International and UNICEF UK	October 2009
Year 9 students focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Year 10 students focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with Assistant Head of Student Voice (school's partnership coordinator)	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with Head of Citizenship (partnership coordinator)	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with English teacher	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Partnership mid-term evaluation meeting	The AI UK HRE Manager and the school's Assistant Head of Student Voice met at mid-year to review the school's completed action plan and assess the school's progress to that point	February 2010
Year 10 Students Classroom Workshop	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Junior Leadership Team (students) focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Teacher focus group	Teachers provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Teacher focus group	Teachers provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Interview with Headteacher	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Conference presentation by Buckingham Students and Teachers at IOE "Education in a Globalising World" Conference	The deputy head, head of citizenship and five students attended an IOE conference and made a presentation highlighting themes and achievements of the HRFS partnership at Buckingham School	November 2010
Interview with Amnesty UK HRE Manager	The main coordinator of HRFS provided feedback on the project and her involvement in the partnership during the preparation and implementation phases	February 2011

*Figure 6.2  
Amnesty/Buckingham Partnership Case Study  
Key Implementation Documents*

<b>Document</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Amnesty International <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i>	Provides comprehensive guidelines for schools implementing HRFS to develop the project in four key areas using ten key principles	March 2009

Buckingham School International Student Conference – conference materials pack	Includes: - A conference schedule of workshops and events, introduction from the head teacher, list of participating schools and keynote speaker biographies, information on Burma, and an excerpt from the novel <i>Lord of the Flies</i> - A one page trifold leaflet gives details of the school's conference theme, date and location, and logistical information	October 2009
Amnesty International "Human rights concepts and Rights respecting teaching" PowerPoint slideshow	PowerPoint presentation given to all of Buckingham's teachers as part of a day-long human rights training workshop co-facilitated by Amnesty International and UNICEF UK	October 2009
Buckingham School Year One Action Plan	The school's designated partnership coordinator completed the action plan to begin the implementation process	October 2009
HRFS Mid Year Report	After a meeting between the assistant head for student voice and the AI UK HRE Manager, the report was completed by the AI HRE Manager using notes taken at the meeting	March 2010
AI HRFS Project meeting – meeting minutes	Notes from a meeting in which partners discussed how to improve the partnership during the second pilot year	October 2010
AI HRFS Year Two Action Plan	A separate year 2 action plan was developed by student leaders, to be added onto the school's existing plans	December 2010

Examining the actions of Amnesty and Buckingham stakeholders over two years, I highlight two key themes emerging from the data that characterise the ways in which the project was implemented that correspond to the earlier themes of pragmatism and utopianism explored in Chapter 5:

- **Integrative.** HRFS was integrated into existing initiatives and school ethos in order to meet the project criteria. Integration was heavily *pragmatic*, addressing existing challenges and responding to official policy imperatives;
- **Innovative.** New initiatives or changes were created within the school specifically to support HRFS. This type of innovation was *utopian*, reflecting the pursuit of new rights-friendly structures and initiatives.

Data showed that implementation of the project was heavily integrative and pragmatic. The actual commitment to HRFS demonstrated by the school both rhetorically and through its attempted implementation was strongly utopian. However, the school's actions in the implementation phase were less motivated by innovation, with few initiatives created directly because of HRFS.

### 6.1.1 Assessing the State of Play: Buckingham and the Year One Action Plan

The *Year One Action Plan* (appendix 14) and corresponding *Stages of Development* matrix (appendix 13) were designed to give schools a clear

picture of and targets for the envisaged journey for becoming human rights-friendly; Stage 1 represented non-implementation, and Stage 4 represented utopian implementation matching Amnesty's goals for HRFS. Buckingham's assistant head and head of citizenship completed the *Year One Action Plan*, who used the HRFS *Stages of Development* matrix to self-assess the school's starting point in each key area relative to the 4 stages of development outlined. Because of the existence of several high profile initiatives in the school that matched key area goals, the school rated itself as either Stage 2-3 or Stage 3 (and in one case, Stage 3-4) in each of the key areas.

In a number of areas, Buckingham felt that it began HRFS at an advanced stage. For example, stage 3 of the key area component of "school governance: participation" states:

Governance bodies or structures for members of the school community facilitate active participation, and are given limited decision-making authorities. Efforts are made to ensure equal access for all to participate. (Amnesty International, 2009, p. 41)

Buckingham rated itself as Stage 3-4 on this key area component, offering as evidence its many student voice initiatives, which included co-construction of years 7 and 8 curriculum, student evaluations of teaching, and elected student leadership groups. The difference between Stages 3 and 4, however, point to a significant difference in terms of achieving implementation and realising wider utopian aims. For Amnesty, Stage 4 means:

All members of the community are involved in decision-making and decisions about how the school is run, and all are adequately supported in order to be able to participate in governance. (Ibid)

This stage envisages a school that has become fully rights-friendly in terms of participation. However, the stages of development merely provide descriptions of progress, rather than steps on how to progress between stages. The *Year One Action Plan* similarly asks schools to define their starting point in each key area and key area component using the stages matrix, but does not ask schools to define goals in terms of stages; rather, it asks schools to define first-year and long-term objectives.

Thus, the definitions provided by Amnesty for each stage appear to be useful in terms of giving schools a way to both gauge their starting point, and to envision a utopian realisation of HRFS. The school's use of the stages in the *Year One Action Plan* provided clear benchmarks for fitting the school's existing programmes into the stage requirements for each HRFS key area, and show that Buckingham had already put into place many of the core requirements for becoming rights-friendly prior to partnership with Amnesty. But they do not provide a basis for evaluating the school's progress between stages, and were not assessed by the school or Amnesty in terms of progressing through stages. Thus I do not rely on these stages in my assessment of Buckingham's implementation of HRFS.

In the following sections, I explore the data gathered that illustrate the two key themes of *integration* and *innovation* in the HRFS project implementation.

## **6.2 Integration into Existing Initiatives**

Data gathered from focus groups, interviews and school documentary materials revealed that prior to implementing HRFS, the school's strong commitment to the concept of student voice, global education and other rights-based initiatives (such as the posting of large scale posters encouraging students to show respect to each other) had positioned it to implement the project in a strongly integrative manner.

During the first pilot year, management of HRFS at the school was devolved by the headteacher to the assistant head and the head of citizenship, the two school leaders responsible for implementing school-wide student voice and citizenship initiatives. Overall, HRFS was implemented in practice as broadly reflective of the school's existing student voice initiatives, collectively known as Buckingham Student Voice (BSV). The school's engagement with the project was characterised by a re-branding of existing school initiatives under one larger, project-driven umbrella. This is most clearly exemplified in the school's completion of the *Year One Action Plan* and *Mid Year Report* documents, which gave the school a structure for outlining and executing HRFS implementation. Despite the fact that the school complied with the

Amnesty framework in terms of completing the *Action Plan* and *Mid Year Report*, there is little evidence that the school used these documents to structure and guide implementation. Rather, school leaders implementing HRFS used the school's existing work to validate and exemplify their participation in the project. There is little evidence that school leaders used the HRFS materials and structure in any other way than to fulfil the Memorandum of Understanding (appendix 6) reporting agreements.

Integration into the four key areas of HRFS (3.2.3) showed mixed results, largely depending on the amount of existing activity occurring in the school that corresponded to each key area. Attempts by the schools to integrate the project into its existing relevant strands revealed varying degrees of success, according to both the school's own assessments in the *Mid Year Report* and interviews with Amnesty and school stakeholders. HRFS does not appear to have made a significant difference in the school's practices on human rights, although it significantly increased the profile of the school's rights work. Buckingham was already invested in initiatives that corresponded to certain HRFS targets, and during the first pilot year did not develop any visible activity within the school that differed or was explicitly derived from or developed through HRFS. This represents a key finding in this study regarding the potential for whole-school HRE partnerships to generate new school policies and practices.

However, in the second pilot year, at the encouragement of Amnesty, the school set up an HRFS steering committee composed of representative school community stakeholders, to take plans for the project forward in its second year. This committee met twice at Amnesty's UK section office during the 2010-2011 academic year, in November and April. One significant output of this process was the creation by three Buckingham students of a draft for the *Year Two Action Plan*, which outlined updated goals for HRFS. *The Year Two Action Plan* detailed, for each of the four key areas of HRFS, a set of specific goals and corresponding activities planned, resources needed, and ways of measuring success. The students involved in this exercise listed such goals as "learning about human rights," "improving communication between

students and staff,” and “promoting culture (sic) understanding,” but they also included pragmatic goals that were mostly related to the school environment. Students listed “making play area safe,” “improving the canteen,” and “a greener and safer environment” as three key goals, and included a number of activities that would support these goals, including “add gates to field [and] astro-turf to courts,” “improve fence,” and “camera in good places.” These ideas all involve increasing security at the school and “camera in good places,” in particular implies that students completing the action plan believed that increased surveillance would make the environment safer. This suggests that students’ understandings of rights were linked to understandings of security.

Two key findings emerge when examining the integrative aspects of the project. Firstly, the actual *naming* and *framing* of activities already present in the school as constituent parts of HRFS has been largely symbolic, as the actual practice of implementing these initiatives as part of HRFS does not require any development or change in practice. The essential nature of Buckingham’s existing initiatives is unchanged, and their uses of existing practices to meet reporting requirements are, in some cases, merely tokenistic gestures. Secondly, other existing initiatives at the school that could have been named as part of HRFS were not identified, and thus no link between them and HRFS was made.

The following sub-sections analyse the key areas of integration in the school, through school-wide international and democracy-related events, structured student voice initiatives, and within the school’s curriculum.

### **6.2.1 Integration into School-Wide Events**

#### *Lighting the Amnesty Candle: Buckingham’s 2009 International Student Conference*

The first and arguably most high profile example of the project as integrative occurred during the beginning of the first pilot year in October 2009, when the school used its sixth annual International Conference to launch HRFS and

introduce the project to students and teachers. The school's previous international conferences fit well with a global human rights theme, focusing on global issues such as "making a difference" in the world (2005), climate change (2006) and peace (2008). The conferences involved substantial organisation and coordination by the school, with keynote speakers from the British government and industry and performers from around the world in attendance, indicating a high level of engagement with a global dimension to the school's education work prior to the start of HRFS.

To launch its partnership with Amnesty, the school designated Amnesty as an official sponsor of the International Conference, a decision made to deliberately enhance the profile of HRFS. All students participated in the two-day conference, which featured human rights-themed workshops and keynote speeches from the chief executive of CARE International, a Burmese activist and former prisoner of conscience freed with support from Amnesty, and the director of the UK human rights NGO Liberty. All of the school's teachers and leaders were introduced to the project through a day-long staff development session on HRE.

In a speech that opened the conference, the headteacher explained to Buckingham school community members and visiting schools attending from abroad that the school's conference that year was markedly different to past conferences. The head noted that for the first time the school staff would forego the usual training day taken during annual conferences to participate and learn about human rights. The head also noted that the presence of three contingents of students from participating HRFS schools in Israel, Denmark and Mongolia (all of whose attendance was self-funded) made the conference a unique opportunity for Buckingham students to interact with students from other cultures around the topic of human rights, and for the visiting schools and Buckingham to exchange ideas and advice about their shared goal of becoming human rights friendly. The head summarised the conference aims:

What we're hoping to do these two days is for all of us, staff and students, to find out a lot more about what it is to have a school that really takes the human rights of every single individual in that school

community seriously, and tries to run the school with regard to the human rights of all participants in the school community.

This is a strong statement of intent by the headteacher, who explained to the entire school community that the goals of HRFS were at the forefront of the aims for the International Conference. It is clear that in terms of staff participation the headteacher's words were true; the staff development training, led by Amnesty International UK and UNICEF UK, offered detailed explanation of the elements of HRFS and also of basic components of HRE in secondary education as they relate to teaching.

During the International Conference, interviews with Buckingham students revealed a high level of awareness and knowledge about human rights and student voice. The school's head boy, a year 11 student elected to represent students in his year group, displayed a sophisticated knowledge of human rights concepts and of the purpose of HRFS for young people:

Human rights is something that every human is entitled to just because they are a human. [HRFS] is a really good idea because it sort of targets students at a young age so they know what human rights are. And if young students know what human rights are, maybe that's one step to making the world a better place.

Other students shared enthusiasm about the project's potential in interviews at the International Conference. A female year 11 student commented:

I just think it's amazing cause we're leading by example, and we're just showing that, if we can all come together here, showing that we're all equal, then the rest of the world should be able to do that as well.

Another female student remarked:

We're all from different backgrounds and stuff but we all have you know the same kind of issues, and the same kind of dreams and ambitions in our own countries. This conference has just been a huge chance for everyone just to come together and to share their ideas and their ambitions with each other.

These utopian comments shared by students demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm and knowledge about human rights and global issues, and are indicative of the exemplary nature of the school's previous work on human rights. Integration of HRFS into the International Conference not only

appeared to be seamless, but also strongly supportive of existing school practices.

### *International Week*

A second example of HRFS integration occurred during Buckingham's International Week, held annually in February. According to the *Mid Year Report*, the school's 2009-2010 International Week theme of immigration included "a human rights focus integrated throughout." However, the *Year One Action Plan* did not mention how International Week would be used to promote HRFS. There is evidence that rather than intentionally integrate HRFS and International Week, the school only included a human rights focus after a controversial incident at the school involving the establishment by a student of an anti-immigrant Facebook group page, which coincided with the beginning of the week.

In an interview, the assistant head described events in the middle of the first pilot year, in which three students had created and promoted a Facebook group page entitled "Get the Immigrants out of Buckingham High School" directed specifically at Afghan students in the school. The students, all Sikh (and who were in fact also siblings) created the page as a response to what they perceived as bullying by a group of Afghan students. According to the headteacher, there had been several physical fights between the groups in previous months, reflecting larger tensions in the community:

And at the time we know that also outside in the community there was a lot of bad feeling between Afghani and Sikh communities, so it wasn't just in this school. We'd get, you know, children and young people coming from another school and fighting with our students somewhere else out there on the street.

The assistant head elaborated on some of the underlying issues that led to the incident by sharing that one group in particular was largely responsible:

There is a group of Afghan boys who are essentially bullying other students in the playground. And because a lot of them are newly into the school [in the] last two years, it's quite obvious that some of them are two, three years older than the kids [whose year group] they're in. An anti-immigrant Facebook group [was] set up by a group of two or three brothers and sisters who had a really bad run in with the Afghans. They ended up in a fight and got punished and so they were cross.

The assistant head felt that intimidation of younger students by an older ethnic group was feeding conflict, demonstrating some of the challenges of the school's attempts to work with recent immigrant populations (i.e. integrating older students into younger year groups, working with students from war-afflicted countries). He also noted that the father of the three students who started the group had displayed anti-immigrant attitudes in school meetings and had cursed at both the headteacher and assistant head about the "problem" of immigrants at the school. The headteacher compared tensions in the school to wider problems in the surrounding community:

There's always this tension between the kind of existing community and the newer community. When I first came to this school [in 1997], there was tension between Asian children and Somalian children. That's settled down now because the Somalian community has been here longer. Now you've got Somalian and Asian and Afghani. But it's very complicated in those cases. Because it's not just about the children's ethnicity, it's also about the trauma they've been through, it's also about the difficulty they have making themselves understood. In some cases you get conflict arising because of language, because the students can't communicate properly.

These issues framed the incident at the school, a unique situation in which a group of students from immigrant backgrounds set up a website to denounce immigrant students at their school, attracted over 450 Buckingham students – a large majority of whom are Sikh – to join or "like" the Facebook page. The school's response was to empower its full-time police officer to publicly arrest the students for inciting racial hatred and, during a school-wide assembly, to explain to students the punitive measures being taken for both the students who had created the group, and for those who had signed up. The assistant head explained:

The week after the event, our police officer [told students at an assembly] "We've arrested the students who started this, and they have had their fingerprints taken, their DNA, they were arrested for a crime of inciting racial hatred. All of you who signed up to it could be at risk." And you just saw the kids... "Oh my god." Every single kid who signed up had a letter home saying, "Your child, your son/daughter has signed up to a Facebook website that is racially inciteful."

For a school purporting to be implementing a rights-friendly approach, the decision to use the symbol of police authority acted to scare students. School

leaders felt that the seriousness of the offence and the number of students (many of them immigrants themselves) who had signed up to the page demanded a strong response. The assistant head reported that in addition to arresting the responsible students (who were given a warning), the school used the incident as a teaching moment about immigration, and held dedicated assemblies to addressing the specific issue regarding the Facebook group. This led to school leaders changing the theme of International Week to include specific lessons on diversity. The assistant head felt that HRFS had given the school a strong framework for addressing the issue of immigration:

It's actually turned out to be very powerful in the positive because it allowed us to really address an issue that we knew was an issue but really address it head on. When something like this does happen, we focus about how is it infringing on people's human rights and that's how they learn from it.

Despite identifying how HRFS could mediate tensions between groups, the school nonetheless incorporated a highly visible authoritarian response, arresting students in front of other students, which may have undermined any human rights messages in the school about the incident. Amnesty's lead coordinator noted that being an HRFS school gave Buckingham an opportunity to addressing the problem from a human rights perspective, irrespective of its inclusion in HRFS implementation plans.

The assistant head highlighted the challenge of HRFS as a whole-school approach when speaking about one of the main students involved in setting up the Facebook group:

One of the girls who set it up and was arrested had a few meetings with me and sort of talked about how International Week made her think how wrong she had been and made her realise. The problem is you meet her father, and you just think, well you've got no hope you poor girl. Father who walked out of a meeting with the headteacher, left the school, with his wife who doesn't speak English, just walked out of the school shouting at the top of his voice, "Get the f\*cking immigrants out!" He was so angry because his kids had been excluded.

This quote demonstrates that despite the ability of HRFS to provide opportunities for rights learning to counteract racism, the influence of the surrounding community can undermine or disrupt the promotion of rights

perspectives. The headteacher, however, felt that HRFS had provided a positive influence and learning opportunities during the International Week:

The international week was very significant, because that came quite soon after [the Facebook incident] and because it was a celebration of many different cultures and it gave the opportunity for a lot of our students to celebrate their own culture for example, by coming in their own traditional dress and so on. I think that was actually a really good way of generating respect for others and empathy for others. I would say that thinking about it and reflecting on it, the Human Rights Friendly project has had an impact there, because it has provided a vehicle by which we can be very positive about the range of different minority groups in the school.

Both the headteacher and the assistant head affirmed the role of HRFS for supporting community cohesion. However, the initial response of the school to the Facebook incident appeared to undermine attempts to use a human rights response. Even as the school used HRFS to pragmatically address a rights-related problem, the initial response of arresting students publicly symbolised punitive action and assertion of control rather than rights-based dialogue.

These two methods of dealing with the situation demonstrate competing discourses of control and rights. Although the incident led to a change in the focus of International Week to immigration and rights, the school's use of its full-time community police officer to make a public arrest represented a repressive option designed to convey the seriousness of the incident primarily through fear. The school's police officer, normally tasked with ensuring safety, preventing bullying, and investigating theft, was called on to perform a duty not normally associated with his specific role at the school. Furthermore, the letter that was sent to parents of students who had signed up to the page, by invoking the potential liability of each student to charges of inciting racial hatred, appeared specifically designed to scare students and parents.

### *Democracy Day*

Finally, a third example is the school's annual democracy day, on which student leaders are democratically elected. There is no evidence that HRFS was integrated into Democracy Day, and mention of Democracy Day was not included in either the *Year One Action Plan* or the *Mid Year Report*.

Despite beginning the year with a strong integration of HRFS into one of the school's most high profile annual events, Buckingham did not integrate HRFS into two other annual events that seemingly shared strong links with the aims and purposes of the project, and which could have raised the profile of HRFS as a long-term and sustained approach.

### **6.2.2 Integration into Student Voice Initiatives**

Across the school, there were strong structures for students to participate in democratic decision-making processes and other forms of peer-to-peer leadership opportunities. Buckingham's website outlines the principles of the Buckingham Student Voice (BSV) initiative, comprised of three main pillars: a democratically-elected **Junior Leadership Team** for each year group who input into school polices and programmes; **student learning advisors** tasked with assessing teacher performance; and democratically-elected **house councils** that operate student juries tasked with peer mediating student-student conflicts using restorative justice techniques.

Discussions with students, teachers and leaders around the three main BSV initiatives support the school's assertions that HRFS was integrated into these existing school practices through their inclusion in the *Year One Action Plan*.

At the time of HRFS launching, BSV had a strong presence in the school, and could easily integrate into the HRFS framework. The school used BSV in both the *Year One Action Plan* and *Mid Year Report* to highlight its implementation of the school governance and democratic participation element of HRFS.

It is clear that BSV itself and its intended outcomes were popular with students. When asked about their opinions of BSV, students in the Year 10 focus group were effusive about the benefits. One Year 10 boy said:

Everyone gets a say in how the school should change, how it can change and they have a few governors meetings and some of us are invited over as student representatives of the school. And we talk about what could be improved and what's good about the school.

The student focus groups initially queried students' understandings of and interactions with Amnesty and with HRFS. When students were asked about HRFS and HRE, they reflected primarily on their existing experiences and showed limited awareness of HRFS. Thus, data presented in this section is centred primarily on students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of BSV, and analysis focuses on students' current understandings of democratic participation and human rights within Buckingham in order to demonstrate the integrative nature of HRFS implementation.

Students at the school elect representative student leaders on Democracy Day every June. This body is known as the Junior Leadership Team (JLT), and is comprised of Head Girl and Boy and form deputies from each year group. Their functions and an example of their work are highlighted on the website:

[The JLT] meet regularly and are there to help represent the school. For example, the Learning Futures programme came as a result of listening to the pupils and what they wanted as part of their learning experience. (School website)

Buckingham's four *house councils* of twenty students each are democratically elected student bodies for each of the school's four form houses, consisting of students from key stages 3 and 4, who are according to the head of citizenship "trained and understand how to represent other people's views, trained in the democratic process [and] how to go about making change in schools." Students from the house councils form student juries, which are tasked primarily with addressing behaviour and attendance issues of other students. The school's website states that:

One of the most important jobs our students do is to help Heads of Learning in trying to ensure that behaviour is as good as it can be. We have student juries that meet once every half term and interview students who are regularly getting into trouble. Student Juries are an amazing opportunity for students to help and support their peers. All students who are involved say how much it can help improve their behaviour at school. (School website)

Casting efforts to empower student voice in terms of benefits to overall student behaviour, this statement from the school would appear to suggest a link between the school's conception of student voice and of a more

pragmatic discourse of peer surveillance. Here again is further evidence of the school's conflicting messages of control and rights.

In addition to filling members of the student juries, the house councils are tasked with working with the school's leadership (specifically the heads of learning and senior teachers who comprise the Senior Leadership Team, or SLT), ostensibly to improve the educational experience for students. According to the website, they are "fully trained" to run meetings and meet every two to three weeks, although data collection did not focus on capturing information regarding these meetings so it is not possible to confirm their frequency.

The *Mid Year Report* noted that house councils are involved in school policy decisions, and identified house councils as an example of the school's strong commitment to democratic participation for all students and as evidence that it was following HRFS guidelines for giving school community members meaningful opportunities to participate in governance. Some of those opportunities mentioned in the *Mid Year Report* concern behaviour issues, attendance, and the school's charity work; however, none of these aspects of schools' work are necessarily explicitly HRE-related, particularly behaviour and attendance. Other opportunities mentioned on the school's website include consultation on uniforms, school food, and school trips, and

sometimes they even help interview new teachers for jobs at the school. (School website)

Beyond the relatively superficial issues (excepting behaviour) addressed by students in the JLT, the phrase "sometimes they even help interview new teachers" demonstrates an exceptional or unusual type of responsibility for students to have. According to school leaders interviewed, two students in key stage 3 in every class had been trained as *learning advisors* to give feedback to teachers on lessons. The school trained over 50 learning advisors to work with teachers on improving lessons:

Students are trained to understand what makes a good lesson and how good learning takes place. Teachers and students often work together to help plan activities. Teachers often comment about how helpful it is to have the opinion of the students in planning their lessons. It is a role

that lots of students really enjoy doing and helps them in their own learning experience. (School website)

Some of the students in the Year 10 focus group were learning advisors, and reported positive experiences in their roles. One boy described the main responsibilities, watching the teacher give lessons and then giving “constructive feedback on how to make it better,” before expressing that he felt it was “quite effective with the teachers cause then the next time you go in the lesson you see the them trying their hardest to actually do it.”

Another year 10 girl also asserted that teacher observations had a positive impact:

You sit in the back of the class while she’s teaching another class, for an hour, and you observe her. Later on it’s confidential just between you and the teacher. You tell them what you liked about her lesson, what she did really well and what she can improve on, and it actually makes a difference cause it made a difference with my old history teacher.

One year 10 student felt that communication between students and teacher was improved as a result of the initiative:

We all get a say in what we have to do, and the teachers actually ask us how we could make their lesson interesting, how we could do our group work more.

While another year 10 reported that student-teacher collaboration increased:

We as students play a big part. And we actually help the teachers, its not always them helping us.

Views from students on their roles as learning advisors offer evidence that this initiative in particular is not only successful, but clearly links to outcomes envisioned by Amnesty for increased democratic participation of students and improved student-teacher relationships. But this vision of students as engaged and equal members of the school community comes up against forces that view even small decision-making roles given to students as potentially problematic. The practice of consulting students about teacher hiring and behaviour policy, which does offer students meaningful if limited opportunities to participate in school decision-making, has become so common in British schools that one of the largest UK teacher unions, NASUWT, raised the practice of student voice as a potentially negative issue

for teachers that can be “abused.” Responding to the Welsh Assembly Government’s early 2010 consultation on a potential Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure, the Secretary General of NASUWT said:

When school councils were introduced, there was a failure to recognise the inappropriateness of allowing pupils to take part in a whole range of issues relating to staff, including appointments and dismissals, pay, discipline and performance management. Children are not small adults. They are in school to learn, not to manage either the school or the staff. Giving pupils a voice on such matters is a distortion and abuse of student voice. (NASUWT website)

NASUWT went further to outline its position on student voice on a dedicated student voice webpage, which lists three “key points” that appear to be entirely based on reminding students that they are “personally responsible for their own learning,” and must be mindful of “the impact their behaviour and general conduct can have on themselves, their peers and teachers.” The third and final key point underlines the extent to which the discourse of student rights in the UK is inextricably linked to notions of student responsibility:

Learners must understand how the legitimate rights of all members of the school community can only be secured by each person acknowledging and undertaking their own responsibilities and obligations. (NASUWT website)

Although this quote suggests teacher resentment at increased student entitlements (as too does the teacher’s comments about Jonathan being too exposed to human rights – 5.5.1), the data points to a stronger link (and even potential collaboration) between teacher and student voice movement at Buckingham school. The relationship between Buckingham’s teacher unions and student voice discourses at the school is discussed in Chapter 8.

BSV appears to simultaneously be considered good practice in school whilst being potentially limited in scope by political pressure. Amnesty’s perspective, according to the *Guidelines* and to numerous other Amnesty documents on HRFS, is that giving students more meaningful decision-making responsibilities could further deepen the school’s work and improve outcomes. This tension between Amnesty’s utopianism and the political and pragmatic dimensions of student voice underscores the challenge of implementing whole-school HRE.

### 6.2.3 Tensions in Existing Student Voice Initiatives

A separate tension found in BSV concerned student perspectives on their educational experiences in the context of their increased involvement in school decision-making. Although they spoke positively about existing mechanisms for student voice in the school, students in a Year 10 focus group identified increased democratic participation and communication between students and teachers as ways to further improve the school community. One student said, “there should be more voting,” while another suggested that school leaders should have a suggestion box in the reception area of the school offices.

It was clear that whilst BSV was largely seen as positive and giving student opportunities to make decisions, it had created expectations for more authentic involvement in school decision-making, and as a result, disappointed students when they perceived their views and input as being ignored. One student reported that she felt that school leaders did not care what students thought.

Three separate incidents where students felt a need to voice their concerns to school leaders illustrate the tension between the empowerment students feel as a result of their involvement in BSV and the limitations of student voice. In particular, it appears that the lack of a shared language about the limits of democratic participation between students and school leaders has fostered raised expectations amongst students about their ability to change what they disliked about their schooling experience.

#### *Example #1: Virtual Science Class*

Failure to effect change to discontinue an unpopular elective class was the first incident students discussed as an example of their lack of voice. Year 10 students described their attempts to change the curriculum:

Boy 1: We had virtual science, and nobody liked it cause we had like an exam coming up and everyone admitted that they weren't learning anything from the virtual science. We had to do work on computers and

everyone was just mucking about not doing anything. Everyone like wrote a letter to the [SLT], and everyone signed a petition and everything. And then, what did [they] do, [they] didn't do anything.

Girl 1: No we had to go to [their] office, and [they] kept on saying, from the records [they] had of virtual school it was a real success. But it wasn't really.

Boy 1: We didn't see it as a success.

Girl 1: And we find out what it really was, they couldn't afford another teacher, another science teacher.

This example illustrates some of the limits of student voice in the school. As the conversation continued, the same students began to focus on their dissatisfaction with a policy put into place by school leadership. This incident is particularly instructive because it demonstrates that (1) students dissatisfied with what they believed to be a legitimate concern (virtual science distracting them from exam preparation) used collective action to air their concerns; (2) dialogue between teachers and students concerning the issue elicited a response from the teachers defending their choice; and (3) students felt that they were misled by the school leaders and not given the real reason for the decision. In this case, students felt that their efforts at making their voices heard were blocked by a perceived injustice (being lied to).

#### *Example #2: Vertical Tutor Groups*

In the *Mid Year Report* section assessing the school's work on improving student-to-student relations (as part of their work on key area #2, community relations), the school lists as an accomplished activity a recently implemented initiative:

We have set up vertical tutor groups for the first time, so each tutor group has students from year 7-13 in it. This has contributed to the improvement in student relationships, as older students take on a more mentoring role to younger ones, and students in different year groups get to know each other better.

From a democratic perspective vertical tutor groups appear to be a proactive way to encourage the development of positive student-to-student relationships. However, students did not share the same perspective. One student said:

It's mixed up. It'll work cause we'll interact but it's not really gonna work that much cause like we feel much more comfortable with like people our own age, and we'd like to know more from them rather than like smaller children who are younger than us or people who are older than us.

The students in the focus group were clearly unhappy about the SLT's decision to enact vertical tutor groups, despite the obviously good intentions of school leaders in combining year groups together to interact with each other. And in another example of student activism, the same students reported that they had petitioned and organised to change the rules for different year students in form groups, only to be denied even an audience with members of the SLT:

Girl 2: We had a protest, we went out and we were screaming and shouting. But [school leaders] didn't come out, another teacher came out.

SM: Who organised the protest?

Girl: It was last year, but it was generally the year 11's. The current year 11's started it, and everybody started joining, they all came out of their classes. And [senior leaders] didn't come out [themselves, they] sent another teacher out. And they were like, 'go to your classes, we just need one representative' or something like that.

The SLT's response and students' dissatisfaction shows that the lack of shared guidelines on acceptable democratic participation, and/or an effective way to raise concerns with school leaders outside of BSV initiatives, may have played a role in deepening tension between students and teachers. Whilst the SLT wanted students to send only one representative to express overall student views, students saw this as a denial of their right to have their collective voices heard. At the same time, the students' behaviour in screaming and shouting because they felt they were being denied their rights demonstrated that they also did not have suitable mechanisms for and understandings of appropriate (or effective) political dialogue and dissent.

In the same conversation, however, students revealed a deep sense of engagement with and attachment to Buckingham, indicating that they were fully invested in positive outcomes at the school and not simply complaining to change something they didn't like. As one student put it:

At the end of the day, it's our education, we don't want to do anything to muck it up or anything.

This statement was met by agreement of all of the students present in the focus group. Several students stated that they simply wanted school leaders to listen to their views before making the decision to vertically integrate tutor groups, whilst two other students asserted that many of the school's teachers agreed with them that it was not a good idea. The fact that Buckingham school leaders used the vertical tutor group initiative to demonstrate strengthening student-student relationships when students felt so strongly opposed to it reveals the disjuncture between intended school changes and the ways in which the recipients of such changes actually respond, reflecting the uncertain processes of the 'leap' between policy intention and policy implementation (McCowan, 2008). Further evidence of this disjuncture can be seen in the assistant head's citation of the vertical tutor groups as evidence of the school's progress in improving student-student relationships in Buckingham's HRFS *Mid Year Report* (7.4.2).

#### *Example #3: Changes to the School Timetable*

A final example of student discontent offered further insight into current tensions regarding student-staff relationships. When changing the daily timetable the previous year, school leaders, in an attempt to give students a voice in decisions affecting them, gave students a choice to either start the school day early at 8:20 in order to finish at 2:50pm, or start and finish at their normal times of 8:40am to 3:05pm. The students voted to start early so they could finish by 2:50pm (and thus trim five minutes off their day), but despite starting the day twenty minutes earlier at 8:20am, the school took the decision to end the day at 3:00pm instead of 2:50pm as promised. Responses in the Year 10 focus group illustrated the mistrust that the incident had either enabled or enhanced. Several frustrated students argued that there was little point to their being consulted about the decision in the first place, as the eventual outcome did not reflect either of the choices given to them. Others spoke in terms of disrespect shown to them by school leaders despite school-wide expectations for them to be respectful towards adults. One student

described an interaction with one school leader immediately prior to participating in the focus group to illustrate claims of not being respected:

I was just walking with him now, and he asked me a question and I was just about to answer it and he said, "Fix up your tie" and didn't let me answer the question and I'm like, fine, and he just walked off.

Discussing their support for BSV and for student voice, the students interviewed spoke of having strong relationships with teachers and certain (but not all) school leaders, and appeared in one instance to make a clear link between the role of one school leader (the assistant head) to promote student voice and that leader's status as a defender of their rights. Other school leaders came in for greater criticism during the above-mentioned incidents, most likely because the relationship between students and these leaders was not as sustained and interactive as that of students and teachers, and the structural role of some school leaders to manage the operation of the school limits interaction with students in comparison to teachers. Clearly students would not be in a position to offer critical views of school leaders, based on their experiences in being consulted on their views, if the leaders were not so strongly supportive of student voice initiatives. This suggests a gap between students' perception of school leaders as authority figures and their perception of teachers as allies (as well as authority figures).

Together these examples show that while BSV was successful in engaging students, they took exception to some of the SLT's decisions because of a previously stated commitment to consulting students. A lack of shared language between students and staff on the limits of democratic participation for students, and/or a lack of a forum for discussing school policies and decisions amongst all the school community members, may explain their responses. Students who were told they could have a voice but were not provided with opportunities for understanding the limits of that voice and of their participation in general experienced disappointment, regardless of the positive intent of school leaders.

Overall the findings from student focus groups suggest that when students are introduced to ideas of democratic participation and given meaningful

opportunities to participate, they develop expectations of fairness and respect, and also exhibit increased engagement with school management practices. These characteristics closely correspond to the aims of HRFS, despite seemingly emerging from the school's work on BSV in previous years.

#### **6.2.4 Integrating HRFS into the Curriculum**

Prior to and during HRFS implementation, Buckingham's curriculum included human rights as part of the citizenship programme of study, which is taught through the school's Personal Development Curriculum (PDC), humanities and drama subjects. In the Summer term of the first pilot year the school focused on "rights and responsibilities" in its PDC, meaning that all students had classes specifically about rights and responsibilities.

The assistant head acknowledged the school's existing (but limited) focus on human rights through PDC but clarified coverage in the curriculum as "coming through" to students "more implicitly rather than explicitly":

Random student in the playground, how much human rights education do you get, they might say not very much. But then if you went and said well have you learned about water supplies in developing countries? Yes. Well, that's it, human rights.

The assistant head went on to suggest that "there's a lot of head turning that needs to be done with students" to make the connection between the various subjects they learn in school and HRE. Acknowledging the need for signposting the types of subject areas students learn about related to human rights gives further support to the idea that the actual naming and awareness-raising of the project are important elements of the implementation process. The head of citizenship echoed the point that explicit references to human rights within other subject areas would be promoted, explaining that one of the school's approaches beyond mapping citizenship (and by extension, human rights) into areas of the curriculum was to design a logo to communicate to students where citizenship would be taught in their non-citizenship lessons. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this initiative was implemented.

A Year 9 focus group of students reported little awareness of human rights in their courses, citing drama and religious education as two subjects where they did learn about human rights. At the same time students revealed a high awareness of many initiatives in the school that linked to human rights, such as assemblies and through the new curriculum that had been introduced.

I asked this group what they thought the concept of a human rights friendly school meant, and their responses revealed a basic understanding of some of the general concepts of human rights and what the project could do for the school. Students mentioned freedom, freedom of speech, solving collective global problems, rights to marriage, and fairness as some of the rights they understood. Students in the year 10 focus group revealed a range of knowledge identifying core elements of human rights principles, including “a school where children have a say,” “making us understand what our rights are,” and an implicitly cosmopolitan perspective on rights for people in other countries. One female student said:

Loads of kids in places like Africa, they do stuff they're not actually meant to be doing. And they get taught about the rights that they should be having and that.

This response exhibits a general view that in the developing world rights are not as guaranteed as in the UK or not protected and so people must be taught about them in order to claim them. Another Year 10 focus girl commented on rights as future-orientated, saying that the purpose of HRFS was to “make us understand the rights of children so we could help the future generations.”

It is clear that students have been exposed to HRE in various forms, including through Amnesty-provided human rights passports that all students were given in the middle of 2009-2010 the school year. However, HRE in the school is being delivered mainly through other subject areas, and most prominently through citizenship education. Despite the positive steps taken by school leaders as part of a larger commitment to HRFS to increase the profile of human rights school-wide, there appears to be a clear need for an increased profile for HRE within the existing curriculum or as a subject itself if

the school is to meet the curriculum aims set out by both partners in the *Year One Action Plan*.

### **6.3 Innovation in the School using HRFS**

This section considers evidence that participation in HRFS encouraged or enabled Buckingham to create new initiatives aimed primarily at embedding elements of the HRFS framework. Overall, the study found little evidence that HRFS had directly led to innovations within the school. However, the depth and breadth of international, human rights and democratic initiatives existing at the school within which HRFS was integrated mitigated against a requirement to focus on innovation. The strength of Buckingham's existing practices meant that less innovation was required in order to work towards becoming human rights friendly. However, there were a number of areas in which the school innovated to support HRFS.

#### **6.3.1 School-wide Rights Charter**

The school's creation of a school-wide rights charter, which every student signed, and which hung in the school's main hallway, was a highly visible means of promoting HRFS and a significant act aimed at encouraging a shared language of human rights in the school. The school designated a "pledge day" on which students participated in an assembly discussing the rights charter, and where each student received a copy of the UDHR. At the end of the assembly, each student signed the charter, which was then placed in a glass display case in the school's main hallway. Over 1400 students signed the charter and were given Amnesty-supplied UDHR passports.

School leaders created the school's rights charter, with students and teachers having no input into its development. In this respect creation of a charter excluded the voices of key members of the school community, potentially undermining buy-in for the rights charter. However, in the classroom research workshop, two students explained that they learned about human rights because of the school's rights charter and proudly showed me their copies of the UDHR. Teachers interviewed in focus groups also spoke of their support

for the rights charter; one teacher commented that the charter shows that “everyone agrees that we stand by our human rights.”

### **6.3.2 Behavioural Policies**

Buckingham's use of HRFS to innovate on behavioural policies is perhaps unsurprising. The school's focus on behaviour as a key element of its organisational strategy was plainly evident in its initiatives and policies. With support from its local authority, the school had since 2008 employed a full-time police officer as part of a scheme to improve behaviour. The hiring in 2008 of two ‘positive behaviour mentors’ tasked with designing and updating the school's behaviour codes also pointed to an emphasis on behaviour. The assistant head spoke about how participation in HRFS had changed the school's approach to updating behavioural policies, and discussed a specific innovation on behaviour policy inspired by HRFS:

New policies are being written explicitly to take account of human rights values. The behaviour policies are being written around the idea that if you're late, if you're disorganised, if you forget equipment, what you're doing is, you're taking away other people's rights to learn. And right to an education. That sort of language is now appearing in the new documents.

The inclusion of rights language into school policies offers evidence of a new means of framing responsible behaviour for students, particularly through advancement of the idea that students should be collectively responsible for ensuring the right to education for each of their fellow students through positive behaviour. It also continues to potentially conflate the school's messages about rights and control.

### **6.3.3 Curricular and Extra-Curricular Innovation**

Section 6.2.4 discussed ways in which HRFS was integrated into the existing school curriculum. In terms of innovation, school leaders used HRFS in order to justify a significant expansion of the number of citizenship education hours offered to students each fortnight (from 1 to 3), and created new cross-curricular enquiry projects that were meant to involve humanities, arts and citizenship subjects in collaborative projects with a human rights theme.

In terms of extra-curricular innovation, the school's strong external partnerships were leveraged to promote HRFS and human rights. The school's partnership with the Short Form Film Company aimed to teach students how to make short films in one day. Facilitators from Short Form worked with students to develop ideas for films, and focused on the school's work with Amnesty to generate ideas, questions and topics. The students were then given the opportunity to develop, film and edit their ideas. Students produced a film entitled "Being British: My right to a nationality," which focused on the right to nationality enshrined in the UDHR and queried students, teachers, and local community members about what it meant to be British and have rights to be British. The film inspired some complex answers intended to raise awareness of the relationship between rights and nationality. Many of the students and teachers did not identify themselves as simply British. One student said:

Having a British passport doesn't make you British, it's where your family and all your relatives are actually from, that's where you're from.

A teacher interviewed for the film explained that, "I think of myself as British, but I'm a British Indian," further highlighting the balance between British and ethnic or cultural identity that is a common feature at the school. The question of what being British means in a school where 98% of students were from a minority group provided an innovative and engaging learning opportunity about how these issues relate to human rights for students making the film and for students, teachers and community members interviewed in the film.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

HRFS was primarily integrated into Buckingham's remarkably progressive existing work, which was re-branded by school leaders as part of the overall HRFS approach. HRFS was simply too ambitious, time-consuming, too *utopian* to be implemented in any other way than for the school to use it to build upon the work it had already been doing. However, certain forms of innovation resulted from the project, including the inclusion of rights language into behavioural policies, use of HRFS as a focal point for other extra-curricular activities, and expansion of learning hours devoted to teaching human rights. Some of these innovations were short-term, others have

potentially longer-term effects, and it remains to be seen whether innovations in policy and curriculum will be challenged by continued pressure from policy imperatives (e.g. if citizenship education becomes non-statutory, thus removing justification for increasing citizenship hours; or if schools begin to follow advice given on the white paper to give teachers more authority to search students). It is also difficult to tell whether integration of existing school initiatives has served to dilute the status of HRFS as its own transformative project, or whether it has actually assisted potential sustainability of HRFS by infusing the school's existing work with the project. What is clear is that a majority of informants for this study were either engaged in or aware of the various types of human rights initiatives at the school. Whilst some initiatives were easily identifiable as corresponding to HRFS, others had become entrenched as part of Buckingham's identity and were considered part of the normal work of the school.

Viewed in context of suggestions in the HRFS guidelines that students and all members of the school community should be given "a role to play in democratic school governance, including in the areas of leadership, development of the school vision and mission, development and implementation of school policies and procedures, and methods of accountability," (AI 2009, p. 25) it is possible to look at Buckingham's student engagement policies as both exemplary and emblematic of current popular educational approaches in England, but also tokenistic in terms of the actual levels of meaningful input that students have into school policies and decisions. Buckingham's focus on students as the primary beneficiaries of HRFS also missed opportunities to build support amongst teachers for the approach, whose exposure was limited primarily to the International Conference HRE training workshop.

Data collected shows that Buckingham leaders used integration of HRFS into its existing work in order to foster innovation. School leaders used Amnesty resources on immigration and human rights to address the creation of an anti-immigrant Facebook page, which was then fed into the school's existing International Week. HRFS provided justification for the school to innovate on

its International Conference by providing opportunities for all teachers to participate in human rights workshops about HRFS.

Finally, it is possible to identify clear challenges for the HRFS approach on a number of levels. School leaders who had demonstrated a strong commitment to HRFS implementation nonetheless spoke of typical barriers preventing deeper engagement with Amnesty, including reform overload and diffusion, lack of time, lack of strategic planning for whole-school implementation, and low project awareness. There was also evidence of the potentially negative effects of student voice initiatives on student engagement. Tensions between students and leaders were based on students' understandings of the potential of their voices to effect change, and their frustrations at the limits of voice. Tensions also existed between discourses of control and empowerment in the school, evidenced by the school's response to the Facebook incident, and to conceptualisations of behaviour by school personnel as a way to control students. In Chapter 8, I explore further the impact of these tensions on school-wide political discourses and on school leadership. In the next chapter, Chapter 7, I turn to an examination of the partnership process.

## Chapter 7

### Envisioning and Enacting Partnership for *Human Rights Friendly Schools*

#### 7.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I explored the ways in which the perceptions and actions of key project participants affected the implementation of HRFS. I was concerned primarily with revealing the types of knowledge (understandings), perspectives and modes of action that shape the delivery of whole-school HRE.

I now turn to an investigation of how the partnership – in terms of both vision and enactment – affected the implementation of HRFS. I draw a distinction between analysis of the *project* and analysis of the *partnership* in order to highlight the ways in which whole-school changes are enacted, and separately the ways in which partnership for change is enacted.

This chapter draws on key Amnesty and Buckingham documents on HRFS, participant-observation field notes of partnership meetings and events, and semi-structured interviews with school leaders and Amnesty coordinators. I investigate the ways in which actors from both organisations envisioned and enacted the partnership through planning, training and check-in/evaluation meetings, coordinated large-scale events, and the development of a range of project materials outlining both the nature and content of the partnership. The chapter addresses **research sub-questions 3 & 4**:

- How are NGO-school partnerships envisioned and enacted?
- What are the observable outcomes of partnership enactment?

Analysis of partnership is structured around the two phases of the project that are the primary focus of this thesis and which are described in Chapters 5 and 6: conceptualization of HRFS (vision), and implementation of the pilot project (enactment).

## **7.2 Envisioning Partnership**

In August 1994, Amnesty International Secretariat invited eight international HRE experts to their headquarters to discuss the organisation's HRE strategy. The meeting report stated that the meeting aimed to "learn from the participants – what is, and what is not, being done in the wider HRE community, and, from their point of view, what role AI should play within that community" (Amnesty International, 1994, p. 1). Formal education was one area in which Amnesty sought guidance from the assembled experts, and one of the key recommendations was that Amnesty needed "to look at and work more closely with other organizations [including] educational authorities, teachers' associations, overseas development agencies" (Amnesty International, 1994, p. 14). Partnerships with formal education were recommended as a way of expanding Amnesty's work, and it was noted that key aspects of HRE are based around concepts of partnerships. One invited expert presenting on formal education elaborated, stating, "HRE training should be a democratic, cooperative and sharing process" (Ibid, p. 11).

Thirteen years later, Amnesty organised another experts meeting specifically to discuss HRFS, the organisation's first global project based on formal education partnerships. The meeting convened more than 20 people from around the world to "share, analyze, and learn from experiences in integrating human rights into schools, advise and inform the HRFS project, and to explore opportunities for cooperation between local, national and global initiatives" (Amnesty International, 2007b, p. 3). For Amnesty, this particular project to enact formal education partnerships was itself informed and guided by collaboration with leading members of the international HRE community. The documents obtained for this study relating to HRFS and to overall organisational HRE policy show that Amnesty's conceptions and enactment of partnership have been deliberate, organised, and based on an eagerness to apply lessons learned by HRE practitioners to new areas of organisational programming. Amnesty has spent considerable time and energy envisioning what successful partnerships with schools could and should look like.

At the same time, efforts from Amnesty to critically understand and anticipate the challenges of whole-school HRE projects and partnerships in formal education have led directly to a number of strategic policy decisions built into the HRFS project that limit the role of direct partnership between Amnesty and schools. These decisions were taken in the interest of making the project more sustainable. The idea behind this decision was that sustaining external partnerships in the long-term was not feasible for schools, but providing a strong framework for empowering the school to embed the project could potentially ensure long-term sustainability. Thus, when planning HRFS, Amnesty limited the scope and duration of the HRFS partnerships in each of the fourteen participating countries.

In this section, I investigate the key mechanisms used in developing HRFS as a collaborative partnership between Amnesty and Buckingham. The main data collected on envisioning partnership are:

1. Amnesty HRFS project documents;
2. Participant-observation of Amnesty/Buckingham meetings during the preparation and implementation phases; and
3. Semi-structured interviews with project participants.

Three main themes emerge that illuminate how participants envisioned the HRFS partnership:

1. As a part of each institution's individual strategic organisational development;
2. In terms of the mutual benefits brought about by the principle of collaborative advantage;
3. As finite in the short-term and unsustainable in the long-term.

Views on partnership by both sides during the preparation and conceptualisation of HRFS revealed a utopian conception of partnership as unquestionably positive, mixed with a pragmatic outlook on some challenges the partners might encounter.

### **7.2.1 Partnership as Strategic Organisational Development**

In HRFS documents, Amnesty defined the goals of formal education partnership: (1) to support overall strategic objectives in the field of HRE of building a culture of human rights; and (2) to undertake a project focused on depth rather than breadth (Amnesty International, 2005). According to

Amnesty's lead coordinator for HRFS, the organisation has links with over 600 youth groups and thousands of schools in the UK, to which it provides material and training support. From a strategic perspective, HRFS represented a significant innovation on Amnesty's traditional HRE efforts.

Different forms of collaboration were highlighted as strategically important for the success of HRFS in project planning documents. During a November 2007 experts meeting, the importance of collaboration between Amnesty and teachers in the development of materials and their "involvement in all parts of the project" was mentioned by participants, as was the need for partnerships with government (Amnesty International, 2007b). The *HRFS Project Description*, a 2007 document separate from the concept paper summarising key elements of the project, emphasised that the project should not only be about partnership between Amnesty and the participating school, but also between schools in different countries participating in the project. This was meant to support strategic objectives for increasing and improving educational networks between AI sections, and for creating a "global coalition of Human Rights Friendly Schools" linked through Amnesty as an umbrella organisation (Amnesty International, 2007a). As part of HRFS, Amnesty established an online network through a virtual classroom website that encouraged schools to share their practices on HRFS. The website features a "school lounge" with a world map displaying who is logged in and where they are from; an interactive message board; and an instant messaging feature. A second feature is a "resource centre" which Amnesty used to make project documents available for the global pilot schools, and which allowed participating schools to share their work with each other. However, according to Amnesty's lead coordinator for HRFS, specific efforts to build an active online network proved unsuccessful because the interface was too difficult to use for participants. When logging on to the site, it was clear that only a small number of people had actually logged on and contributed to the website.

Data collected from Buckingham suggests that entering into partnership with Amnesty was also of strategic importance to the school as an organisation. Participation in HRFS provided strong justification for expanding the number

of hours of citizenship teaching offered at the school (6.3.3), which aligned closely with the school's emphasis on student voice. Informants viewed partnerships as a strategic element of Buckingham school policy specifically in terms of addressing the school's behaviour. Expressing frustration about a recent Ofsted inspection, the headteacher remarked that for "behaviour in particular, I think that's where Amnesty is quite significant." This referred to the headteacher's view that Ofsted should have considered HRFS when compiling their score on behaviour, rather than as simply an example of strong external partnerships.

Dawn, the school's positive behaviour mentor, felt that HRFS fit so well into Buckingham's existing organisational strategies that the project did not need to be viewed as separate from the school's current approach:

I think it's less about sort of imposing human rights friendly principles, it's more about looking at the principles that we already have which adhere to those principles, and enlarging them, so having a framework. We already have our curriculum and our school processes developed according to human rights guidelines although we might not call them that. So it's really about identifying the areas where we are doing it already, and in the areas where we're not then adapting those areas to make sure that they fit within the human rights framework.

The clearest example of HRFS as beneficial to Buckingham organisational strategy is reflected in the seamless integration of the HRFS framework into BSV (6.2.2), itself the product of several years of organisational planning and development. At the time of the HRFS pilot launch, Buckingham was expanding BSV and solidifying democratic structures in the school. Data shows that the HRFS partnership was a key means of supporting these existing strategic development policies.

### **7.2.2 Partnership as Collaborative Advantage**

In nearly all of the interviews with key coordinators from both sides in the preparation and implementation stage of the project, the partnership was viewed as inherently and unquestioningly beneficial to the short and long-term work of both organisations. Both Amnesty and senior staff at Buckingham spoke effusively of the role of their partner to provide expertise in HRE and

education respectively. Partnership was envisioned as an uncontested good and as mutually beneficial, reliant on the expertise of each partner to ensure project success.

The *HRFS Project Description* describes the potential of organisational collaboration for the advancement of HRFS's goals:

Besides the primary partnership between AI and the schools, and the coalition of schools, the possibilities for other kinds of alliances and partnerships are numerous and should be explored, as they could create a wide array of positive rippling effects. (Amnesty International, 2007a)

The document names some key potential collaborators, including Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) and their international network of human rights schools, the People's Movement for Human Rights Learning and their "human rights cities" initiative, and the International Baccalaureate Organization who offer an optional comprehensive human rights secondary curriculum in their specialised schools. This project description and language used in other project documents discussed earlier demonstrate Amnesty's strong belief in collaborative advantage.

Buckingham partnership with Amnesty began when the school invited Amnesty to participate in its peace-themed 2008 International Conference. During that conference, Amnesty assisted the school in running workshops as a voluntary temporary partner. The assistant head described how the positive experience of initial partnership led to HRFS partnership:

Amnesty thoroughly enjoyed working with us and we thoroughly enjoyed working with Amnesty, we've got a shared background that has shown that the value of both institutions can be combined and we can work together very successfully.

The language used here underscores an outlook reflecting the concept of collaborative advantage, with the assistant head speaking in terms of adding value through collaboration. In interviews, the assistant head conceptualised partnership uncritically, and as a positive good because of the progressive and rights-respecting nature of Amnesty's work and the value and expertise it could bring to Buckingham's existing work.

The rhetoric used by both Amnesty and school participants reflects the depth to which managerialist and professional language dominates policy speak in contemporary UK educational policy and practice, even in the context of an aspirational human rights project. For example, use of the term “experts” by both Amnesty and Buckingham staff about the other was particularly pronounced. The notion of experts, like the school’s aspirations for its students to become the “creative professionals” of its STARS motto, fits well alongside rhetoric the school uses in its own documentation and policies. Whilst the use of the word expert suggests a link with the professionalisation of schools in managerial language, it also reflects the positioning of Amnesty by the school as indisputably beneficial for its work, and vice versa. In fact, the school’s perspective on Amnesty conveyed through interviews and focus groups appeared to be entirely free of controversy. Despite the fact that Amnesty operates in an intensely political arena and sometimes uses protest and advocacy as political tools for achieving its goals; that it has no prior experience implementing whole-school HRE projects or linking together its varied educational approaches in a holistic manner, the organisation was viewed unquestionably as human rights experts with much to offer the school. The school’s head of citizenship, when asked how she envisioned establishing a working partnership with Amnesty, offered this response:

Amnesty are the experts on human rights and human rights education. We know the students, we know the staff, so therefore we’re the experts of our school.

Supporting this view on the advantages of partnership with external organisations, the school’s headteacher linked the benefits of external partnership to the acquisition of professional skills that could not be taught by teachers:

If you take a professional dancer or a professional musician they approach their music or dance in a very different way than we would approach it in the curriculum.

The assistant head highlighted the value of Amnesty-supported training for the school’s development as well as the potential for Amnesty staff to assist in strengthening the school’s curriculum as it related to human rights. He spoke

of his vision for the partnership to be a “symbiotic relationship in the sense that we’re there to show Amnesty what we’re trying to do,” and described as a key challenge integration of HRFS into the daily life of the school. He said:

[We don’t want to] have it as some sort of bolt on fashionable thing that we’re doing when it’s actually something that goes right in. That’s why I think moving slowly on it is very important.

Amnesty staff also used the language of expertise when describing partnership. When asked about expectations for partnership with the school, the lead Amnesty project coordinator replied,

They’re the education experts; our role [is] to support them through our human rights and human rights education expertise. We recognise that they are the people with expertise on running the school.

The lead coordinator also framed the partnership in terms of expertise that Amnesty as an organisation lacked, which they could gain from HRFS in order to amplify their position as experts in HRE in formal settings:

I think there are challenges to our legitimacy, we are not an education organisation, so we’re not an academic institution that has a huge amount of research on education, and best practice in education, or reform in education, or change in education, we don’t have that kind of context.

The data found few critical collaborative examinations by project participants of the challenges of partnership. Although one of the requirements of the *Year One Action Plan* was to conduct a human rights temperature (an informal assessment of school climate meant to gauge the levels of rights awareness and perspectives at Buckingham), one was not conducted. The assistant head commented: “Practically, with a school of 1400, I don’t know [if it’s possible] unless we get some sort of computer marking system.” In addition, neither Amnesty nor Buckingham undertook any risk assessment or evaluation of the school’s current climate and atmosphere prior to partnering, and partnership during implementation tended to be of a pragmatic rather than reflective nature. No interviews, observations or texts uncovered evidence of any form of speculation regarding the potential for HRFS to fail or to have negative effects on the school. Partnership was viewed unquestioningly as philosophically and practically beneficial. Beyond the overwhelming support for partnership because of perceived collaborative

advantages, one explanation for the largely positive support for HRFS may reflect the utopian nature of HRFS' subject matter. The human rights principles underpinning the partnership's purpose may in fact serve to idealise the partnership as doing only good for both Amnesty and Buckingham.

### **7.2.3 Partnership as Finite**

From the very beginning of its development, Amnesty conceptualised the HRFS partnership as finite, and to be sustainable by the school alone upon termination of the partnership. Amnesty's approach reflected a fixed and limited partnership role that it had defined at the outset of the project. The project had a small budget, little staff time, and was constructed so that schools could use HRFS guidelines, principles, Amnesty resources and the international HRFS network to drive the project at little or no annual financial cost. The lead coordinator at Amnesty expressed concern that if the project was not framed as being ultimately school-led instead of partnership-driven, it might be unsustainable, saying that otherwise "if we continue to drive the project, if we pull out it will just stop."

Amnesty's lead coordinator placed responsibility for sustaining the project on Buckingham, saying:

The expectation was that Buckingham would be responsible for mapping human rights across their school, linking human rights to their current school priorities and projects, identifying where they need to develop new projects or initiatives, and our role would be to provide them with resources and materials, to provide them with human resources, people that could train their teachers, people that could run workshops with pupils, people that could help to facilitate sessions. I think we ideally wanted Buckingham to own this as a project and us to be that kind of supporter and facilitator role.

Amnesty's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (appendix 6), drafted as a tri-lateral agreement between Amnesty International Secretariat (developers of the global project) and Amnesty International UK and Buckingham School, (who implement the project) delineated the essential goals of the partnership. The MOU also codified the non-binding nature of the partnership agreement, noting that "the signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the

objectives stated in the MOU.” The MOU laid out the finite nature of the partnership by stipulating the length of the agreement as one year, subject to extension “upon written mutual agreement and depending on the outcome of the evaluation meeting of project participants.” A second MOU was signed after the first pilot year.

### **7.3 Enacting Partnership**

Where partnership on HRFS was envisioned largely in terms of the mutual benefits that collaboration could bring to both organisations (i.e. the utopianism of collaborative advantage and strategic development, versus pragmatism of a finite partnership timeframe), the data found that partnership enactment was mainly pragmatic and responsive to school challenges, whilst the few moments of opportunity in which utopian innovations in partnership became possible were not capitalised upon. The sections that follow explore data that reveals the ways in which partnership was enacted: as bureaucratic; as pragmatic; as uneven in terms of partnership responsibility; and as facilitating perceived and real added value.

#### **7.3.1 Partnership as Bureaucratic**

Amnesty’s organisational bureaucracy is close to unparalleled in the world of human rights organisations, but is typical of modern international NGOs. In many ways, Amnesty resembles more a global multinational corporation with its complex operational hierarchies, aggressive brand protection, and calculated public relations exercises. Two examples of the latter are the hastily-arranged “Rally for Egypt,” at Trafalgar Square on February 12, 2011, the day after the Egyptian president resigned (which undercut the rally’s very purpose), or the letters sent to university Amnesty groups in England in August 2011 explaining the organisation’s position on a scandal involving a £500,000 severance payment to outgoing Secretary-General Irene Khan. In a similarly protective move, the organisation’s US section removed itself as a partner in the midst of the process of establishing an Amnesty-themed charter school in Brooklyn, New York in 2004 (3.2.3). Acting in the interest of preserving moral authority is a strong feature of organisational operating

procedures, as Amnesty vigilantly safeguards the usage of its image and brand in the public sphere (Hopgood, 2006).

Thus, it is unsurprising to see that a project created by the IS HRE team for use by the national sections would be organisationally complex and bureaucratic.

The enactment of the partnership was, in terms of key project documents and reporting requirements, highly bureaucratic. Although non-binding, the MOU created a clear division of responsibility among the three main project partners. The MOU was not developed in partnership with the school, but was instead developed by the two Amnesty sections in London and reflects their organisational cultures. However, the MOU for the second year is instructive, reflecting a key outcome of the partnership related to revision and management of project expectations. Meetings between partners to discuss school progress against the *Year One Action Plan* provided the basis for updates to the MOU. Integration of HRFS with existing school initiatives compelled the partners to make changes to the MOU for the second year that demonstrated collaborative and realistic target-setting.

The development by Amnesty of ten global principles and four key areas of project implementation in the HRFS *Guidelines* created a highly rigid structure for enacting the project. So too did the project's *Year One Action Plan*, in which schools were asked to create specific goals for Amnesty-defined sub-sections in each of the four key areas (for example, staff-staff and student-staff relations were all sub-sections of the "community relations" key area). Finally, Amnesty's process for evaluation of the project via the *Year One Action Plan*, including mid and end-of-year evaluation reporting requirements, are further evidence of the organisation's bureaucratic approach to implementing HRFS. Amnesty's *Mid Year Report*, a 19-page evaluation form with over 50 questions, was completed by Buckingham's assistant head, who remarked on the difficulty of meeting Amnesty reporting requirements. Answering Section 1, which gauged the school's use of the human rights temperature activity at the beginning of the academic year, he responded:

We haven't done this activity yet. We initially saw it as too administrative heavy.

In response to the question, "how practical was the project – was your school able to achieve what you set out to in the time available?" the assistant head ticked 'achieved some things' and responded:

The project is very ambitious. Because it is the first year – we were reactive to issues, and took an organic approach. The paperwork involved in the project is very time consuming, and wouldn't be sustainable long term. It would be good to see how this could be reduced, as the project itself is very worthwhile.

This comment shows how for Buckingham, enactment of Amnesty's bureaucratic implementation structure was considered too intensive and potentially damaging to the project's sustainability.

The data revealed clear strengths and weaknesses of the structured, bureaucratic approach to partnership. Although Amnesty provided a solid structure for the project to develop and grow, the approach was too multi-layered and diffuse, allowing for under-development in some areas and inaction in others (for example, the non-completion by Buckingham of any targets for the 4<sup>th</sup> key area, community relations, on the *Year One Action Plan*). Ultimately, meeting the rigid structure of reporting requirements and targets across all areas of HRFS proved unrealistic and unattainable for Buckingham. Both the Amnesty lead coordinator and assistant head acknowledged the challenges of fulfilling the project requirements during a mid-year evaluation meeting, discussed in the next section.

### **7.3.2 Partnership as Pragmatic**

As part of the first partnership MOU, Amnesty's lead coordinator and Buckingham's assistant head (and the school's lead HRFS coordinator) arranged a mid-year evaluation meeting in February 2010 to assess progress on completing the *Year One Action Plan* targets set out the previous October. The meeting was a key moment of pragmatic partnership enactment. Using the *Year One Action Plan*, the Amnesty lead coordinator went through each target point-by-point with Buckingham's assistant head, ostensibly to learn what actions the school had taken thus far in each area in order to complete

the required *Mid Year Report*. It was quickly apparent that the meeting would not serve to neutrally assess progress towards meeting on-going targets, but would instead be negotiated by both parties to find mutually-agreed upon responses and pragmatic solutions for meeting each target. The Amnesty coordinator recognised early in the meeting that it would be necessary to change the approach for reporting to be more pragmatic:

Amnesty lead coordinator: Before we go through this, in terms of filling this in, is this something that, you want to talk through today, and then you do a bit of work on? Or, [do you want to] talk through it today, I'll do a bit of work on [it] and then send it to you?

Assistant head: I think realistically, [the latter is] the better option. Because I'll sit here and say 'yeah yeah' and then I'll forget.

The suggested approach proved to be successful for agreeing upon what constituted “evidence” of the school’s action in implementing HRFS.

As the third person in the room during this meeting, I witnessed a friendly and professional collaboration between the Amnesty lead coordinator and Buckingham’s assistant head. It was clear to the Amnesty coordinator that the meeting would be more productive if Amnesty supported the school to complete the reporting requirements. The assistant head immediately recognised that the Amnesty coordinator’s generous offer would ensure that the *Mid Year Report* would actually be completed, and demonstrate that much of the school’s existing work actually met the highly bureaucratic structure of the HRFS framework outlined in the *Year One Action Plan*. However, this collective decision also served to transform the evaluation meeting into an exercise of completing project-reporting requirements.

Nonetheless, the meeting identified a number of areas where concerted action could improve the school’s work to promote human rights. However, the project’s two main coordinators instead focused on validating the school’s work to demonstrate that Buckingham had fulfilled its commitments, and brainstorming positive strategies for moving forward. This pragmatic enactment of partnership was based on a mutual understanding that sustaining the partnership required making compromises. Interestingly, a key

area identified by the school as a way to generate further support for the project was through increasing the profile of its relationship with Amnesty. School leaders felt that using Amnesty's name to "badge" the school, and even writing a letter to all members of the school community congratulating Buckingham for beginning the journey to becoming human rights friendly, would significantly raise awareness and interest in HRFS (7.4.3). Amnesty's lead coordinator agreed with the school's suggestions to write a letter and also offered other forms of marketing support, including posters advertising HRFS in ten different languages.

### **7.3.3 Partnership as Uneven/One-Sided**

Although partnership was envisioned as providing collaborative advantage (3.4.1), the partnership appeared to be uneven in terms of both benefits and implementation. Buckingham appeared to receive more tangible benefits from the partnership (e.g. free curricular and policy resources, and positive associations with the Amnesty brand), whilst Amnesty felt that partnership was primarily one-sided and that they were most responsible for driving the project forward. Amnesty's lead coordinator said:

We were pushing to get project plans written, we were the ones saying, have you done this, have you done that, when are we doing this, and we were the ones having to kind of initiate contact with the school. And I think that is because schools are incredibly busy places, the people that are really leading this project aren't just leading this project, they're also they're teaching twenty lessons a week, and so I do think it is because it was a new project, it wasn't necessarily as integrated into the school's policies and plan as it could be.

As a former primary school teacher, Amnesty's lead coordinator immediately recognised that one-sided partnership was a logical outcome of a new school-wide initiative at a school overflowing with external partnerships and internal performance demands. Interviews with both the assistant head and the head of citizenship suggest that the school's understanding of the partnership was one-directional.

Buckingham staff even made several suggestions for Amnesty to deepen their engagement in the partnership, particularly around two areas: training support for teachers and students; and raising the profile of HRFS across the school.

The assistant head requested an Amnesty-branded letter of support to increase teacher buy-in and remind them of the enthusiasm they had felt during the International Conference teacher workshop (6.2.1):

They were all very interested on the training day, so [I'd like] an update on our move towards becoming [human rights friendly]. If it was an Amnesty document about our school, almost like a "Congratulations to Buckingham School, at the moment you are at this stage on the path towards [becoming human rights friendly], that we hear great work about." Amnesty having the kind of kudos and impressiveness that it does, to have a document that has come from Amnesty, you could write it as, "Dear members of staff," you know, "Dear Buckingham teacher," or it might be to students and staff. Almost like Ofsted do after an Ofsted inspection when they write and they say, "Dear Student" or "Dear Staff, we really enjoyed the visit to your school, we're really impressed." It shows everybody this is what you're doing as a school, your new behaviour policies are respecting the rights of the learners, your attendance policies are being added to by the students.

This comment implicitly acknowledges that teachers did not engage with HRFS outside of the International Conference. It also invokes bureaucratic processes associated with government evaluation (formal letter writing) as a potential means of credentialing HRFS and generating enthusiasm amongst students and teachers for working with Amnesty as a trusted partner and respected brand. Finally, it further entrenches a partnership structure of one-way support from Amnesty to Buckingham. This (perhaps unintentional) framing of partnership by Buckingham school leaders as one-sided is logical, reflecting the general assumptions of partners in NGO-school partnerships geared towards school change. Yet it nonetheless represents a core framing of partnership and impacts how the partnership was enacted. In the mid-year meeting, the assistant head suggested a form of collaboration – curriculum development – that had not been developed as part of HRFS and which was not an Amnesty formal education HRE project. In a conversation between the assistant head and Amnesty's lead coordinator, the development of a mutually beneficial idea for partnership appeared to take shape very quickly:

Assistant Head: We would love Amnesty [to] help with doing some planning of the units. I think that would be great. And I think that would be really sort of powerful. It might be that Amnesty are looking at creating kind of schemes of work that you want to showcase to other schools in England with a similar [approach]. The innovation that we're doing here is going to start happening in lots of other schools as well, and a citizenship enquiry project designed, co-constructed between

Amnesty and a practicing school might be schemes of work that you [could use].

Amnesty Lead Coordinator: It would be quite good I think, to almost create, you know the kind of portfolio you put together when you're training to be a teacher and you kind of collect evidence. It would be quite nice to have a folder with evidence of policies, talking about some of the curriculum days, the international week, the student conference, just paperwork and you can say here's what we've done.

Assistant Head: That's why, a letter from you guys from Amnesty to our staff and students would be really powerful.

Amnesty Lead Coordinator: The other thing is that you know at our offices we've got the classroom, so if you did want to take some students out of the school environment for a day which could be quite powerful I think for students. And we've got resources there that you can use. And also, I don't know if you know you're having some of your award ceremonies, but we've got a big auditorium which you could use if you wanted to do events. But again, just reinforcing that Amnesty's human rights action centre and taking students over to it might be good.

The positive and innovative ideas discussed between the two coordinators, and particularly the assistant head's suggestion for working with Amnesty to develop curriculum units, captures the essence of partnership as described by Amnesty and Buckingham when asked how they envisioned working together. However, of the suggestions emerging from this conversation, none were implemented during the remainder of the school year (although school visits of students and teachers to the Amnesty office were already a feature of partnership). This undoubtedly reflects the lack of time and resources available, but demonstrates the potential for the HRFS partnership to generate innovative ways of advancing shared goals. Curricular planning between Amnesty and Buckingham in particular would have met the goals of sharing expertise across organisations as stated by both partners, and potentially represent a meaningful form of collaborative advantage for Amnesty.

### **7.3.4 Partnership as Value Added**

This section highlights several findings (discussed in earlier chapters) demonstrating how partnership enactment facilitated perceived or real added value to the school's profile or work.

#### *Adding value to existing initiatives*

The school used the partnership to add value to its existing school-wide events and to support its substantial student voice initiatives (6.2) by involving Amnesty in the delivery of events and by using the HRFS framework to join up the many rights-based initiatives at the school.

#### *Deepening organisational knowledge and practice*

The school used HRFS as a way to develop more depth and to enhance their citizenship curriculum work (6.2.4), to improve their student voice practices (6.2.2), and to more closely align school policies with human rights (6.3).

#### *Supporting community cohesion*

The school used the partnership as a pragmatic approach to address problems of ethnic tension around an incident at the school, in which three students created a Facebook page inciting hatred against Afghani Buckingham students (6.2.1). The value of the Amnesty partnership was made apparent when the school invoked its status as a human rights friendly school to frame its response and to promote rights-based understandings of immigration during Buckingham's International Week.

#### *Validating performance during official school inspection*

The school attempted to use the HRFS partnership to add value to its profile when undergoing inspection by Ofsted in May 2010. My involvement in this process was unintended; Buckingham's assistant head asked me to speak to inspectors about HRFS because no Amnesty personnel were available on the day of the inspection. My experience being interviewed by an Ofsted inspector was unusual because I was able to witness this inspector interview another

external partnership representative in front of me immediately before my interview.

Upon arriving at Buckingham I was asked to wait in a small meeting room with another external partnership representative from Imperial College for ten minutes. The inspector entered and began to interview the Imperial College representative in my presence while I waited. I watched as the inspector responded with positive comments and warm praise for the physics projects created by their partnership. Once the interview had finished, the Imperial College representative left and I was alone with the interviewer. The inspector's questions to me were similar, but the tone and reactions were markedly different. It was easy for me to discern a difference between reactions to the physics partnership and reactions to my descriptions of HRFS. I left the interview with the strong impression that the inspector was more interested in the Imperial College partnership, and I felt that the inspector had not asked any questions that would generate information about the project's influence on the school for the Ofsted report. I was simply asked how often I was in the school (which I pointed out was irrelevant to the partnership as I was an external researcher), and when I answered, the interviewer expressed surprise that I was not at the school more often. Upon relating this information to the assistant head, I was contacted by the school's head, who asked me to draft a letter to Ofsted to support the school's existing official complaint about its drop in rating from "good" to "satisfactory." I agreed to draft a letter, as I felt comfortable explaining my impressions from the interview, and received a response from Ofsted indicating that my complaint had not been upheld.

I felt that my experience did not warrant a formal complaint, but was rather indicative of a missed opportunity to have a useful discussion about the contribution of HRFS to school improvement. However, I recognised the political dimension of the headteacher's request, who argued:

They haven't actually evaluated [HRFS] properly. The other thing is, that we claim our external partnerships are outstanding, and they claim that they're only good because we haven't evaluated the impact. I

believe that the Amnesty work is being evaluated throughout, and I gave them a copy of the evaluation.

This comment makes specific reference to the head's belief that a fairer assessment of the Amnesty project would have potentially improved the school's score. The Amnesty evaluation referred to by the head is the *Mid Year Report*, which is referred to as a "progress report" on the first page.

This example shows the level of value school leaders attached to external partnerships as a way of demonstrating school performance for official evaluation. The head's comments about how Amnesty partnership supported behavioural management strategies in particular show that the school was eager to frame its work with Amnesty as benefiting wider school policies and goals. Locating the value of a whole-school HRE project in its ability to improve behaviour management suggests the subversion of utopian goals for pragmatic, and even authoritarian, aims.

As discussed in previous sections, the Amnesty brand itself also contributed to a construction of the partnership's value to Buckingham. The school's use of Amnesty's name, its repeated requests for Amnesty to provide forms of branding and awareness-raising for and about HRFS provide evidence of the value attached to the Amnesty identity by school leaders and other members of the school community.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

In envisioning and enacting HRFS, Amnesty and Buckingham's approaches to partnership display similarities to the types of multi-organisational partnerships discussed in the literature review (3.4). They are often complex, temporary, and changing, and there is a clear gap between how partnership was ideally envisioned and how it was pragmatically enacted.

NGO-school partnerships are often small-scale or time-limited projects; therefore HRFS represents a unique and challenging partnership model. Whole-school partnerships require more strategic partnership planning from the outset and deeper involvement by school partners in order to increase

buy-in. This should be a key focus for Amnesty, who created a complex and ambitious project for formal education and attempted to implement it without drawing on the experiences of schools, or without offering regular forms of support. Amnesty could potentially enable stronger outcomes if deliberately engaging in deeper partnerships with schools as part of implementation, particularly regarding training for teachers and HRE lessons for students, or in the area of curriculum development as suggested by Buckingham's assistant head (7.4.3). Data showed that implementation of both the project and partnership mainly supported existing school practices by providing a rights-based policy framework that raised awareness – but not knowledge – about human rights concepts.

Overall, the findings show that whilst whole-school partnerships with NGOs can be mutually beneficial and address a number of individual and shared organisational goals, the policy nature of whole-school approaches makes a loose partnership approach unsustainable. In other words, HRFS frames whole-school HRE as a time and resource intensive policy framework (evidenced through its complex implementation structures), but Amnesty's conception of partnership as being school-driven potentially undermines its ability to flourish.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Politics, Protest and Partnership: Struggles for Justice at Buckingham School**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

Just after 8:00am on a cold winter morning, outside of the gates of Buckingham School, approximately 400 students assembled to strike during school hours and protest a perceived injustice. Their strike was aimed at the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), to challenge what they viewed as the unfair firing of a popular teacher. Some students walked around in and outside the school, others sat down together in protest in the parking lot. Students filmed events outside the school, focusing on the gathering police presence and describing events on the ground, later uploading their videos to YouTube. A small group of Year 11 students demanded to see the headteacher. In just under one hour, the number of protestors had increased, as students marched through the halls encouraging their fellow students to leave their classes and join in the protest. They chanted the teacher's name over and over: "Kohli! Kohli! Kohli!"

The protesting students were organised and media savvy, calling the BBC, the local newspaper, the Guardian newspaper, and even Ofsted during the protest to alert them to their actions, and had, prior to the strike, organised themselves through Facebook. These students were beneficiaries of significant changes in school policies over the previous several years that had instilled in them a conviction that they had a voice and that they were entitled to have a say in how their school was run. Their actions were based on a simple thought: if we protest, then we can change what has happened to one teacher and correct an injustice.

The SLT, faced with hundreds of students peacefully protesting inside and outside of the school, closed the school for health and safety reasons. Only eighteen months earlier, the school had entered into partnership with Amnesty, and now faced a revolution of teachers and students fighting for social justice.

Thus far in the thesis, I have focused on how key actors involved in implementing HRFS envisioned and constructed both the *project* and the *partnership*. Using the concepts of utopianism and pragmatism as heuristics for analysing factors influencing school partnerships for HRE, I discovered a number of perspectives that support notions of holistic rights frameworks in secondary education, but that were often informed and contextualised by governmental policy imperatives, incessant pressure on schools to improve performance, and ordinary pressures on teachers and leaders.

Throughout my analysis, I have situated HRFS within the broader macropolitical context of education policy in England, but less so within Buckingham's micropolitical context. However, transformational events at the school made it impossible to ignore the micropolitical dimension of the school's engagement with Amnesty. In this chapter, I examine the political climate of Buckingham School in an attempt to make sense of how both HRFS and Buckingham's partnership with Amnesty informed and became affected by dramatic events within the school. In doing so, I respond to the **final research sub-question**:

- How did micropolitical relationships at Buckingham school influence and/or become influenced by the HRFS project?

This chapter draws on observational and semi-structured interview data, as well as documentary data collected from news articles, social networking websites (YouTube and Facebook in particular), and other online sources (such as The Times Education Supplement online forums). Because of the extremely high profile nature of the events at the school, I draw on online data that sheds light on not only the media-constructed narrative of events, but crucially of the voices of members of the community surrounding Buckingham. These voices are captured on student-made videos uploaded to YouTube, social media websites, and in online media forums.

In exploring issues around the organisational culture of the school prior to and during implementation of HRFS, I drew inspiration from Hopgood's (2006)

study of Amnesty, in which conflicts amongst employees over uses of political authority (activism) versus moral authority (neutrality) in the organisation's practices revealed the tensions between Amnesty's mission and its methods. Hopgood's study exposed the disjuncture between the organisational culture of Amnesty and its utopian aims, highlighting the challenges, compromises and conflicts beneath the surface of Amnesty's powerful brand of moral authority. In this chapter, I explore the disjuncture between Buckingham's existing school culture and the utopian aims of the rights-based reforms introduced by HRFS, in order to elaborate the influence of micropolitical activity (particularly leadership style) on the school's attempts to become more democratic and human rights friendly.

Analysis focuses on how the school's authoritarian actions and specific responses to a students' strike starkly conflicted with school-wide messages about human rights. This tension between discourses of control and rights is supported by data in earlier chapters and represents a key finding of this thesis. An important element of the current neoliberal script for schools is a discourse of control (3.3.2); schools depend on accountability and therefore upon a measure of control. The human rights discourse represented by HRFS challenges some elements of the school's controlling systems and responses which school community members perceive to be excessive.

Much of the data presented in this chapter is taken from an in-depth interview with the school's assistant head, a central figure in the events that led to a key school leader's departure from the school, who shared with me a level of privileged knowledge about the school's strikes, protests and disciplinary actions throughout the year that the majority of the school's students and teachers were not privy to. To corroborate and support the assistant head's narrative of events, I separately interviewed a second year teacher. I did not share with either interviewee information about other teachers I had spoken to in the school in order to ensure as objective a description of events as possible. My primary aim in soliciting the voices of a school leader and teacher were to provide inside accounts of what became a highly public series of political events surrounding Buckingham. Due to the extremely sensitive

nature and political ramifications of those events, the informants' responses are likely to contain subjective accounts that bias the interviewee's perspective of their role in the events. In order to mitigate against potential bias and to construct a fuller picture, I triangulated data from key public sources to support the events described in this chapter. In addition to interviews with these two key informants, I draw on the voices of teachers and students captured in focus groups, and also on video, YouTube and Facebook comments, from online news articles penned by teachers and by journalists writing for national newspapers.

## **8.2 Government Inspection and School Community Feedback**

It is clear from interview, focus group and documentary material data that tensions between teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) played a decisive role in instigating both teacher and student strikes that heavily destabilised the school. The starting point for the unrest described in this chapter was a visit by the government's education inspectorate Ofsted, the first inspection the school had undergone since receiving a "Good" award in 2007. The outcome of that inspection, an awarding of a "Satisfactory" grade as compared to 2007's "Good" rating, marked Buckingham's official decline in performance, and commenced a chain of events that eventually led to a key senior leader's resignation from the school a year later.

The assistant head reported that Ofsted officials had observed students running around the school unsupervised, indicating, "we'd taken our eye off the basics," i.e. student behaviour. He felt that "behaviour was not as good as it could have been," and that the school was "too busy doing the fancy stuff," referring to Buckingham's external partnerships and special initiatives. The assistant head reflected on the SLT's emphasis on partnerships at the expense of more fundamental issues:

[The SLT] spent all this time going, "Look at all this stuff that we did!" [Ofsted said], "Yeah but your results are ok, your attendance isn't as good as it should be, and we've been around the school today, and the behaviour is not great, and we've spoken to a lot of staff and they're really unhappy."

The assistant head's assessment illustrates some of the indicators Ofsted uses to measure school success: test scores; attendance; behaviour; and staff wellbeing. Partnerships and extra-curricular innovations appear to be less important than these "fundamentals," despite receiving significant praise in both Ofsted reports. In an interview, the headteacher expressed dismay at the lack of focus by Ofsted on the school's partnerships as a basis for measuring performance.

The political symbolism of performing poorly on an Ofsted inspection was amplified by the troubling nature of some of the unofficial allegations made by teachers to Ofsted inspectors of problems with members of the SLT.

Data from interviews and from the voices of key actors involved in the protests paint a surprisingly uniform portrait of a school in which both teachers and students reported the use of intimidating and heavy-handed tactics by a specific key school leader. Teachers spoke of living under anxious conditions. A local authority ward councillor attending a teachers' union rally supporting teacher strikes at the school explained her views on the events at the school:

There is a lot of tension between staff members at the school right now. A lot of them feel as if there is a culture of fear. This is a very big issue for the borough. I have listened to the people who have gone on strike and they feel that they are being bullied. (Quote from local newspaper article)

The Ofsted inspection represented a flashpoint, not only for the macro- (government) and meso- (community) political implications of dropping down a score in rated performance, but for the forum it provided for school community members to speak – ironically, off the record, to Ofsted – about their discontent. According to the assistant head:

The staff had gone behind [the SLT's] back. When we were getting feedback from Ofsted the chief inspector pulled [them] out of the office and said, "I'm not going to say this in front of everybody but I want you to know that I've had feedback from staff, that there is a climate of fear at this school." And that was never officially put down on paper. And we were in this position where we had to say, "Well I think some do feel it."

This frank discussion of the mood and atmosphere of the school by SLT members is revealing because it shows that whilst some SLT members were aware that teachers were questioning their leadership and authority, others were not.

In the following sections, I focus on the nature of the micropolitical relationships between members of the school community. Specifically, I argue that:

1. Deep fissures within the school around undemocratic leadership practices starkly contrasted with school-wide human rights messages, leading to accusations of hypocrisy; (*discourses of control*)
2. The existence of HRFS and popular student voice initiatives at Buckingham provided a form of symbolic and material support for students and teachers seeking justice within the school through direct collective action. (*discourses of rights struggles*)

In both areas the role of HRFS is clear. HRFS provided a counter-narrative of school culture that teachers and students compared to their actual (reportedly undemocratic) experiences in the school. Although the extent to which HRFS directly influenced students to become politically engaged is impossible to determine, HRFS clearly provided a platform and reference point for making rights claims within the school.

In the next section, I present a timeline of key events within the school to provide context for my exploration of the intersections between HRFS and micropolitical activity. Events are in chronological order, although specific dates of each month are omitted to preserve anonymity of subjects.

### 8.3 Timeline of Events

Date / Event
<b>May (Summer Term, Year 1)</b> – Buckingham receives a “satisfactory” score from their Ofsted inspection. Several teachers privately voice their dissatisfaction with the school’s leadership to Ofsted inspectors, which is shared by inspectors with school leaders on an unofficial basis.
<b>June</b> – Teachers represented by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) forward a letter of complaint to Amnesty’s UK section, outlining some of their grievances with the SLT and making the specific point that Buckingham, ostensibly meant to be working towards becoming human rights friendly, is not a place where their rights are being respected.

<p><b>July</b> –Teachers send a petition of complaint to the school’s board of governors, signed by 76 staff members.</p>
<p><b>Summer</b> – The SLT takes the controversial decision to close one of the school's canteens to save money, resulting in some staff having to work longer mornings and some classes having to be covered by non-specialists. In a letter to parents justifying these actions, an SLT key senior leader explains: “This change has been one of the best changes we have ever made. Unfortunately a few staff are against this change. As a result I have to inform you that about 30% of staff voted to take strike action. I have told them that their actions are selfish and irresponsible.”</p>
<p><b>August (Autumn Term, Year 2)</b> – A deputy head reports to a key senior leader in the SLT that two students asked him questions about a recently fired science teacher, and claim that the head of the science department, Mr. Kohli, informed them that the SLT “forced him to resign.” Mr. Kohli has taught at Buckingham for 28 years and is also the school’s current NUT representative.</p>
<p><b>September</b> – A key senior leader launches a disciplinary investigation into the alleged comments made by Mr. Kohli to students, appointing the assistant head to lead the investigation. The assistant head questions the two students, who confirm Mr. Kohli’s statements to them, alleging SLT impropriety in the firing of the teacher.</p>
<p><b>October</b> – The disciplinary investigation into Mr. Kohli’s actions is dismissed by the head of governors on a technicality. The assistant head leading the investigation had failed to adhere to updated disciplinary guidelines, which required informing students that they were answering the question as part of an investigation, and also informing the students’ parents.</p>
<p><b>November</b> – In response to complaints from teacher unions, school governors and the SLT issue a joint statement rejecting accusations of bullying and mismanagement.</p>
<p><b>November</b> – The local NUT and the Association of Teachers and Lectures (ATL) chapters announce that they will strike over what they allege as “mismanagement and bullying” by the SLT.</p>
<p><b>November</b> – A key senior leader sends a letter to parents explaining the management’s views on the proposed strike.</p>
<p><b>November</b> – The local paper publishes a letter expressing opposition to the head, signed by 25 former pupils.</p>
<p><b>December</b> – Unions and staff circulate leaflet explaining their views.</p>
<p><b>December</b> – The local NUT chapter convene a public meeting at a local community centre to explain the union’s decision to strike to parents. A local councillor and a local MP attend.</p>
<p><b>December</b> – NUT walks out of Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)-mediated negotiations with the SLT at 3:00pm intending to strike the next day. A key senior leader claims that the SLT had already agreed to all of the union’s demands.</p>

**December** – A key senior leader sends a letter to the parents informing them that the school has a “minor and troubling element of rogue teachers preventing a democratic outcome,” and reiterates the SLT’s position of wanting to negotiate with the unions.

**December** – Members of NUT and ATL conduct the first-ever teacher strike in Buckingham’s history, creating a picket line outside the school. The SLT chooses to partially close Buckingham. 90 students who are meant to take exams are allowed to attend school. The school’s remaining 1200 students are unable to attend school. 87 out of a total 178 staff go on strike. Union members hold a rally afterwards at a nearby restaurant. The area ward councillor speaks in support of the striking teachers. A parent reports being barred from attending the meeting despite the ward councillor’s invitation at the request of parents.

**December** – NUT, ATL and Buckingham’s SLT conduct further ACAS-mediated negotiations. It is agreed that they will continue talks later in December.

**December** – A parent lodges a complaint to the SLT about a member of staff who inappropriately dealt with their daughter, a fifteen-year-old female student. The staff member in question is Mr. Kohli. The SLT is now faced with launching a new investigation against the same teacher whose last investigation was dismissed. This allegation is more serious, suggesting that he physically (violently pushed) and verbally abused (shouted at) a student.

**January (Winter Term, Year 2)** – The local newspaper reports that progress has been made in ACAS-led negotiations. The SLT states its support for the agreement reached during the negotiations, and the NUT spokesperson also issues a positive statement announcing victory.

**February**– Evidence collected by the assistant head as part of a second, separate investigation against Mr. Kohli is brought before a three-member committee of the board of governors. Based on the presented evidence, all three governors agree that Mr. Kohli is guilty. Two governors vote to fire Mr. Kohli with immediate effect. Mr. Kohli is fired.

**February** – Students stage a sit-in strike and protest at the school. Approximately 70% of the students arrive at school on time on the day of the strikes. None of the Year 11 students arrive. At 8:10am, 250 students appear outside the school gate and proceed to enter the school together, chanting “Kohli! Kohli! Kohli!” The protest continues until 3:30pm. Police arrive and attempt to contain students in certain areas. A key senior leader intentionally triggers the fire alarm to force students to leave the school, which succeeds in removing 60% of students.

**February** – Year 10 and 11 students amass over 1000 signatures (including parents) on their petition to reinstate Mr. Kohli. Students gather in a local park to prepare to march on the school in further protest.

**February** – NUT announces a two-day strike to be held the following week, citing the SLT’s failure to abide by the ACAS agreement, specifically highlighting the firing of Mr. Kohli.

**February** – The local authority intervenes. A spokeswoman for the council announces that the local council has requested a meeting with the SLT and the chair of the governing body.

<p><b>February</b> – Over 400 parents from the school convene an afternoon meeting to discuss the situation at the school.</p>
<p><b>February</b> – The proposed NUT two-day strike is called off after a key senior leader enters an "agreed leave of absence."</p>
<p><b>February</b> – Following the departure of the key senior leader, the chair of governors commissions an independent report into the incidents surrounding Kohli's dismissal.</p>
<p><b>March</b> – The school's board of governors is replaced with a new set of governors, who overturn the decision to fire Mr. Kohli at an emergency governors meeting appealing the decision. Although the decision to fire Mr. Kohli is overturned, the board of governors conclude that the evidence proved his guilt and that he would receive a letter of written warning.</p>
<p><b>March</b> – The key senior leader on leave submits his resignation.</p>
<p><b>April</b> – Mr. Kohli is elected unopposed as a staff governor in the last week of term. The re-constituted governing body announces that it has set up an independent investigation into the school strikes, which is being supported by the unions. A socialist political party online article, written by the local NUT representative who acted as a union spokesperson and participated in negotiations during the strikes, reports that "the workers and the governing body are now looking to revert the school back from Foundation status to the fully council-controlled Community status."</p>
<p><b>June</b> – The departed key senior leader is appointed to a new post on the SLT of an academy school in the north of England. The town's local newspaper publishes an article entitled "Outstanding leader joins Academy," which boasts of his "stunning achievements." Two sentences at the beginning of the article briefly mention the controversy surrounding the departure from Buckingham, asserting that the key senior leader "was forced to quit" the London school.</p>

#### **8.4 Undemocratic Governance**

As the timeline above indicates, school strikes were driven mainly by discontent with the school leadership over a series of controversial decisions. Buckingham's teacher and student strikes represented extremely high profile and highly political attempts to confront the school's leadership over perceived problems being caused by improper management. In the case of the teacher unions, several high profile incidents, and what appear to be years of anecdotal evidence of tension between the SLT and teachers, fed an emerging narrative of an authoritarian and undemocratic leadership style that frayed relationships and reputations over time.

Beth, a second-year teacher, gave her impressions on what it was like starting as a new teacher. She told me that "literally within a second of starting" she

was alerted to the depth of ill feeling towards the SLT. Beth claimed that the “horror stories” she heard weren’t “from a couple members of staff, it was quite a few.” Thus Beth’s career at Buckingham School began with a direct political manoeuvre by her immediate peers, the teachers, to establish allegiance and identify the enemy at the same time. The warnings may also have been part of an extensive repertoire of survival tactics employed by teachers, but this type of urgent warning against the school’s leadership structure illustrates the nature of staff relationships at the commencement of the HRFS project.

A clear example of authoritarian management is found in the SLT’s response to the student strikes. The SLT reacted to the student strikes by excluding entire year groups of students whom they felt had instigated the strikes, the year 9, 10 and 11 groups. These groups were barred from coming into the school in one form or another for the following three days of the school week. In total, over 350 pupils from Years 10 and 11 were excluded on the first day after the strikes; 360 pupils from Years 9 and 11 on the second day; and 360 pupils from Years 9 and 10 on the third.

The school’s website posted this message on the day after the strikes:

Only years 7, 8, & 10 will be allowed in school tomorrow. The Sixth Form will also be open as normal.

Special Information for Year 10 Pupils

1. Year 10 pupils will only be allowed in through the main school gate.
2. Year 10 students **MUST** have a signed note in their diaries from their parent/carer stating: “My child is attending school today and will not participate in any protests or disruptive behavior.”

On the following day, the same message was posted on the school’s website, but all Year 10 information was changed to Year 11, meaning that Year 10 students were now excluded and the Year 11s allowed back in with a signed note. The following weekend the website amended the above message to reflect that “ALL years will be allowed in school on Monday” but stipulated that Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils needed to bring a signed note. A full week passed between the strike and when the school was fully opened to all students.

Evidence on the school's website during the week of the student protests paints a clear picture of reactive, sweeping exclusion of students. For three days after the strike, two full year groups were excluded with no provision for attending the school using a parental note. They were simply excluded en masse. The legal implications of this action are difficult to determine, but the measure appears at minimum to be extreme, as student exclusions are usually individual cases connected to misconduct. In a quote given to the local newspaper covering the protest, an SLT representative explained the decision to exclude students by saying that "they are at home calming down." The assistant head explained that it was his idea to require students to bring signed letters, arguing that this was the only way to "get the school back to normal." But the damage had already been done. The day after the student strike, the SLT held an assembly for the Years 7 and 8. According to Beth and the assistant head, students who protested in the assembly by chanting "Kohli! Kohli!" were immediately suspended for simply saying his name.

Other examples of authoritarian leadership actions were found prior to the strikes. Both the assistant head and Beth described how, immediately after firing Mr. Kohli and asking him to leave the school, the key senior leader instructed several SLT members to physically prevent NUT representatives from entering the school. The assistant head, as one of the enforcers, reported a strong sense of discomfort with the position he was placed in.

Two further examples of SLT decisions perceived to be undemocratic were reported by students and teachers in focus groups. Students were upset about the decision to lengthen the school day (6.2.3). Teachers were unhappy about a lunch break decision that they felt alienated them (8.3), which provided justification for the December teacher strike.

Overall the response of the SLT to crisis or conflict situations surrounding the strikes was authoritarian. Excluding entire year groups and physically preventing the entrance of union representatives symbolised extreme responses of control, creating a dissonance with the rights and justice discourses promoted by school leaders. There is no evidence that the school

drew on any human rights discourses or practices to address or resolve events in the school.

### **8.5 Political Struggles Between Teachers and Leaders**

The catalyst for the events described in this chapter was a history of accusations by NUT representatives and member teachers at Buckingham aimed at the SLT, whom it accused of teacher bullying and mismanagement.

Data collected during this study revealed a significant rift between the SLT and the NUT. Multiple school staff reported that a commonly held perception in the school was that the SLT had successfully fired the previous NUT representative at the school for personal reasons. Thus, when it appeared that the SLT was targeting the current NUT representative with not one but *two* disciplinary investigations in the space of one academic term, the NUT offered a robust response to what they saw as bullying, in the form of a strike. Teacher unions striking included the NUT and the ATL, who drew on the language of human rights to frame their struggle. A picture of striking teachers at Buckingham featured in an ATL Summer Newsletter showed a number of political messages on smaller placards, including “Stop the Bullying,” “Do the right thing,” “Atmos-fear,” and on a larger banner: “Human Rights not Wrongs.”

According to two teachers, the events leading up to the teacher and student strikes followed a history of conflict between the SLT and the school’s NUT representatives which could be traced as far back as 2003, when a key senior leader orchestrated the firing of Buckingham’s then-NUT teacher representative. That teacher remained connected to the school as the council’s local NUT secretary, and was deeply involved in working with Buckingham teachers to oppose the SLT. He acted as the main NUT spokesperson during teacher and student strikes, and was quoted extensively in media coverage of events at Buckingham. He was also present as the main NUT representative during union negotiations. In a series of highly political and public disputes, the NUT and the SLT made counter-accusations and traded public statements justifying their positions:

SLT key senior leader: We welcome a promise by the unions to end their threat of strikes at the school and fully support the agreement reached at the conciliation service ACAS. The school can now return to the discussions it was having with staff over the important issues of school lunch breaks and the wellbeing of staff. It is also hoped there will be a joint consultation committee, involving senior members of Buckingham staff and the unions' representatives.

Secretary of local NUT chapter: We are delighted that Buckingham School governors have accepted the need for a serious change of direction in how their school is managed. We expect to see an immediate transparency and democracy in all aspects of the running of the school, as well as an end to unfair treatment of staff. We will remain vigilant until the independent wellbeing survey and a joint consultative committee bear fruit, and the chaos around lunchtime arrangements is finally sorted. We believe that the determination and unity of teaching unions has won a great future for the Buckingham students and community.

The political posturing by both sides illustrates the uses of rights discourses to justify political struggles. Behind public statements professing mutual goals of compromise and collaboration, there appeared to be long-standing tensions. The assistant head believed that “really what the unions want is to get rid of [the key senior leader],” ostensibly because of years of personal ill will between the NUT representative and the key senior leader. The statements publicly exposed Buckingham’s micropolitical conflict to the local community.

One aspect of the political struggles between the NUT and SLT involved a wider macropolitical context. Two key NUT representatives working with teachers at Buckingham were responsible for moving industrial action forward to oust SLT members. Both the local NUT secretary and the local NUT assistant secretary, who acted as public spokespersons supporting Buckingham teachers during strike negotiations, are members of their local chapters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), a left wing UK political party aligned with progressive causes such as anti-war and anti-capitalism platforms. The NUT secretary has written on the Socialist Review website and authored a 2008 review of a book entitled “Marxism and Educational Theory,” in which he argued the importance of combating the “proletarianisation” of education workers. The NUT assistant secretary published an article in the

Socialist Worker Online three months after the student strikes entitled “Teacher reinstated after ‘bullying’ dispute,” in which he praised Buckingham staff and students for their efforts to change the leadership of the school, which “ended last term on a high.” Characterising Mr. Kohli’s firing as “the last repressive act” of the key senior leader, the article celebrated Mr. Kohli’s return to the school and outlined the intentions of the teacher unions:

The re-constituted governing body has set up an independent investigation into the winter turmoil at the school, supported by the unions. The workers and the governing body are now looking to revert the school back from Foundation status to the fully council-controlled Community status.

This quote, when linked to evidence demonstrating the key role played by both NUT figures in representing the school and pressing for change, indicates that political intentions of the local NUT chapter extended beyond seeking justice for teachers to reverting the school to local council control. The article was written for a socialist newspaper by a key figure in the union struggle, in which teachers were referred to using the socialist language of “workers,” clearly indicating the political preferences of certain members of the local NUT chapter.

Mr. Kohli, the current NUT representative, had been at the school for 28 years and was considered a popular teacher. It is not known whether his adversarial relationship with the SLT was directly related to his role as the school’s NUT representative or whether it developed through personal and professional interactions. What is clear is that the SLT, and specifically the key senior leader, wanted him removed from the school. The assistant head described the basis of the animosity between Mr. Kohli and the SLT as being rooted in his political status:

Mr. Kohli is the NUT rep for the school, [an] open enemy, [the key senior leader] doesn’t like him, doesn’t rate him as a teacher, he’s been mister anti-any changes. The first disciplinary investigation into him [was] based on the fact that it had been reported that [Kohli] slagged him off behind his back to pupils.

This comment reveals that Mr. Kohli had voiced his opposition to SLT policies in the past and was an “open enemy,” but it also reveals that relations between a key senior leader and Mr. Kohli were of a personal nature. It is

clear from this quote that the key senior leader was targeting Mr. Kohli, perhaps because of vocal opposition to his leadership.

Two separate disciplinary actions against Mr. Kohli in the span of three months created a powerful symbol of persecution that appeared to reinforce an existing narrative about the SLT's tendency towards targeting specific teachers for removal. The result was that Mr. Kohli became a cause celebre amongst students and teachers. The assistant head felt that "the majority of staff thought he was Che Guevara [or] a popular cult hero [and] the only one that stands up" to the SLT.

When the SLT initiated its first investigation against Mr. Kohli, the assistant head claimed that Mr. Kohli's response was to frame the allegations in terms of the SLT's political vendetta against the NUT:

[Mr. Kohli] is going around saying "It's a set up, [they're] just trying to get rid of the NUT." He has all these meetings, he's whipped up this popular fervour, staff are furious because it's like, "same old [SLT], [they're] just trying to get rid of our NUT rep, [and] trying to lose our voice."

The investigation had the effect of galvanizing Mr. Kohli in his position as NUT representative to further pit teachers against the SLT. The teachers went on strike in December partially because of the investigation. When Mr. Kohli was charged with a second and more serious allegation of inappropriate conduct, in the midst of negotiations and tense relations, the NUT viewed it as a significant political opportunity, according to the assistant head, remarking that "his reps are, they're like, game on, fantastic." Beth supported this claim in her interview based on her close ties with John, another member of the SLT, asserting that John "thinks that [Mr. Kohli] really used the whole situation to his benefit."

The emerging picture of Buckingham during this period of unrest is a site of intense political struggle and an arena where the SLT and teachers fought to control the wider narrative about the state of micropolitical relations. One area in which this is plainly evident is in the use of letter writing as a form of protest and political manoeuvring. In addition to writing to Amnesty in the summer

prior to the strikes to alert the organisation to Buckingham's problems, the NUT also drafted a letter a few months later that in essence conveyed the message that "if Kohli is guilty, then so are we." According to Beth, an NUT member, the letter was signed by 92% of the staff.

After unsuccessful third-party negotiations, the SLT drafted a letter to parents that was seen by teachers as a direct slap in the face. Beth described the contents of the letter:

[They] sent a letter to the parents saying that the school had a minor element, this troubling element of rogue teachers determined not to start off the process of democracy and [the SLT] wanted to have a democratic outcome, and wanted to negotiate, and it was us [the teachers]. Before that point, I was angry about stuff, I could see the injustice, [but] at that point everyone was like, "[It's] just lies."

The letter undermined political negotiations between the SLT and teachers whilst simultaneously bringing parents into the middle of a political fight.

The SLT appeared also to assign malicious intent by the NUT in prodding the students towards collective action, asserting that one of the teacher union representatives had "leaked" the information about Mr. Kohli's firing to pupils "through other members of staff." According to the key senior leader, the leaks were part of "an orchestrated campaign to wind up students," explaining:

That should never have happened. All of this should be confidential and dealt with in a totally confidential way. There are people with bigger political agendas who are out to destroy the school. They are from outside the school but they have created a situation inside the school.

These serious allegations appear directly to implicate the NUT in attempting to destabilise and ultimately drive out the key senior leader. The key senior leader's claims of being specifically targeted by outside groups with political agendas cohere with the NUT secretary's intention of converting the school back to community status.

## **8.6 The Effects of Student Voice**

Informants offered different perspectives on how school-wide student voice initiatives played a role in events at the school.

### **8.6.1 Disempowering Staff**

Citing complaints he had heard throughout his years working at the school as a teacher and member of the SLT, the assistant head spoke about staff discontent in deficit terms, comparing their lack of voice to the overall increases in the school of opportunities for students to make their voices heard:

[The] staff started to talk about the fact that there's all this stuff about student voice, but where's the staff voice? It's all very well saying that it's all about the kids, but if you haven't got the staff then it's not gonna be all about the kids. It's only all about the kids when the staff are on your side as well.

The assistant head implicitly acknowledged the importance of having harmonious relations between teachers and administrators in order to facilitate the empowerment of students to participate in school political processes. That the SLT apparently failed to cultivate positive working relationships with the staff may have undermined any initiatives taken to empower students.

Another example is an open letter forwarded by a single teacher to Amnesty in June 2010, lamenting the school's hypocrisy at calling itself a human rights friendly school in spite of high levels of teacher dissatisfaction. The letter was sent to the SLT and signed by over 70 teachers.

### **8.6.2 Politicising Students**

In successfully conducting a strike that shut down the school, students demonstrated an extremely impressive grasp of public relations, particularly in terms of their engagement of print and television media. They also demonstrated their ability to swiftly harness new social media platforms in order to express their concerns and to organise and document their movement. Questions remain about what compelled students to demonstrate:

a real desire on their part to effect change, encouragement from teachers with a political agenda, or potentially a mixture of both?

### *From Student Voice to Student Protest*

Both the assistant head and Beth expressed similar perspectives on the role Buckingham Student Voice (BSV) played in contributing to the politicisation and empowerment of students. Both felt that BSV had effectively created the conditions for the student protests. Beth recalled a conversation where she told the assistant head, “You’ve politicised them.” She continued:

I said [to the assistant head that] you can’t say to students, “You can do this, and empower them, and then not expect them to use it.” It’s massively ironic.

Not only did Beth identify an irony in the ultimate outcome of the SLT’s decision to promote student voice, but she and the assistant head also expressed pride in the accomplishments of the students. Both cited two aspects of the students’ actions: their savvy in engaging the media, government and partner organisations, and their ability to conduct a peaceful protest. The assistant head elaborated:

The kids kept it peaceful. It was a phenomenal piece of self-organisation. There was at one point, three or four idiotic year 9 boys, [who] got hold of some fire extinguishers, and were throwing it around. And it was the other kids that stopped it. Other kids dived in, took them off of them [and said], “Sit down, you’re gonna ruin our protest! You’re losing our message!”

I had these astonishing conversations with some of our year 11 girls, I was saying, “This is so sad, I understand why you’re doing it, but you’re wrong, you’ve been given the wrong information.” And she’d look at me, and she said, “You’ve got some information. I’ve got some information. You believe your information. I believe my information.” And I almost wanted to hug her saying, “Go out into the world, you’re gonna be fine.” You’re completely wrong, you’ve been completely brainwashed by these unions and teachers, but you know what, I love you for it.

Beth similarly expressed sympathy and support for this particular group of Year 11 students whilst acknowledging her choice to remain politically neutral: “We were just like, ‘Yes!’ cause we had to pretend we’re going on as normal.” The assistant head, who had expressed his approval of these students in

multiple interviews as examples of students who had benefited from HRFS, pointed to their views on the SLT, describing them as “very anti-[SLT] year group” because of “all the tutor group changes without any consultation” (6.2.3). In focus groups, one student identified a perceived hypocrisy: “What do you mean student voice, everyone’s ignoring us, we’re miserable.”

In fact, the year 11 students the assistant head discusses above were at the heart of much of the student political activity. The students involved in the second investigation of Mr. Kohli that led to his firing were both Year 11 students, and changed their story after the official investigation had concluded by writing formal letters to the chair of governors and to the assistant head recanting their previous testimony and accusing the assistant head of “tricking” them into providing evidence. However, the assistant head was convinced that teachers connected to the NUT had assisted the students in drafting the letter.

The year 11 students coordinated a non-arrival on the day of student protests. None of the students that I had interviewed a year earlier when they were Year 10s and part of the JLT came to the school that day. They instead assembled outside of the school to protest, and walked through halls encouraging students in classrooms to leave their classes and join the strike.

The school had only a year earlier held up these students as role models and exemplars of student-centred learning approaches. It is clear that the students became actively politicised, drawing on language, concepts and democratic processes learnt as part of BSV. Where school intentions for student voice work may have focused on giving young people opportunities to input into their own education, this privilege had the effect of developing students’ confidence and abilities to engage in political struggles.

#### *Social Networks for Social Movements*

The use of online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to mobilise protest actions is well documented (Evans-Cowley, 2010; Hew, 2011). Popular examples in the media abound, including the Egyptian protests of

2011 (to which the Buckingham strikes were compared by school teachers), but it is unknown as to who first created the group pages that established an online forum around the problems at Buckingham School.

Two Facebook group pages were created around the times of the strikes: one called “Save Buckingham School,” and a second called “Buckingham School – Reinstatement Mr. Kohli.” One Facebook profile was created entitled “Save Buckingham” – as of May 2012 the profile had four friends, all Asian male youths. The assistant head asserted that the “Save Buckingham School” page had been active for roughly 4-5 weeks before Mr. Kohli was dismissed, but he was certain that this particular page, whilst containing student voices, was created by a former chair of the governors with a personal agenda against the key senior leader.

The “Reinstatement Mr. Kohli” group page attracted current and ex-student and teacher posts, some of which were vitriolic in tone. This prompted school leadership to become involved in monitoring the website. The assistant head described having to involve police in their surveillance actions:

We got police to shut down aspects of the Facebook site because ex-students were putting on racist comments, and offensive rude comments about “Hang [the SLT]” and things like that.

Facebook eventually served as a convergence point for planned action against the SLT after Mr. Kohli had been dismissed. According to the assistant head:

Monday evening he gets dismissed, it's on Facebook by ten o'clock that night. Facebook then declares that all students and all staff must go and protest outside the SLT's office to express how unhappy they are.

The assistant head's concerns that students were being politicised via Facebook is validated in some of the comments posted to Facebook during the student strikes. On the “Buckingham High School – Reinstatement Mr. Kohli” Facebook group page, there is evidence of political engagement of students. One male commenter wrote:

Hi, I write for a socialist paper, Solidarity (put out by the socialist group Workers' Liberty) and we'd love to run a piece about your campaign,

and an interview. It would also be good to try and get a how-to guide from your campaign from other school students in a similar situation. If you're up for helping with that, please message me.

One day later, the person who had created the Facebook page, and who had created a profile with the same name as the page, responded:

Hi, I am an ex student from Buckingham High School, let me know if you need a perspective from someone in my position. :)

A second female poster commented on the same day:

Hi, My name's [Susan] from Revolution Socialist Youth, socialistrevolution.org. I was wondering if I can interview one of the students who led the walk out for our website/magazine?

A third (male) commenter created a post on the page linking to a Socialist Worker article on the Buckingham strikes with the comment, "students locked out of school after defending teacher." It appears that Socialist Party members with a particular interest in Buckingham and in student-led protest used online articles and social networks to generate support for the student cause and engage community participants.

### **8.6.3 Leveraging Media, Government and NGO Networks**

On the day of the student protests, students successfully attracted national media attention to their cause by telephoning the BBC, who responded by calling the school to inform leaders that they would be sending a news team. BBC arrived by midday, and the protests were on the 1:00pm national news. Students also contacted the Guardian and the local newspaper to alert them of their actions. Within hours a reporter from the local newspaper had arrived at the school to cover the protests.

Students also telephoned Ofsted. Beth commented on the impact that this action had on the leadership:

That is when I actually saw a drip of sweat going down [the assistant head's] face, he's like 'You're kidding me, some kids were on the phone to Ofsted.'

Finally, students called Amnesty to alert them and solicit advice on how to successfully conduct their protest. Amnesty's response was to consider the

political implications for their partnership with Buckingham. The students refused to give their names to the Amnesty staff for fear of repercussions from teachers and school leaders. Amnesty staff then asked students to call back in an hour so that they could formulate a response. Their first action was to notify the school that students had telephoned Amnesty, and to indicate that they were only willing to direct students to consult the teachers who were leading HRFS at Buckingham.

The students' primary complaint was that they felt that by closing the school and prohibiting year groups from coming back, the school was interfering with their right to freedom of expression and their right to protest. Amnesty's lead coordinator explained the organisation's response:

We were saying two things. One, the school had to balance their right to protest and their right to freedom of expression, with their right to an education. So, if they weren't in lessons, and they were continuously not in lessons for over a period of days, the school wouldn't be fulfilling their obligation to fulfil their right to an education. [Secondly], we told them that the right to protest is not an absolute right. We gave them the examples of Amnesty's demonstration that we organised in Trafalgar Square. We couldn't just go and do that, we had to get permission to have that many people in one place at the same time. There [were] limits on our ability to have that protest.

Amnesty used the opportunity to give students some advice and information on their rights, but explicitly discouraged the students from continuing their protest. The Amnesty lead coordinator said:

We didn't want to put ourselves in a position where we were being seen as against the school, or giving [students] advice against their senior managers. That's not a helpful place for any of us to be.

Despite not receiving protest advice from Amnesty, students succeeded in demonstrating an awareness of the power of public relations to influence and support their political struggles. Appearance of both the local newspaper and BBC national news at the school during the strikes validated students' media efforts and brought considerable attention to Buckingham.

## **8.7 Discussion: Political Upheaval and Whole-School HRE**

This chapter presented data about and attempted to understand how the micropolitical climate in Buckingham school was influenced by and also an

influencing agent for Amnesty's work in the school. The dramatic events at Buckingham School provide vivid illustration of the power of rights discourses within schools, the critical role that leadership and governance plays in creating an atmosphere conducive to embedding rights, and the potential for HRE to empower students and teachers to take political action.

Ultimately, conflicting micropolitical discourses of authoritarian control and rights played a key role in destabilising Buckingham. In a contentious political atmosphere, there was simply no possibility for HRFS to be viewed by aggrieved teachers as a legitimate driver for increasing human rights across the school. The existing school culture was recognised by teachers, students, Ofsted inspectors, and even in the media as being driven by a powerful, unpopular and authoritarian SLT. The NUT's framing of the SLT as unjust and unfair undermined the progressive vision for student learning promoted by BSV and HRFS. In a climate described by various school community members in largely negative terms, HRFS was viewed as hypocritical and focused exclusively on students to the detriment of the staff. This demonstrates how student voice and rights-based initiatives can sometimes become a destabilising force within schools. Nonetheless, HRFS provided political tools for students to draw on that might not have been available otherwise, which may have impacted choices students made about their political behaviours.

### **8.7.1 Insufficient Focus on Staff Relations as part of HRFS**

In terms of improving community relations through partnership with Amnesty, Buckingham focused less attention on this aspect of HRFS implementation, choosing to concentrate on improving only student-student relationships. Buckingham's *Year One Action Plan* outlined two goals for improving staff relations: creating a "standard procedure" for dealing with staff conflict, and ensuring that "all staff feel secure and that relations are modelled and practiced by senior staff." However, no actions were taken to address staff relations as part of HRFS implementation.

The HRFS project and Buckingham may have both benefitted from either a school-wide satisfaction survey or a risk assessment before implementing the project, although it is difficult to predict how candidly teachers would respond about problems in the school.

The school's leaders remain the critical actors in driving whole-school HRE forward. As events at the school demonstrated, if leaders are perceived to have managed the school in a fundamentally undemocratic manner whilst simultaneously touting its status as human rights friendly, the entire enterprise of whole-school HRE can be critically undermined.

### **8.7.2 The Symbolic Power of Student and Staff Voice for Affecting Change**

By virtue of its rarity, there is a kind of political and social novelty to a peaceful student protest conducted as part of a principled stand against injustice. The sight of Buckingham students protesting created a loud enough clamour within the school and the surrounding community to serve as a catalyst for change. That catalyst was the symbol of *students* rising against perceived oppression. Schools, communities, and local and national governments are well accustomed to teacher unions' making rights claims for the group they represent; in fact, these claims are often controversial and contested (6.2.2). Thus, despite the initial teacher strikes having made a significant impact on the school by virtue of their novelty (as the first ever strikes at the school), the student protests were more unique and served a symbolic purpose, driving a wave of discontent that ousted a key senior leader.

In terms of teacher voice, teacher unions demonstrated political savvy in achieving their goals, despite the fact that the political cause that became the change agent at Buckingham involved pardoning someone guilty of misconduct. Members of the local SWP chapter ultimately instrumentalised the dispute to consolidate their positions in school governance, with the newly appointed head of governors an ally of the SWP.

### **8.7.3 Leveraging the Moral Authority of HRE Partnership**

Amnesty's presence – and HRFS – played a clear role in the movement for change and justice at Buckingham. Teachers and the NUT appealed to the moral authority of Amnesty in writing to inform them that they were not a human rights friendly school. Students drew on Amnesty's organisational presence at and relationship with Buckingham, seeking their advice and support when conducting their strikes.

What is harder to discern is the extent to which strikes were either student-driven, or influenced by teachers. It is clear is that teachers shared information about Mr. Kohli's firing with students before it was made public. However, the collected evidence illustrates that there was a strong language of rights and student voice in the school at the time of the strikes. The Year 10 group in particular which ended up organising the strike were heavily politicised when I interviewed them a year earlier. Through their involvement in the JLT, many of these students had a strong awareness of what Amnesty was and of their rights-based mission. They identified perceived injustices by the SLT (6.2.3) and eventually took action to voice their views on dissatisfaction with another SLT decision.

Despite – or in fact, because of – the political upheaval of the prior year, Buckingham would benefit from continuing to implement HRFS and increasing its work on the project. Using the HRFS framework to improve community relations could benefit Buckingham by addressing some of its long-standing micropolitical problems. HRFS is potentially a powerful tool for building on political upheaval in order to create a more democratic and rights-respecting atmosphere. However, the damaging effects of the micropolitical relationships between teachers, students and leaders on the school ultimately influenced the viability of the partnership, which in the third year was essentially abandoned by Buckingham, whose key leaders supporting the project had either left the school or were unwilling or unable to continue working with Amnesty.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusions**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

This thesis has examined NGO-school partnerships in formal education through a case study of an innovative educational initiative piloted in a London secondary school by the world's largest human rights organisation, Amnesty International. My aims were to uncover the perspectives, understandings and actions of school community members and Amnesty staff who partnered to implement a whole-school HRE project over two years. Specifically, I set out to answer the question, "how is partnership enacted between Amnesty International and Buckingham School?" What I discovered during this study were a complex set of answers highlighting the many challenges of rights-based policy frameworks, as well as the politically contingent contexts of 21<sup>st</sup> century educational policy in England and of NGO-school partnerships.

The previous data chapters identified partners' utopian and pragmatic perspectives on the potential of whole-school HRE to positively impact school culture and performance in England (**Chapter 5**); the utopian, neoliberal and pragmatic uses of whole-school HRE by school community members to improve school performance and outcomes (**Chapter 6**); the uncritical constructions and pragmatic enactment of partnership by Buckingham school and Amnesty (**Chapter 7**); and the destabilising effects of the micropolitical relationships between teachers, students and leaders on the school and partnership (**Chapter 8**).

This chapter attempts to synthesise the thesis findings and to draw some initial conclusions on the theoretical and practical implications of HRFS, to contribute to an emerging body of literature on NGO-school partnerships within the formal education sector. I first summarise the preceding chapters and the research sub-questions that each chapter attempted to answer, before turning to a synthesis of the main themes and finally offering suggestions for where further research is warranted.

## **9.2 Contributions to Knowledge**

This thesis makes contributions to knowledge specifically through exploring and filling a lacuna in the literature on NGO-supported HRE projects in formal settings. There has also been little research on the processes or impacts of external partnerships promoting social justice values. This thesis represents a contribution to knowledge in a rapidly emerging field of practice, that whilst mitigated by the educational policy climate in England and its effects on entry points for NGOs into formal education (particularly the changing fortunes of global education based on which political party is in power) continues to play a role in the overall educational policy and practice framework in England that is supportive of NGO involvement.

This case study revealed significant gaps between the rhetoric and the reality of partnership, and between the intentions and the actual implementation of HRE policies and practices in the school.

Data emerging from this thesis study supports theoretical and empirical work of critical pedagogists such as Apple, Fielding, Harber and others regarding the influence of neoliberal frameworks in UK educational discourse and practice (Apple, 2004; Ball, 2012; Bartlett, Frederick, Gulbrandsen, & Murillo, 2002; Harber, 2005; Mejias & Starkey, 2012), and regarding the importance of analysing power struggles and organisational micropolitics within schools as a way of understanding the hidden forces shaping educational outcomes (Ball, 1987; Lindle, 1999; Scribner, Aleman, & Maxcy, 2003; Webb, 2008). Nominally progressive subjects such as HRE, considered by many a counterpoint to neoliberal perspectives in education (Apple, 2009; Imre & Millei, 2009), become filtered through such discursive prisms and are understood by school leaders as forming part of a contribution to the many requirements placed on schools to increase competition, provide value, and increase choice for their student 'consumers.' The findings also support arguments that in England, human rights have become increasingly linked with customer satisfaction with public services (Gavrielides, 2008).

This study also demonstrated the challenges of whole-school reform and the obstacles external partnerships face when promoting holistic values as a part of education. This is particularly relevant in a context where:

- Proposed whole-school changes fall substantially outside of a school's remit in relation to government policy mandates;
- The use and appearance of political power (perceived and actual) plays a substantial role in the negotiation of relationships and mediation of conflict between members of the school community; and
- External partnerships are loose, uneven and sometimes politically sensitive vis-à-vis the organisational identity and reputation of the external partner.

In the case of Buckingham, a school with a diverse ethnic background and a recent history of fractious management-teacher relations, partnership with Amnesty provided largely non-controversial opportunities for promoting rights (such as addressing problems related to ethnic conflict between students and teachers, and increasing student participation), until teacher and student-led action against the school management directly engaged Amnesty as a school partner to bolster claims for seeking justice.

### **9.3 Summary of the Thesis**

**Chapter 1** outlined the context for the study, describing the emergence of an expansive international human rights and development NGO industry, and of a global discourse of human rights and HRE. I then discussed a particular aspect of the field of HRE that forms the basis of this study, the educational initiatives of development and human rights NGOs and their prominence in recent years in UK formal education systems. I highlighted the gaps in the literature, notably the absence of empirical knowledge on the nature of NGO-school partnerships and the outcomes of NGO-supported HRE initiatives.

**Chapter 2** provided an overview of the HRE field, using the UDHR and CRC as foundational documents to chart the development of HRE approaches globally over the past sixty years. I related key principles of HRE to traditional and progressive forms of formal education in England and around the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. I drew on the concepts of utopianism and cosmopolitanism to frame my analysis of Amnesty's educational projects.

**Chapter 3** reviewed literature on the development of NGO-led HRE and whole-school HRE approaches, considering evidence from previous studies on the influence of whole-school HRE. I sought to understand how holistic interventions become embedded, the challenges they face, and their long term prospects in an educational climate of fiscal austerity and neoliberal orthodoxy. I explained how, together with utopianism, the conceptual frameworks of pragmatism and micropolitics provided theoretical and empirical support for exploring enactment of school-wide NGO partnerships for human rights.

**Chapter 4** outlined the methodological approach to the thesis. In positioning the thesis as an ethnographic case study, I drew from the field of ethnographic studies to situate the thesis as a form of semi-embedded participant-observation research. As a consultant to Amnesty, I was able to gain privileged access to the inner workings of the organisation and to observe the processes of project development, implementation and evaluation formally and informally over a period of three years. Although I did not conduct a traditional ethnography, I drew on the multi-varied tools of ethnographic research to shape the study, situating myself as a participant-observer within the overall sphere of the project.

In **Chapter 5**, I began my analysis of HRFS by examining the perceptions of key project partners on the possibilities and challenges of implementing HRFS. In answer to **research sub-question #1** exploring how HRFS was envisioned and prepared by both partners, I identified several utopian factors that motivated the project partners on both sides, and also discussed the pragmatic and sometimes neoliberal perspectives that school leaders applied to HRFS. I argued in this chapter that the construction by Buckingham of HRFS as utopian was predominantly situated within a pragmatic paradigm that drew on prevailing neoliberal discourses underpinning school macro-policy in England. These discourses ultimately influence school leaders' and teachers' talk on the purposes of education generally and HRE specifically.

**Chapter 6** analysed Buckingham's implementation of HRFS to answer **research sub-question #2** (how HRFS was implemented, and what were key opportunities and challenges?). Despite being designed for the entire school community, HRFS was targeted mainly towards students as a way of supporting the school's current student voice work. The role of most teachers and other members of the school community in the implementation of HRFS was either tokenistic or absent, and the majority of teachers' participation in HRFS was limited to a day-long introductory Amnesty workshop at the start of the first pilot year. The integrative nature of project implementation as a way to bolster existing student voice initiatives explains why across the school, awareness and practice of HRFS was limited (particularly among students), despite a high awareness of student voice and rights-based work in the school. This appears to reflect a broader disparity in terms of awareness of the concepts of HRE and student voice, which enjoys popular support across England.

Several initiatives served to raise awareness of HRFS, such as the signing of a school rights charter, an international student conference that hosted students from participating HRFS schools in Mongolia, Israel and Denmark, and Amnesty's support of the school's International Week. The school missed some key opportunities to promote HRFS, particularly during the Democracy Day process that culminated with the election of student representatives. However, existence of HRFS and the Amnesty partnership provided inspiration for innovations at the school, including the development of new school behavioural policies that included human rights principles and language, and student-created film projects about human rights issues. Despite these considerable efforts, the data showed that explicit teaching about human rights principles and practices remained largely absent from HRFS implementation. Understandings of human rights amongst school community members appeared to be limited to broad and vague conceptions linked to rights-based policy approaches rather than to substantive human rights knowledge.

**Chapter 7** shifted from an analysis of the *project* in its preparatory and implementation stages to examine perceptions and enactment of *partnership*. Answering **research sub-question #3** (how was partnership envisioned?), the data showed that partnership was viewed uncritically and largely as a positive good, in terms of the collaborative benefits for each organisation's strategic development goals. Partnership was also viewed as short-term, with both partners recognising that the project's sustainability required Buckingham to implement HRFS on its own with limited or no support from Amnesty. In response to **research sub-question #4** regarding observable outcomes of partnership enactment, uneven collaboration tended to characterise both the development and the actual implementation of the partnership. During project development, Amnesty's largely bureaucratic approach to designing HRFS was conducted without the input of participating schools (although schools in Ireland using whole-school HRE approaches were visited), whilst Buckingham, with limited Amnesty support, drove its implementation and requested Amnesty support in a number of areas of the school's work. I argued that Buckingham's use of Amnesty as a partner to address existing initiatives and internal issues such as providing support for Ofsted inspection, and for assisting the school in dealing with ethnic conflicts and student strikes, reflected a pragmatic, results-driven, and often-unpredictable reworking of the partnership's intentions. These uses of partnership were in fact not about working together towards becoming human rights friendly, but were instead about using the school's available resources to address Buckingham's particular challenges.

Focused on the strike actions by teachers and students that led to the resignation of a Buckingham key senior leader, **Chapter 8** answered **research sub-question #5**, "how did micropolitical relationships influence or become influenced by HRFS?" I explored how the micropolitical climate of the school, characterised by an undemocratic, authoritarian leadership style, undermined student voice and HRE practices. The SLT's fractured relationship with teachers and its perceived authoritarian practices meant that the introduction of HRFS was seen by that teachers as further eroding their status and authority to give students increased agency. Furthermore, I

showed how Buckingham's highly visible control systems were used to address school violations, during the Facebook incident and via its webpage and in letters to parents in response to strikes.

Students' strike actions to shut the school down over a perceived unfair teacher dismissal reflected a negative view of the SLT based on past interactions, personal relationships with the teacher in question, and rumours passed along by members of the school community. There is clear evidence that the SLT's substantial efforts to promote student voice over the previous three years had empowered students to take action to claim their rights and protest perceived injustice.

#### **9.4 Synthesis of Thesis Findings**

In this section, I identify common themes across different chapters and discuss the findings holistically. I also discuss and interpret the findings in light of the conceptual and theoretical issues introduced in the literature review. This section links the thesis findings to the literature on whole-school HRE, school micropolitics, and NGO-school partnerships.

The thesis advances four main arguments to answer the **main research question**, "how was partnership enacted between Amnesty International and Buckingham School?" First, there was broad support by Buckingham students, teachers and leaders for using human rights as a policy framework, but the influence of neoliberal policies and pragmatic concerns (such as behaviour and community cohesion) on Buckingham management and teaching practices acted as a prism through which HRE efforts were interpreted and appropriated (9.4.1). Secondly, HRFS was reshaped by Buckingham to meet existing school goals and was loosely implemented, which rendered the partnership and project superficial and tokenistic (9.4.2). Thirdly, the findings show that whilst HRFS is mutually beneficial and leads to increased awareness and practice of rights-based approaches, the policy nature of HRFS is incompatible with a loose partnership approach (9.4.3). Lastly, the thesis argues that Buckingham was a site of discursive tension between school-wide messages of control (evidenced by authoritarian

decisions and practices) and of human rights (evidenced by Buckingham Student Voice and HRFS). The micropolitical activity contributing to and generated by this tension played a significant role in undermining HRFS and in destabilising Buckingham, and suggests that positive micropolitical relationships between key members of the school community are a critical determinant of success (9.4.4).

#### **9.4.1 Conceptualising *Human Rights Friendly Schools*: The Utopian Pragmatism of HRE**

The thesis findings explored in Chapter 5 demonstrate how conceptions of whole-school HRE operated in tension between the utopian, unchallenged ideas about the positive effects of human rights principles and practices for schools, and the pragmatic, policy-driven imperatives that shape the actual teaching and learning practices at Buckingham. Changing the school ethos to be framed around human rights was a major utopian aim. Promoting cultural diversity was another utopian aim, although given the diversity of the student population it was also a pragmatic concern, one instance in which the utopian and pragmatic perspectives aligned. Pragmatic aims were to positively affect behaviour and to improve the school's performance, add value, and make it more competitive.

This thesis found that HRE is an accepted form of values education at Buckingham school, a "utopian good" that elicits widespread rhetorical support and little opposition to its practice, particularly due to its close association with student voice initiatives, which have a higher profile in British schools. Reviewing the data analysis chapters, it is clear that, prior to the launching of HRFS, there was a school-wide language and understanding of overarching concepts of human rights amongst most students, teachers and leaders. Students have been given several high profile platforms for developing knowledge and skills about democratic participation and using their voice to express their views. Teachers interviewed recognised the potential of HRE to improve student relationships at the school. Teachers who were members of national teacher unions were familiar with political struggles for justice and engaged in political discourse and action within the school

through their teacher unions as a way to express rights claims, using the language of human rights.

Buckingham's existing student voice project, Buckingham Student Voice (BSV), created a favourable environment for partnership with Amnesty because school community members all were familiar with and recognised the value of a democratic, rights-based approach. Unsurprisingly, this awareness yielded largely utopian perspectives, and data on the majority of participants' perspectives reflects an overwhelmingly positive framing of the potential of HRFS. However, statements of support for the utopian aims of HRE by teachers and leaders were mediated by two forces: the pragmatic realities of "getting by" in the daily life of schools, typified by the sometimes difficult choices staff must make in order to accomplish their tasks; and dominant policy and practice regarding effective performance, accountability, and behaviour that influences the talk and work of teachers and leaders in British schools. Such pragmatic realities can act as powerful motivators for justifying innovations in school policy and practice, including so-called "progressive" policies. Staff perspectives on the potential of HRFS often reflected (in some cases literally) official educational policy discourse on improving behaviour and performance. Regarding the use of neoliberal perspectives, the headteacher's emphatic promotion of partnerships as value-adding and performance-enhancing demonstrate how HRFS was seen as adding to an already substantial portfolio of activity designed to increase the effectiveness of Buckingham as a centre for innovation and competition.

Buckingham staff also viewed HRFS as another tool for improving outcomes and solving traditional school problems, particularly poor student behaviour. This study showed that, amongst a number of different meanings ascribed to it, HRE is partially understood as a strategy for behaviour control. The data collected offers further empirical support of the existence in England of an interpretation of rights as being explicitly linked to responsibility and ultimately behaviour, confirming earlier research findings (Howe & Covell, 2010; Trivers, 2010; Sebba & Robinson, 2010). However, there is also evidence that school

leaders conceptualised human rights as a strategy for encouraging positive working relationships between students and teachers, and between students. The school's extensive work on restorative justice approaches using student juries to mediate disputes demonstrates a commitment to rights-based (rather than control-based) approaches to managing student behaviour, and illustrates school leaders' complex constructions of the relationship between human rights and behaviour.

#### **9.4.2 Implementing *Human Rights Friendly Schools*: Pragmatic and Piecemeal**

Analysis of project implementation in Chapter 6 gathered voices from students, teachers and particularly leaders who were the key actors in the implementation stage. From the outset of launching HRFS, Amnesty viewed the project operationally as a means to inform and deepen their HRE work, and strategically to provide new avenues for advancing their organisational mission. Amnesty's implementation scheme was primarily front-loaded, consisting of the establishment of structured project materials and agreements on the school's process for planning, assessing and reporting their participation in HRFS during the first year. During the first two pilot years their contact with the school was largely supportive (providing materials and trainings to teachers and students) and administrative (conducting and participating in assessment and steering group meetings). Overall, Amnesty used its expertise in developing HRFS to offer a significant set of inputs for Buckingham to begin implementing the project. In line with its pilot strategy to create a project model that would be sustainable without Amnesty support, the organisation gave Buckingham wide latitude to implement the project as it saw fit. Providing the school with the *Year One Action Plan* gave the school a rigid yet flexible structure for setting specific targets for whole-school implementation that could be assessed at the end of the first year.

Buckingham's attempts during the first two years to implement HRFS were mainly integrative and focused on students. The data showed that Buckingham school leaders and teachers implemented HRFS primarily by re-badging Buckingham Student Voice activities to fulfil HRFS requirements.

This form of implementation is logical and pragmatic; Amnesty selected Buckingham to act as a pilot based on its progressive student voice initiatives, and Buckingham saw HRFS as an effective means of supporting and expanding its student voice agenda (supporting democratic structures, but also providing justification for expanding curricular hours for HRE-related subjects, notably citizenship). Perhaps because of the school's intensive work on student voice, there were significant missed opportunities to use the HRFS framework to expand focus from student to teachers. For teachers, HRFS was seen as an initiative mainly meant for students. With few exceptions, it was not seen as something that could either improve teaching practices or improve teacher relationships with either students or the school's management. The lack of emphasis on teachers is perhaps understandable considering that many of the school's external partnerships are targeted towards students, but the efforts to include teachers in HRFS during the 2009 International Conference acted as a strong foundation for including teachers in the project's implementation. However, because there was no follow up to the training day, it functioned as a one-off teacher development session and the links to school-wide work on HRFS went uncultivated amongst the wider teaching staff for the entire year.

A tension was also apparent in the relatively high visibility of rights-based work in the school and the low levels of awareness of HRFS amongst most students and teachers. Several key signposts conferred a high level of visibility and status to HRFS in the first pilot year. The head's speech at the 2009 International conference explicitly set out the goals of HRFS. Similarly, the school's rights charter, which was signed by all students and developed as a result of participation in HRFS, was displayed outside of the school's auditorium in February 2010 and spanned the length of a hallway. Existing visual displays posted in and around the school encouraging students to respect each other, act responsibly towards their environment, and resolve conflict peacefully encouraged values linked with human rights principles, although some displays (e.g. the sign "Show some thought," showing a shoe stepping in gum; and the sign "Dunk your junk," showing a man throwing garbage in a bin) could just as easily be interpreted as messages of

behavioural control. Finally, on-going Buckingham Student Voice initiatives and the school-wide International Week and Democracy Day were considered important annual initiatives in the school, yet these school practices were not explicitly linked to HRFS in the school's implementation strategy.

Innovation at Buckingham existed primarily in two forms: in the creation of new initiatives involving HRFS; or in response to events where a human rights issue was involved. The school began rewriting behavioural policies using human rights language, created a Rights Charter Pledge Day at the school to raise awareness of HRFS, and used HRFS to justify expanding the citizenship curriculum hours. One of the school's external partners drew on the HRFS theme to work with students to make rights-themed short films. The school's use of HRFS to respond to the Facebook incident (6.2.1) demonstrated a nimble innovation of the partnership as a way to support community cohesion strategies to diffuse a volatile situation between students from different ethnic groups.

Although human rights language and activities were clearly signposted throughout Buckingham, the complex connections between student voice, rights, and international issues and interdependence of human rights were not made explicit. Efforts to promote rights-based practices were disconnected from each other, and crucially, not explicitly named as rights *per se* or constructed as components of HRFS. Buckingham leaders and Amnesty staff missed opportunities to link the promotion of rights-based approaches to a wider utopian agenda and to unify them under a whole-school framework. There were also missed opportunities to deepen the partnership after a mid-year evaluation meeting yielded several innovative strategies that were not pursued, but this reflected the lack of resources and time available to project coordinators on both sides.

#### **9.4.3 Partnership for *Human Rights Friendly Schools***

The findings show that whilst HRFS was mutually beneficial, and led to increased awareness and practice of rights-based practices, HRFS as a policy initiative is not sustainable under an external partnership model. My

analysis of the partnership was set against the context of both partnership location and type. In terms of location, partnership was enacted largely within the school, as HRFS was intended primarily to benefit Buckingham. This has implications in terms of assessing the 'value added' for each partner organisation, focusing attention mostly on the partnership as a change agent for school practice (in which the potential value of the partnership to the school was significant) rather than for its contributions to Amnesty organisational practice (in which the potential value of the partnership was to improve and expand a smaller area of Amnesty's substantial human rights portfolio).

The findings show that using a whole-school approach as the method of external partnership posed significant challenges due to the disjuncture between the policy implications of the approach and the peripheral nature of external partnerships. As I argue in Chapter 3, whole-school HRE intends to change policies and strategies of school operation at all levels. In other words, implementation of HRFS constituted a form of rights-based policy enactment. Yet because HRFS was clearly not regarded as 'policy' at Buckingham, it received substantially less material or conceptual support by school leaders versus other initiatives that more explicitly cohered with government policies and which the school actively promoted (e.g. the school's "learning to learn" curriculum). For a project purporting to transform the entire school, HRFS and its implementation more accurately reflected operation on the periphery of daily school life.

In analysing HRFS, I sought to also interrogate the project's implicit idea that external partnerships could provide an appropriate foundation for whole-school projects, which require broad implementation through official and explicit school policy. HRFS was Amnesty's attempt to move NGO-school partnerships beyond limited, small-scale interventions such as teacher trainings, materials provision, or even supposed whole-school initiatives packaged as badge or award schemes. Whilst teacher trainings and materials provision represent the majority of NGO-school partnerships, award schemes designed to provide whole-school accreditation in a particular area can also

be considered limited interventions because these initiatives are not partnership-based, and require schools to perform certain finite actions that will 'earn' an award. For example, UNICEF UK's *Rights Respecting Schools Award* (3.2.3) placed the onus for implementation entirely on schools, whereas Amnesty provided intensive programmatic support and project development, creating structures (such as the *Mid Year Report*) that facilitated active partnership.

The thesis found that despite Amnesty's intentions to use HRFS for transformative and sustained school change, the nature of the partnership with Buckingham inherently limited the possibilities for building a strong external partner role for the project to grow. From the outset of the project, Amnesty outlined a deliberate policy to limit the amount of support provided to partner schools. The partnership roles were clearly defined and context-contingent, with Amnesty providing project structure and expertise, and Buckingham providing human resources and daily implementation. In interviews and in project documents, Amnesty's position was that creation of a global model for human rights friendly schools should be able to be implemented with little to no resources. HRFS was meant to be driven by schools, with HRE expertise and training provided by Amnesty. This policy expressly advocates a limited Amnesty role and is both pragmatic and realistic (schools are ultimately the drivers and enactors of their policies, and whole-school policies must be able to be implemented in any financial context), but comes with considerable risks attached to it. One of the key risks is that whole-school transformation can quickly become small-scale partial-school change if the external partner's role is vague and limited and there is not enough support within the school.

Despite the clear challenges of delivering whole-school change through external partnership, the thesis showed that the HRFS partnership added substantial value to both Buckingham and Amnesty. Amnesty's human rights and HRE expertise, and the HRFS project structure itself, were important assets for supporting Buckingham's efforts to use human rights approaches in its daily work. Without Amnesty as a partner the language and principles of

human rights would have been less explicitly linked to the school's existing student voice work. Thus Amnesty's contribution provided significant added value to Buckingham. Furthermore, Amnesty represented value to Buckingham in other, more politically useful ways that cohere with the current neoliberal educational agenda in British schools. The clearest example is the school's use of Amnesty's brand and reputation as a way to demonstrate strength of overall performance in its 2010 Ofsted inspection (7.4.4). In this situation, partnership was used to support adherence to government performance and accountability protocols.

The Amnesty brand also provided Buckingham with a kind of competitive edge in terms of the school's community and national networks, alongside the many external partnerships promoted by Buckingham to enhance its profile. Affiliations with BBC news and the Guardian around its extracurricular work and HRFS itself created political value in terms of positive media exposure for Buckingham, and in terms of raising its profile in the community and throughout London.

One of the more interesting findings of this study concerns the contribution of the partnership to political discourses on rights in the school (8.3). Rights-based partnership with Amnesty was linked by members of the school community to the micropolitical struggles at the school. Students called on Amnesty to support their political action, whilst teachers reached out to Amnesty to air their grievances and challenge their status as a human rights friendly school. This reflects the strong associations between Amnesty and political struggle; it is unlikely that Oxfam or UNICEF would be called upon to participate in school political disputes.

Regarding school improvement, the piloting of HRFS achieved a high level of awareness-raising about human rights, and to a lesser extent about Amnesty. More importantly, the school were beneficiaries of a trove of specialised education resources about HRFS specifically and Amnesty's significant HRE experience. However, there is little evidence that HRE was taught in any meaningful sense to members of the school community, who in interviews and

focus groups displayed limited and superficial understandings of human rights concepts.

Partnership enhanced feelings of status amongst the headteacher, teachers, and students (6.2.4, 7.4.4). Members of the school community felt their school was uniquely important because of participation in HRFS, and they were correct, because within the larger scheme of Amnesty's global HRE work, their school was vitally important. As the only UK school involved, and because of Amnesty's two London offices (UK Section and International Secretariat), Buckingham was well situated to benefit from Amnesty support for the pilot.

For Amnesty, the project's value lay in the simultaneous consolidation and expansion of its global HRE work. HRFS was used to expand its HRE work into formal education partnerships and rights-based educational policy approaches. HRFS was considered so successful in its first two years that the project was rolled out in 2012 to 70 countries where Amnesty has national sections. The value of HRFS to Amnesty is thus identifiable in:

- The processes leading to, and the creation of international whole-school HRE curricular materials;
- The lessons learned through internal evaluation and school self-evaluation by individual Amnesty sections and the IS about a) whole-school approaches, b) political and micropolitical contexts for school interventions and c) school partnerships; and
- The ability to use its vast organisational networks to create an empirical body of work on global whole-school HRE.

These benefits validate Amnesty's approach and demonstrate how a partnership based seemingly on dissonance – an ambitious agenda and a loose implementation – can prove mutually beneficial.

#### **9.4.4 Power, Micropolitics and Rights at Buckingham: The importance of rights-based relationships**

The thesis found that in Buckingham School, the micropolitical context – namely, the prevailing mood within the school that the SLT's authority and power was mismanaged and/or contributing to poor teacher and student

morale – played a significant role in the way in which rights discourses were interpreted by school community members. The introduction, first of BSV, and then of HRFS, was viewed by some teachers as a threat in that it gave students more power (5.5.1). Simultaneously, students' conceptions about the limits and balancing of rights created a backlash where students felt that they had been told they had certain rights but in fact were not able to exercise them (6.2.3). This served to undermine BSV; students reported a disjuncture between the rhetoric of student voice (being told they had a voice and could say and do things) and the reality of what they were allowed to say and do at the school.

Data also revealed conflicts amongst staff explicitly concerning teachers' rights that ultimately led to the resignation of a key senior leader at the school. Teachers felt disempowered, mismanaged and "bullied" (the most commonly used word to describe the SLT's actions), and a sense of resentment fed into teacher action, evidenced by key actors within the school who used the teacher unions to engage in direct political action against the SLT. This push for teachers' rights in the school may have involved collusive action by teachers to encourage students to strike on their behalf. Questions remain as to why students chose to protest: whilst it was publicly clear during the strikes that students acted because they supported a teacher who they felt was being treated unfairly, there was also clear indication that students were encouraged by teachers who themselves had strong links to the teachers unions and a far-left political party. Although there is no direct evidence save the word of the assistant head and another teacher, it is possible that politically savvy teachers connected to the teacher unions encouraged students to act against the SLT, and did so by appealing to student loyalty to a popular teacher and by obscuring the details of why that teacher had been fired in the first place. This manipulation of student voice by teachers represents a potentially significant obstacle to achieving rights-respecting relationships at Buckingham. I argue that student strikes were largely enabled by a climate of student empowerment (due to BSV) that did not go far enough in teaching students the ways in which rights needed to be balanced and exercised responsibly and contextually, and the ways in which rights were absolute.

Amnesty coordinators recognised the political sensitivities of working with Buckingham, particularly during political struggles at the school where the organisation was placed in a position to have to either comment or take sides. In two separate cases, members of the school community approached Amnesty: first, to act as an independent observer (when teachers shared a letter with Amnesty arguing that Buckingham should not be called a human rights friendly school); and secondly, to support protest action (when students called Amnesty for protest advice). In both cases, Amnesty's responses reflected careful political calculation. It acknowledged receipt of the teacher letter but took no action. In the case of the student phone call, Amnesty coordinators immediately told the student representative phoning them that they were unable to offer support for the student strikes, instead providing information about absolute rights and informing the SLT that students had made contact. This demonstrates the tricky political boundaries of the Amnesty-Buckingham partnership. Amnesty staff reported that they felt that engaging with the school's internal political struggles would jeopardise the long-term relationship; in doing so they assumed a familiar role of political neutrality. Amnesty's response of acting only in the interest of maintaining their partnership with the school reflected an obvious reality that the partnership was not strong enough for the organisation to legitimately take a position other than in support of school management. Amnesty would not risk commenting on the internal politics of a school in which it had invested a significant amount of time and energy, and with which it had a very short-lived relationship. This reveals some of the fundamental challenges of Amnesty's entry into the educational partnership arena as a political actor.

This study found coherence between perspectives on the ability of whole-school HRE to foster rights-respecting relationships, and the role of values in micropolitical activity. Based on the substantial literature on power and micropolitics in education, HRFS as a strategy for working within micropolitical structures offers a framework for guiding the everyday interactions between various school community members around a shared language of rights. The highly uneven implementation of the HRFS framework at Buckingham

(focused almost exclusively on students rather than staff) missed a significant opportunity to address years of damaged staff relations, which eventually led to school-wide conflict and breakdown.

I argue that existing relationships between the key members of a school community (students, teachers, and leaders) play a vital role in (1) supporting the success of rights-based projects and (2) influencing the manner in which democratic and rights-based approaches are interpreted and implemented. Whole-school HRE can play a role in politicising unjust and problematic relationships of power, but these very same problematic relationships can prevent the establishment of authentic foundations for whole-school HRE and engender accusations of hypocrisy. Although the vision and direction of Buckingham's leadership enabled establishment of HRFS, commitment to progressive and rights-based visions was unsuccessful in an educational climate where rights were perceived to be violated, particularly by leaders. In particular, the symbolic construction of control through undemocratic and reactive practices (excluding entire year groups, suspending students for saying a fired teachers' name, and publicly arresting students in school assemblies) sharply conflicts with the articulation of school-wide rights messages and critically undermines the potential for rights-based policy approaches to succeed.

## **9.5 Implications of Thesis Findings**

This section attempts to draw some initial conclusions on the theoretical and practical implications of HRFS to contribute to an emerging body of literature on NGO-school partnerships within the formal education sector. I discuss the implications of the findings as they relate to broader macro-level educational policy in England; meso-level community politics in a London borough; and at the micro-level, where micropolitical relationships at the school have led to larger organisational changes. I outline a set of recommendations for both NGOs and schools engaged in partnership around human rights.

### **9.5.1 Macro-level**

The findings from this study suggest that, in 21<sup>st</sup> century England, although rights-based policy approaches remain largely peripheral to school life, strong foundations exist for their sustained promotion. The popular movement for student voice initiatives in British schools offers a highly visible delivery system for basic rights principles of democratic participation. Teachers and leaders also conceptualise human rights as a form of school improvement, and the variety of subjects within the larger field of global education (such as sustainability, development, and global citizenship) that have become common in schools act as a solid foundation for unifying rights principles under a larger pedagogical framework. Many global education initiatives at Buckingham could be explicitly linked to human rights, but most often were not. For example, posters in the school canteen promoting fair trade foods and goods were seen as positive efforts to support developing countries, but the wider lesson about the linkages between fair trade, development and human rights remained hidden in the background. The findings suggest that there are significant opportunities to link up the various values discourses in schools under wider rights-based policy frameworks. What is less clear is the influence that making those connections would have for embedding a shared language of human rights amongst members of the school community. Further research is needed, particularly of a longitudinal nature, in order to build a stronger evidence base for understanding the impact of whole-school HRE projects.

A pressing challenge for the promotion of rights-based education in schools concerns the intersections and divergences between HRE discourses, and neoliberal and behaviour management discourses in education. The thesis identified a clear tension between notions of HRE for empowerment (progressivism) versus HRE for school improvement and control (neoliberalism). The findings amplify existing evidence that education in England is strongly influenced by neoliberal government policies, which shape the priorities and language of school leaders (Ball, 2012; Camicia & Franklin, 2011; Olssen, 2004). This agenda places significant strain on teachers and leaders by demanding that schools do more with less, and by asserting the

need for schools to control students in order to get results. Competition, performance and accountability have become guiding principles of school policy, and government accountability protocols such as Ofsted inspections, despite their extremely limited and finite examinations of individual school life and performance, are major events by which the school is measured in the public eye. Politicians and policy makers inform parents that they are consumers who should demand a better product, and are encouraged to rely on Ofsted inspections and league tables to inform decisions about where to send their children to school. As a result of widespread rhetorical support of neoliberal views on the importance of parental choice in education, making schools attractive to parents have become conditions for the survival of schools. As government policies and Ofsted inspections have emphasised the importance of discipline in creating effective schools, behaviour management is also a key feature of the increasing marketisation of schools (Maguire et al., 2010). This study has shown how the current neoliberal educational landscape in England influences how rights-based education approaches are interpreted and implemented within schools. This supports previous empirical assertions about the dominance of neoliberal over democratic discourses in education (Camicia & Franklin, 2011).

This study has explored both how human rights are used in schools to promote overarching values, and how they are perceived to contribute to improving educational outcomes. I argue that neoliberal discourses of “improved performance” and “added value” can potentially be used to make stronger policy arguments for implementing rights-based frameworks for school development assisted through external organisational collaboration. In exploring the interactions between neoliberal and human rights perspectives in education, I discussed how key actors within school systems use neoliberal frames in everyday practices as a response to state policy mandates that stress market-based approaches to education. I suggest that the idea of improved performance can act as a bridge between neoliberal imperatives placed on schools by the state and rights-based solutions for challenges schools face (such as attainment, addressing cultural diversity, and dealing with violence in schools). Yet this construction of HRE as potentially cohering

with the neoliberalisation of education is challenged by theoretical and empirical arguments about the reproduction and exacerbation of class, race and gender inequality caused by such educational policies (Apple, 2001). More worryingly, findings from this thesis suggest that the discursive construction of behaviour and control in schools as a way of improving performance and accountability can severely restrict schools' effectiveness in promoting human rights. This then poses a larger, more salient question of how HRE can either align with or further challenge the neoliberal approach.

Finally, partnerships as a form of educational policy and practice are in need of a wider evidence base for assessing their value to the work of schools. Although since 2000, the number of empirical studies on NGO education projects has significantly increased (Bond, 2001; Edge, Frayman, & Lawrie, 2009; Edge et al., 2008; Gearon, 2006; Morgan & Kitching, 2006; Sebba & Robinson, 2010), few studies have attempted to look at the relationship between partnership processes and outcomes. Most studies focus on understanding the impact of NGO work in schools, with some exceptions (Edge et al., 2009). They are too often seen as win-wins, operating on the margins of the school or as superficial add-ons, and are not critically interrogated. Having fallen somewhat out of the political discourse since the Conservatives' ascent into power in 2010 – the word “partnership” is absent from the DFE's 2010 schools white paper – the literature is in need of robust empirical research on the organisational complexities of partnerships between NGOs and schools. Too often, academic studies of external interventions focus only on outcomes and not processes, which ignore the conditions under which successful outcomes can emerge.

### **9.5.2 Meso-level**

HRFS was conceived as a whole-school partnership that was meant to be inclusive of parents and the wider community. A key finding of the thesis was that HRFS was not used by either Amnesty or Buckingham to engage parents or other community members, and there is little evidence that the project itself had any discernable influence outside the school walls within the local

community. Therefore, it is not possible to comment on the implications of HRFS as a form of community engagement or on the implications of this study for addressing the relationship between Buckingham and its surrounding community.

However, data collected during the second pilot year showed significant levels of interaction between Buckingham and the local community around rights issues, primarily related to the strike actions of teachers connected to local chapters of England's main teacher unions. These findings have implications for the ways in which community politics affect and are affected by schools.

The existence of HRFS and student voice initiatives at Buckingham provided a form of symbolic and material support for students and teachers seeking justice through direct collective action. The disjuncture between the undemocratic experiences of students in the schools and the lessons they learned through existing student voice initiatives created conditions for them to question their school leaders. Their engagement of Amnesty during political struggles against school leaders reflected an understanding of Amnesty's reputation for protecting and fighting for the rights of others. This is a key finding because it shows that students and teachers were able to conceptualise HRE not only in terms of improving schools, but also in terms of the role it plays in struggles for justice.

The study also revealed that local political groups with vested interests in the affairs of Buckingham School – specifically, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), members of which held key positions in the local chapter of the teacher unions (8.5) – used their affiliations with teacher unions at Buckingham school to achieve larger political goals. In this instance, their main goals were to eliminate figures in the school unsympathetic to the teacher unions and with whom a negative personal history was shared, and to move the school towards a shift in status in order to revert control to the local authority. The use of political positions on the NUT by SWP members to settle scores and to attempt to shift power in the school from government to

community level shows the ways in which education systems are bound up in political struggles and vulnerable to external forces.

### **9.5.3 Micro-level**

The main findings from this study on a micro-level relate to schools' engagement of external partnerships for human rights, revealing both tensions and convergences between the goals of whole-school HRE and the goals of school policies and practices. Apart from these tensions and convergences, HRFS can be considered successful in so far as it was able to compel and drive action towards making Buckingham human rights friendly where no action had previously existed. The key elements of Amnesty's participation – the strength of its human rights and HRE expertise, and the power of its reputation and brand – all contributed to and were part of a wave of enthusiasm and collective utopianism that encouraged Buckingham to build on its already impressive efforts to empower students. Amnesty's prestigious reputation and the global nature of the project made Buckingham's participation unique and infused Buckingham's students, teachers and leaders with a sense of pride and energy about the project's potential. The strength of Buckingham's initial commitment to partnership ensured that whole-school HRE was successfully implemented at Buckingham during the two pilot years, and directly supported the school's prior efforts to promote rights and democratic participation (albeit in a limited fashion, mostly for students). HRFS succeeded at driving forward the school's work on rights, supporting school community cohesion, and creating an evidence base and generating lessons learned that validated Amnesty's efforts to promote human rights friendly schools worldwide.

With this said, the findings suggest that, despite the fact that partnership with Amnesty compelled meaningful action in the school, HRFS was simply too intensive a project from a policy, time or context perspective to be driven entirely by the school. The creation in the second pilot year, at Amnesty's behest, of a school-wide steering group responsible for moving the project forward, initially met with success before being temporarily halted during the school's period of turmoil in the latter half of the year. Because Amnesty

pushed Buckingham to take greater ownership of the project by establishing a school steering group not reliant on Amnesty participation, the organisation now finds itself outside of the school's deliberative processes and unable to determine whether Buckingham will continue with HRFS. In February 2012 an Amnesty coordinator reported that the organisation had been attempting to contact the school with little success, and were unable to predict whether the project would continue. This represents a potentially unfortunate end for a project and partnership that consumed many resources and years of development. However, it appears that Buckingham continues to work on HRE in some forms. The school's Autumn 2011 newsletter (published in December 2011) included several articles about student activities linked to human rights, even mentioning the creation of a Buckingham Amnesty Youth Group conducting letter-writing campaigns. The Spring 2012 newsletter, however, contained no mention of Amnesty or any rights work.

The findings from this study suggest that ideas of human rights and the forms of HRE (mainly policy approaches) taught through HRFS operated in clear tension, in terms of how they were both constructed at Buckingham. HRE was seen by leaders and teachers as a way to encourage better behaviour and even conformity through the linking of rights to responsibilities (5.5.1). HRE was interpreted as bestowing to students certain rights, *provided* they undertook responsibilities to behave in a manner that would earn those rights. Human rights, on the other hand, were conceptualised differently by teachers and students, and put into action through the strikes at the school that clearly violated school rules (Chapter 8). In this sense human rights were seen as supportive of liberation struggles, incompatible with self-discipline and rights-respecting behaviour, and primarily reliant on conflict in order to secure rights claims. HRE, on the other hand, was seen as something apolitical for students that encouraged their democratic participation and taught them the value of being responsible towards each other. This binary of HR for struggle and HRE for control merits further investigation.

Events at Buckingham demonstrated how authoritarian management practices undermined attempts at promoting democratic participation.

Notwithstanding the unique events surrounding Buckingham, most attempts to implement utopian projects for democratising school management around shared rights values will always be situated in the context of a traditionally hierarchical and authoritarian school structure, and thus subjected to struggle. Attempts by schools to introduce actions aimed at giving students more power, or to introduce greater choice as a function of democratising the school's work, are set against this context. Unsurprisingly, leadership plays a vital role in facilitating or undermining democratic approaches.

External partnerships offer built-in advantages and disadvantages. Amnesty's expertise and dedicated HRE work provide a strong support mechanism for rights learning. Schools' internal dynamics, closed micropolitical relationships and tendencies towards prioritising pragmatism disadvantage the possibilities of successful partnership. Successful partnerships for whole-school HRE must be fundamentally orientated around positive working relationships based on a shared language of rights, and although in the current micropolitical climate and in light of recent events this seems highly unlikely, many schools already possess the tools for enabling such partnerships to grow and flourish.

### **9.6.1 Recommendations for Buckingham School**

For most schools working under stringent constraints placed upon them by official policy, whole-school external partnerships may be difficult to both enact and sustain. However, research findings on school partnerships (E.g. Edge et al., 2009) confirm potential for success if particular conditions are met in the formulation of partnerships, such as prioritising and aligning the initiative with other school initiatives, and creating clear and visible structures for embedding the project across the whole-school. With these findings in mind, I argue that projects such as HRFS are only feasible if:

- They have authentic whole-school buy-in and meaningful, regular forms of democratic participation;
- There are enough salient synergies between their aims and the requirements and organisational goals for schools in the particular policy context;
- The external partner has a role that is more supportive than simply pushing the internal partner to act, and if their participation is framed as

supporting whole-school HRE as school policy rather than externally-imposed policy.

Whole-school HRE requires an understanding of school culture, an assessment of the challenges and opportunities of implementation, and a democratic enactment process in order to begin shifting daily operations towards rights-based modes. Real learning about the complexities of human rights, if absent from the school, must be provided to all members of the school community, not simply students.

I argue that four foundational steps are necessary for schools interested in adopting the approach, all of which are centred on the notion of creating a **school culture** that promotes human rights. Such projects must:

1. Have the full support of school leadership to be implemented as a **policy framework**. This entails addressing how human rights can become embedded in school culture, through ethos, policies, curriculum, and school community relations. The project must be regarded as a key pillar of school policy.
2. Ensure **buy-in and commitment to participation** of all members of the school community. An audit of the relationships between members of the school community and the resources to be made available for implementing a whole-school approach should form the basis of building school-wide support.
3. Use a **democratic implementation approach** to create regular mechanisms for facilitating collaborative development of whole-school HRE, and focus specifically on the roles of teachers and students in working together (e.g. weekly steering groups or town hall meetings).
4. Ensure **provision of HRE** as its own taught subject for **all** members of the school community, and across other curriculum areas where possible.

These steps require significant commitment over multiple years.

Amnesty's lead coordinator offered a number of pragmatic suggestions for improving HRFS. These recommendations differ from the general recommendations outlined above, and refer specifically to Buckingham's HRFS evaluation. Both the assistant head and Amnesty lead coordinator agreed that the school was stretched too thin to implement HRFS in all of the key areas, and that a more pragmatic approach could be to focus on improving existing HRE work. It was also agreed that raising awareness of the

project was an important and neglected area. This context informed three recommendations offered by Amnesty:

1. **Reduce the amount of new projects the school has to implement each year**, relying instead on strengthening areas where HRFS can integrate human rights more strongly into existing school practices. Amnesty's coordinator explained: "For example, they've got their junior leadership team, which is a very human rights friendly example of young people being involved in decision making alongside adults. So how can we support that or how can we make sure that that is explicitly linked to human rights?" This suggestion recognises the variation between the range of HRE approaches and the depth of rights learning within each approach, and implies that Buckingham might be more successful focusing on improving instead of expanding HRE practices.
2. **Reduce requirements to implement the project in all four key areas**. This suggestion acknowledges the reality that Buckingham was unable to implement all aspects of the HRFS framework.
3. **Empower a school steering committee to drive the HRFS project forward without Amnesty participation**. This suggestion refers to Amnesty's view that HRFS can only become embedded if it is driven by the school, and that Amnesty partnership support should not be relied upon to sustain momentum for HRFS.

I argue in the next section that this last suggestion actually serves to decrease the chances for success, particularly in the initial implementation states.

### **9.6.2 Recommendations for Amnesty International**

To become a more effective partner, Amnesty could assume a heavier obligation to provide a spark or a catalyst for pushing the project forward, and perhaps outline a timescale for investing the project with support during the first 1-2 years before devolving full responsibility to the school. Amnesty could also increase their monitoring role in order to help maintain project momentum. In future launches of HRFS in other countries, Amnesty could create agreements stipulating school obligations to form a representative steering group inclusive of Amnesty that convenes regularly in order to move the project forward. Requiring the regular convening of a group of representatives of all members of the school community as a core requirement of participation in HRFS would begin to model a functioning and accountable mechanism for democratising the implementation of the project.

In addition to these general recommendations, I outline four additional recommendations:

1. Amnesty's brand recognition, organisational size and strength, and extensive global networks can be leveraged to provide a much **higher level of visibility** to HRFS partner schools. Raising awareness of the human rights friendly approach can generate support and build momentum to enable successful partnerships.
2. Invest in **learning partnerships** with schools. Amnesty works with teachers in several other areas of its HRE work, including secondary school teacher training and curriculum development. Partnering with HRFS schools to deepen work in specific key areas can improve project outcomes, strengthen partnership, and build organisational capacity.
3. Focus on promoting ways in which HRFS can **support schools to develop pragmatic solutions to school challenges**. HRFS can become a policy framework that provides rights-based solutions for challenges in schools.
4. Focus on how **whole-school HRE can improve school performance** and student achievement, in order to build a stronger evidence base for the effectiveness of the approach.

## **9.7 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study advances previous research in the fields of whole-school HRE and NGO-school partnerships by illuminating the processes and outcomes of the HRFS partnership. In doing so, my research enables an understanding of some of the ideological struggles taking place in contemporary schools and educational policies, and also illuminates the complex factors influencing partnership with external organisations.

### **9.7.1 HRFS and Whole-School HRE as School Development**

Future research on whole-school HRE could develop the thesis findings by:

- Comparing existing models of whole-school HRE advocated by Amnesty, UNICEF, ActionAid (2011) and other NGOs to identify common opportunities and challenges;
- Comparing multiple Amnesty HRFS projects across countries in order to investigate context- and culture-specific opportunities and challenges;
- Conducting in-depth longitudinal studies of schools that make a multi-year commitment to embed whole-school HRE.

Furthermore, future research can illuminate how whole-school HRE approaches link with or diverge from rights-based development approaches.

The existence of strong frameworks for rights-based school development could potentially have a significant impact on the work of development NGOs, governments and inter-governmental organisations.

### **9.7.2 NGO-school partnerships**

Future research on NGO-school partnerships could expand on the thesis findings by:

- Examining the role of external partners in whole-school projects, focusing on temporary partnerships for sustainable change;
- Focusing on successful partnership models in comparative contexts;
- Exploring the influence of educational partnerships on the work of human rights NGOs.

## **9.8 Conclusion**

As I conclude this thesis, I am reminded of the excitement and frustration I sometimes shared when working with Amnesty staff on the creation of the HRFS project and curricular materials. During the project's development, it was clear that we were proposing a radical approach to the organisation of school life in order to transform schools into places where human rights played a fundamental role. Exercises in linking the CRC, UDHR and CEDAW to holistic pedagogy were intriguing and complex pursuits. Yet as our work progressed, it became increasingly clear that the challenges of enacting school-wide change, especially in a school we had never set foot in, were simply too profound to address with the resources at our disposal. Informal conversations where implementation strategies were debated and discussed almost always led to impossible-to-answer questions and contingencies. Simply put, the idea of HRFS was always going to be easier to envision than to put into practice. But the utopianism implied by the project made it a worthwhile endeavour.

This then, is the dilemma of utopianism. But it is also its spark. The idea of Utopia is so powerful because it provides us with a plan of action, with a road map for achieving a better world. We may never get there, but *Human Rights Friendly Schools*, and Amnesty, advance a vision of a world where education serves as the basis for the creation of local, regional and global cultures of

human rights. As Amnesty embarks on its next fifty years, *Human Rights Friendly Schools* typifies the diversity and scale of actions that human rights organisations must embrace in order to begin realising human rights for all.

For schools and educational policymakers, human rights can provide a framework for creating positive and successful relationships and empowering active and engaged learners. For NGOs promoting human rights education in a neoliberal age, this case study of Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* project showed that while human rights play a critical role in promoting a more peaceful and just world, they will always be connected to transformative political struggles, and to conflict.

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## Appendices

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# **Appendix 1 - Amnesty International / Researcher** **Memorandum of Understanding**

**Proposed Researcher-NGO Collaboration – 30 May 2008**

Amnesty International Secretariat, London – Human Rights Education Unit  
Sam Mejias – PhD Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Education, University

## **Introduction**

In 2007, Amnesty International Secretariat (AIS) launched the “Human Rights Friendly Schools” (HRFS) project, a whole-school human rights education (HRE) initiative to be implemented in approximately 10-15 countries where AI’s sections and structures are working. AIS will develop a HRFS global standard and work with participating sections and structures to implement the programme in September 2009, which will run for an initial pilot phase of two years.

In 2007, Sam Mejias (SM) began the 2007 Bloomsbury PhD Studentship at the Institute of Education, where he is researching the impact of NGO-implemented HRE programmes. Initial meetings with NGOs in the UK working in HRE found a similar programme focus among several NGOs, the whole-school approach to HRE, which has since become the central topic of his PhD thesis research.

The key question informing both SM’s research and AIS’ interest in collaboration is:

- **To what extent do participants in NGO-led whole-school HRE programs (teachers and learners) develop an understanding of human rights and of its applicability to their lives?**

This main question, of central interest to both SM and AIS, will underpin the research collaboration.

## **Proposed Collaboration**

After several meetings, AIS and SM agreed to initiate an informal collaboration. The terms of the collaboration are:

- SM will work with AIS staff members to design a research outline and develop research instruments for examining the work of the HRFS project.
- SM will attend regular HRFS meetings, contribute to the development of the project where applicable, and will comment on the process as a participant-observer.
- SM will report on the research completed at the end of the collaboration.
- SM will be primarily researching the implementation of the programme, and will not report on specific organisational relationships between the Secretariat (AIS) and AI’s national sections and structures. As part of his overall PhD research, SM will interview AIS staff and project participants and report on organisational practices in relation to the HRFS project only (e.g. management structure, implementation strategy, envisioned outcomes).
- Any foreign travel by SM to an AIS project country that is designated as a research visit on behalf of the HRFS project will be funded by AIS.
- SM will keep all HRFS participants’ locations, names and identities anonymous, except in the case where explicit approval has been received from AIS. Country identities where HRFS is being implemented will be the only specific identification used in the research unless otherwise approved of in advance by AIS.
- During the course of the collaboration, there will be opportunities for SM to present his research at conferences and in papers. This will include initial reporting on the HRFS project, which may use country names, but will not use specific names or places (towns, regions, schools, teachers or students) in any descriptions. SM will inform AIS partners of any planned use of the HRFS research before it is used.
- SM will make every effort to share output of the research collaboration and with AIS (and incorporate feedback) before it is publicly released.
- The collaboration is informal and can be terminated by either party at any time.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Participant Consent Form**

#### **PHD RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

##### **AIMS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

The purpose of this research is to explore the school's involvement in the Amnesty International *Human Rights Friendly Schools* programme. To achieve this goal, I will be conducting interviews, focus groups, and classroom workshops in Buckingham School in order to develop a case study of your school partnership with Amnesty International UK.

##### **RESEARCHER**

My name is Sam Mejias, I am the researcher for this study, and I am based at the Institute of Education, University of London. I have taught in schools in the United States and Madagascar and I have conducted educational research in countries around the world since 2003. My background is in human rights education, arts education, and multimedia education.

##### **WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH VISIT LOOK LIKE?**

When I visit your school, I hope to spend a day with you. I plan to interview school officials and conduct focus groups of teachers and other members of the school community (such as non-administrative staff like cafeteria workers and caretakers). I have also developed an interactive session comprised of two short (and fun) activities to work with students in classroom workshops. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate in this study.

##### **WHY YOUR PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT**

By sharing your experience about the implementation of *Human Rights Friendly Schools* at Buckingham, I can gain a better understanding of how this project is integrated in your school and what impact it has. Because *Human Rights Friendly Schools* targets everyone in the school, it is important to get input from as many members of the school community as possible. This research can benefit your school by giving you feedback on what members of the school community think about the project, which can help to identify opportunities and challenges for successfully integrating it into your school. Additionally, the research will be shared with both other education professionals and the research community.

##### **PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your school's participation, as well as each individual's participation, in this study will remain confidential. While I would like to audiotape your interview and/or focus group, you are free to decline being recorded at any point during your interview or focus group. All tapes will be securely stored in the office of the researcher and will be destroyed after all data is analysed. You will be assigned a pseudonym for the duration of the study. During my analysis and presentation of my research, your name will not be included. While I may use quotes from your interview or focus group, they will never be attributed to you. Only I have access to the raw data and pseudonyms. However, if you wish to make your name or the name of your school public, I will do so.

##### **WHAT IS THE RESEARCH USED FOR?**

Based on the research conducted at Buckingham School, I am going to produce a case study that will be written up in approximately three chapters. The results will be integrated into my PhD thesis. Other possible uses of this research may include scholarly articles and academic conference presentations.

##### **CONSENT**

I agree to participate in an interview for this research project. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time, without fear of penalty. I have retained a copy of this letter for my files.



### Appendix 3

## Research Field and Key Areas of Investigation

Field of research	Key Areas for Investigation
<i>Human Rights Education</i>	(1) Existing forms and methods for promoting HRE, and the prevalence, quality and influence of certain forms (whole-school approaches) (2) Experiences of school community members interacting with HRE in NGO partnerships, and also in school policy, the formal curriculum, informally and throughout the school community
<i>Educational Change and School Micropolitics</i>	(1) Experiences of the school as a system undergoing change in political contexts (2) Experiences of the school and school community members implementing rights-based school reform through NGO partnerships
<i>NGOs and Civil Society</i>	(1) Motivation and rationale for NGO HRE strategies (2) Experiences of NGOs and civil society actors in providing HRE to various stakeholders within formal education systems via inter-organisational partnerships

## Research Subjects, Setting and Data Collected

Research Subject(s)	Research Setting	Areas of Inquiry	Data Collected
Amnesty IS and Amnesty UK staff	<b>Neutral.</b> First Meeting of HRFS Project (24-26 <b>February 2009</b> , Burnham, UK, Burnham Beeches Hotel)	NGO and school partnerships in preparatory phase; NGO and school conceptions and understandings of HRFS project	Video of workshops, presentations; semi-structured interviews (video); documentary materials
Amnesty staff; Buckingham School teachers and students	<b>NGO.</b> HRFS Planning Workshop (14 <b>July 2009</b> , London UK, AI UK Headquarters)	NGO and school partnerships in preparatory phase	Participant-observer notes; documentary materials
Amnesty staff	<b>NGO.</b> Amnesty IS Headquarters, London, UK ( <b>February 2011</b> )	NGO conceptions and understandings of HRFS project and partnerships	Semi-structured interviews with Amnesty IS staff working on HRFS project
Buckingham School – teachers, leaders, students; Students from participating HRFS schools in Poland, Mongolia and Denmark	<b>School.</b> "Light a Candle: An International Student Conference on Human Rights Issues Across the World" (15-16 <b>October 2009</b> , Buckingham School, London UK)	NGO and school partnerships in both preparatory and implementation phases	Participant-observation notes; documentary materials; semi-structured interviews
Buckingham School – teachers, leaders, students	<b>School.</b> Buckingham School, Research Visits ( <b>December 2009</b> )	School conceptions and understandings of HRFS project and partnership in practice during implementation phase	Participant-observation notes; semi-structured interviews with school leadership; focus groups with teachers and students
Buckingham School – teachers, leaders, students	<b>School.</b> Buckingham School, Research Visit 2 ( <b>June 2010</b> )	School conceptions and understandings of HRFS project and partnership in practice during implementation phase	Participant-observation notes; semi-structured interviews with school leadership; focus groups with teachers and students

## Appendix 4

### Amnesty/Buckingham Partnership Case Study – Key Implementation Data (Qualitative)

<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Buckingham School International Student Conference	All students participated in a two-day conference featuring workshops on human rights and keynote speeches from the chief executive of CARE International, a Burmese former prisoner of conscience freed with support from Amnesty, and the director of human rights NGO Liberty.  All teachers at the school attended a day-long human rights training workshop co-facilitated by Amnesty International and UNICEF UK	October 2009
Year 9 students focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Year 10 students focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with Assistant Head of Student Voice (school's partnership coordinator)	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with Head of Citizenship (partnership coordinator)	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Interview with English teacher	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	December 2009
Partnership mid-term evaluation meeting	The AI UK HRE Manager and the school's Assistant Head of Student Voice met at mid-year to review the school's completed action plan and assess the school's progress to that point	February 2010
Year 10 Students Classroom Workshop	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Junior Leadership Team (students) focus group	Students provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Teacher focus group	Teachers provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Teacher focus group	Teachers provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Interview with Headteacher	Subject provided feedback on HR and HRFS as part of an independent research visit	June 2010
Conference presentation by Buckingham Students and Teachers at IOE "Education in a Globalising World" Conference	The deputy head, head of citizenship and five students attended an IOE conference and made a presentation highlighting themes and achievements of the HRFS partnership at Buckingham School	November 2010
Interview with Amnesty UK HRE Manager	The main coordinator of HRFS provided feedback on the project and her involvement in the partnership during the preparation and implementation phases	February 2011

## Appendix 5

### Amnesty/Buckingham Partnership Case Study – Key Planning and Implementation Documents

Document	Date
27 <sup>th</sup> International Council Meeting Circular 25 – Human Rights Education: Building a Global Culture of Human Rights ( <i>International Human Rights Education Strategy</i> )	29 April 2005
The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project Description	October 2007
Agenda for Experts Meeting on the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project of Amnesty International	November 2007
Report on the Experts Meeting on the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project	December 2007
Human Rights Friendly Schools Project Concept Paper (v5)	December 2007
Possible countries for Human Rights – Friendly Schools Project (Partner mapping document)	December 2007
The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project (PowerPoint presentation)	February 2008
Report on the Meeting of HRE Coordinators on the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project of Amnesty International	28 February 2008
Human Rights – Friendly Schools Project Section/structure Self-Assessment Worksheet	February 2008
HRE Survey in Schools table (based on feedback from AI Sections and Structures)	March 2008
Draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group to the Human Rights Friendly Schools Project of Amnesty International	March 2008
The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project: Premise, Purpose and Process	11 April 2008
Human Rights Friendly Schools Project – Status of Section Responses	9 June 2008
Timeline of Human Rights Friendly Schools Project	June 2008
Draft Human Rights Education Capacity-building Strategy For the Amnesty International HRE Network	July 2008
Draft Memorandum of Understanding Between [AI Section / Structure] And [Secondary School] And The International Mobilization Program of Amnesty International, International Secretariat For <i>The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project</i>	28 July 2008
Global Standards and Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools	April 2009
Human Rights Friendly Schools Workbook/Toolkit	April 2009

Document	Description	Date
Amnesty International <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i>	Provides comprehensive guidelines for schools implementing HRFS to develop the project in four key areas using ten key principles	March 2009
Buckingham School International Student Conference – conference materials pack	Includes: - A conference schedule of workshops and events, introduction from the head teacher, list of participating schools and keynote speaker biographies, information on Burma, and an excerpt from the novel <i>Lord of the Flies</i> - A one page trifold leaflet gives details of the school's conference theme, date and location, and logistical information	October 2009
Amnesty International "Human rights concepts and Rights respecting teaching" powerpoint slideshow	Powerpoint presentation given to all of Buckingham's teachers as part of a day-long human rights training workshop co-facilitated by Amnesty International and UNICEF UK	October 2009
Buckingham School Year <i>One Action Plan</i>	The school's designated partnership coordinator completed the action plan to begin the implementation process	October 2009

HRFS <i>Mid Year Report</i>	After a meeting between the assistant head for student voice and the AI UK HRE Manager, the report was completed by the AI HRE Manager using notes taken at the meeting	March 2010
AI HRFS Project meeting – meeting minutes	Notes from a meeting in which partners discussed how to improve the partnership during the second pilot year	October 2010
AI HRFS <i>Year Two Action Plan</i>	A separate year 2 action plan was developed by student leaders, to be added onto the school's existing plans	December 2010

**Appendix 6**  
**Buckingham/Amnesty Memorandum of Understanding for**  
**Human Rights Friendly Schools Pilot Project**

October 2008

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**Between**

**Amnesty International UK**  
**And**

**BUCKINGHAM High School, [REDACTED]**

**And**

**The International Mobilization Program of**  
**Amnesty International, International Secretariat**  
**for**  
***The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project***

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This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes partnership between the Amnesty International Secretariat International Mobilization Program (IMP), ***Amnesty International UK*** (the Section), and ***BUCKINGHAM High School*** (the School) for the purpose of implementing The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project.

**I. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

The Human Rights Friendly Schools Project is carried out by the Amnesty International (AI) Secretariat Human Rights Education Team, up to 14 AI sections and structures and up to 17 secondary schools around the world.

The project seeks to promote the whole-school approach to the integration of human rights into schools, to demonstrate that the approach is valid and effective globally, and to create replicable models which will act as an inspiration to other schools and as a form of advocacy to governments. The project will be evaluated, its best practices will be documented, and support materials and standards and guidelines for human rights friendly schools will be developed, all with an eye to explore opportunities to learn and share successes and limitations in other schools.

Together, the Parties enter into this MOU to mutually “promote the inclusion and practice of human rights in the secondary school system” as outlined in the World Program for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), first phase 2005 to 2009, and to create replicable models of human rights friendly schools.

Accordingly, the IMP, the Section, and the School operating under this MOU agree as follows:

**II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The Human Rights Schools Project responds to a clear cultural and educational need in virtually every part of the world-- namely, to create a global culture of human rights. The schools will demonstrate in microcosm that such a culture is achievable. The project will be the first global project focusing on the whole-school approach to integrating human rights into schools.

The HRE Team within IMP will provide the international link, AI sections and structures (S/s) will provide the most immediate support to secondary schools, and secondary schools will articulate and implement a one-year project plan. Each school's one-year plan will describe how the school will make achievable and measurable progress in integrating human rights into four major areas of school life, the curriculum, the extra-curriculum, school governance, and staff-student / student-student relations. As project partners, the IMP and AI sections and structures will support the schools in creating school environments that are rights-respecting, members of school communities who are knowledgeable about and dedicated to the promotion of human rights, and young people who have not only the knowledge but also the values, skills and experience to be effective activists on human rights issues.

### **1. Goal**

- Within the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, to promote a culture of human rights in secondary schools through a whole-school approach to integrating human rights into major areas of school life, and to demonstrate the global validity of the approach.

### **2. Objectives**

- to promote the whole-school approach in the integration of human rights into schools
- to create replicable models of human rights friendly schools which can be used in other schools around the world
- to build the capacity of up to 14 AI sections/structures and up to 17 secondary schools in different regions of the world to integrate human rights into schools
- to create a network of sections and structures and schools to facilitate sharing of best practice and learning amongst the participants
- to develop a set of best practice materials regarding integrating human rights into the formal secondary school system which can be shared across the AI movement, as well as with external stakeholders
- to develop globally valid principles and standards for human rights friendly schools based on the experience of the schools and the sections and structures in implementing the project

The beneficiaries of the project are the students, teachers and staff at participating secondary schools; the participating secondary schools themselves as well as the communities, parents and educational authorities associated with them; the participating AI sections and structures; other AI sections and structures; and those working in IGOs, NGOs and educational systems and institutions to implement the WPHRE.

Each organization of this MOU is responsible for its own expenses related to developing and implementing the project under this MOU. There will not be an exchange of funds between the parties for tasks associated with this MOU.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each party will appoint a person to serve as the official contact and coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MOU. The initial appointees of each organization are:

**The Section:**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Position: Human Rights Education Manager  
Section: Amnesty International UK  
Address: The Human Rights Action Centre  
17-25 New Inn Yard  
London  
EC2A 3EA

Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Facsimile: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

**The School:**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Position: Assistant Head Teacher  
School: BUCKINGHAM High School  
Address: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Facsimile: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

**IMP:**

[REDACTED]  
International Human Rights Education Project Manager  
Amnesty International Secretariat  
Peter Beneson House  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW  
Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Facsimile: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

The parties above agree to the following responsibilities and tasks for this MOU.

**The IMP** will be responsible for:

- overall management and operations of the project
- coordination of the project at the international level
- co-review of school one-year plans
- coordination of exchange of materials, information and resources at the international level
- development and coordination of a communications strategy with uniform messaging and guidelines for publicity and contacts with media and other organizations, as well as dissemination of information about the overall project
- coordination and execution of overall evaluation of the project

- coordination of the development of standards (including benchmarks and indicators) and guidelines based on the experience of sections/structures and schools and the end-of-year evaluation
- oversight and coordination of documentation of the project
- setting up an Advisory Group of experts on the whole-school approach and facilitating their input into the project

**The Section** will be responsible for:

- supporting the School in articulating and implementing their one-year plan, including the following:
  - provision of expertise in human rights and human rights education
  - provision of materials
  - provision of a “menu” of various AI campaigns, activities and programs in which the School can participate or which can be integrated into areas of school life (for example, Stop Violence Against Women, Safe Schools for Girls, Dignity Campaign, Urgent Action, AI School Group, etc.)
  - provision and/or facilitation of training of teachers, ideally both through existing section/structure training programs and through project-specific training
  - facilitation of and participation in monitoring and evaluation, through coordinating with the School the delivery of its tri-monthly monitoring report and providing logistical support for school visits by project representatives
  - participation in project activities, as required, such as meetings at the international level
  - facilitation of and participation in documentation of activities, including preparation and submission to the IS HRE Team of required reports
  - consultation on and implementation of communications and publicity strategy and activities with the School and the IS HRE Team
- contribution to the development of principles, standards and guides relating to this project
- communication with IS HRE Team on developments in the project

**The School** will be responsible for:

- articulation and implementation of a one-year plan to make measurable progress in four major areas of school life, the curriculum, the extracurricular area, school governance, and staff community relations
- monitoring of the implementation of the plan, including submitting tri-monthly monitoring reports (in November 2009 and February and May 2010) to their partner AI Section and the IS HRE Team
- facilitation and participation in evaluation and documentation activities, including a visit to the school by a project representative for purposes of evaluation and documentation
- consultation on and implementation of communications and publicity strategy and activities with their partner AI Section and the IS HRE Team
- participation in project activities, as required, such as meetings at the international level
- participation in common project efforts between schools and in activities of the international community of human rights schools

#### **IV. TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING**

The term of this MOU is for the period from 15 October 2008 to 31 August 2009, and may be extended upon written mutual agreement and depending on the outcome of the evaluation meeting of project participants tentatively scheduled for June 2009.

**Authorization**

The signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU.

On behalf of the organization I represent, I wish to sign this MOU and contribute to its further development.

**On behalf of the Section:**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Position: [REDACTED]  
Date: 05/11/08

**On behalf of the School:**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Position: [REDACTED]  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**On behalf of IMP:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 7**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL HRFS RESEARCH VISIT HEADTEACHER OR TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

##### **A.) DEMOGRAPHICS**

1. What is your position within the school?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. How long have you been a teacher?
4. What subject do/did you teach?
5. What grades do/did you teach?
6. What kind of school is it? Please describe your school and student population.
7. How many teachers are in your school?
8. How many students are in your school?

##### **B.) BACKGROUND**

1. How did you become aware of Amnesty International? Of HRFS?
2. How did your school decide to become involved in the programme?
3. Is this your first time working with an external organisation such as Amnesty? If not, can you describe your previous experience?

##### **C. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. What do human rights mean to you?
2. What is human rights education according to you?
3. Can you tell me in few words what is your experience in human rights education?
4. Why did you decide to join the Human Rights Friendly Schools project?
5. Have you previously partnered with Amnesty International in your country, and if so, can you talk about your past experience?
6. How do you think it can change your work in or with your school on a daily basis?
7. What are some of the challenges that your school faces on a daily basis?
8. How do they relate to human rights?
9. How will participating in Human Rights Friendly Schools help your school to address those challenges?
10. In your opinion, what is the goal/objective of HRFS for the school?
11. What are your expectations for the Human Rights Friendly Schools project?

##### **D.) NGO-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

1. What does a whole-school approach to HRE mean to you?
2. What challenges do you see in implementing *Human Rights Friendly Schools*, and how is the project framed in terms of altering power relations in schools?
3. How does your school conceptualise the purpose of *Human Rights Friendly Schools*?
4. How has this partnership been operationalised?
5. What are your expectations for this partnership?
6. What do you think are the main opportunities and challenges of whole-school external agency partnerships?
7. How did your school establish a working relationship with Amnesty International?
8. What benefits do you expect?
9. What does the implementation process look like?
10. Do you feel that a whole school approach to human rights poses a challenge for business as usual in schools, i.e. does it really aim to change entrenched power positions in schools?
11. What types of power shifts in schools do you think are envisioned by Amnesty International?
12. What legitimacy and capacity do you think Amnesty International has to manage and influence systemic changes in your school?
13. How are do you think such changes to school structures can be enacted and achieved?

14. What do you think are some of the challenges for imposing a human rights framework on a school with particular cultural traditions that may run counter to human rights? (e.g. gender equality in patriarchal societies, or religious freedoms in societies where religious freedom is restricted)
15. What do you think are some of the issues that might arise when working with a political advocacy organisation that strongly supports human rights and social justice goals?
16. To what extent is the engagement with Amnesty International part of your school's overall reform strategy?
17. Is systemic change really possible or is it just temporary change? If so, how is it possible?
18. Do you think whole-school HRE can actually reduce inequalities in schools?

#### **E.) HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN YOUR SCHOOL**

12. What type of human rights or citizenship education do students in your school already receive, or have received in the past?
13. What about teachers and other school community members, what access will they have had to learning about human rights or democracy?
14. How do you see HRE contributing towards the school's overall improvement goals?
15. What role do you see HRE and HR as having in your school?
16. Is this project aligned with any other initiative at the school? How and why?

#### **F.) WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACHES**

1. Why did the school elect to use a whole-school approach?
2. What do you think are the potential benefits of a whole school approach to HRE?
3. What do you think are the potential challenges?
4. HRFS promotes substantial changes in how the school is run on a daily basis. What do you think is the potential for whole-school HRE to create lasting institutional changes in school organisational cultures? What do you think those changes should and could look like?
5. How can the school and Amnesty meaningfully involve the whole school in the project?
6. How do you think whole school participation can be sustained over time?
7. How do you think the school can negotiate the demands of whole school HRE to shift power among school community members and to actively politicize school culture?

#### **PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE**

##### *G.) Student Engagement*

1. How have students participated in the HRFS?
2. What types of **knowledge** are students learning?
3. What types of **skills** are students learning?
4. What has the impact been on the students participating in the programme so far?
5. Are there students who have not been directly involved with HRFS? If so, why?
6. Has there been any impact on students who are not directly involved? What has that impact been, if any?

##### *H.) Teachers and Leaders*

1. What types of capacity building activities for teachers and leaders are happening through involvement in HRFS?
2. What types of knowledge, skills and awareness are being learned by teachers?
3. Has the partnership changed your teaching practice? How?
4. Has the partnership changed the relationship between teachers? Between staff? Between students?

##### *I.) Community*

1. How is the community involved with or aware of the HRFS?
2. What types of activities is the school doing in the community?
3. What types of knowledge, skills and awareness are being learned in the community?
4. What do you think would bring them closer to the programme?

5. How are students taking action in their community? Teachers? School staff? Non-teaching staff?

**J.) PERSONAL REFLECTIONS – Possible segue: “Now we are moving from questions about the whole school to what it has done personally for you”**

1. What has been the most interesting part of *HRFS*?
2. What has been the most rewarding part of *HRFS*?
3. What have been the most significant challenges for leaders? Teachers? Students?
4. You’ve told us a lot about what you think *HRFS* can do for your school. What do you think Amnesty can learn from you?

**L.) IMPROVING THE PARTNERSHIP**

1. What do you think could improve the programme overall?
2. In your view, has *HRFS* been beneficial for students? How do you know? What evidence do you have?
3. What do you think could improve *HRFS* for students?
4. In your view, has *HRFS* been beneficial for teachers? How do you know? What evidence do you have?
5. What do you think could improve *HRFS* for teachers and leaders?
6. In your view, has *HRFS* been beneficial for and across the whole school? How do you know? What evidence do you have?
7. What do you think could improve *HRFS* for and across the whole school?
8. In your view, has *HRFS* been beneficial for the community? How do you know? What evidence do you have?
9. What recommendations would you make for:
  - Improving the overall implementation of *HRFS*?
  - Support for the partnership in the future by Amnesty International and your school?
  - Future schools taking on this type of programme?

## **Appendix 8**

### **Sample Interview Transcript (Teacher)**

Teacher: My name's [REDACTED], and I'm head of citizenship. [I've been in this position] since September [2009]. [I've been a teacher for] 6 years. [I teach] geography.

SM: How did you become aware of HRFS project?

Teacher: Well [REDACTED] is my line manager, and when I was interviewed for the citizenship position, once I was successful [REDACTED] asked me to attend the training at the Amnesty building. So that's how I became aware of the project.

SM: Was that in July? [2009]

Teacher: Yeah.

SM: Ok so you've just joined the school when?

Teacher: I joined the school last September so September 2008.

SM: How do you think that the HRFS project can change your work in school on a daily basis?

Teacher: I think the Human Rights Friendly school, um, working towards the award will give students and staff more of an awareness of what their rights are along with their responsibilities, so making sure that everybody is aware that, you know, for example, everyone has the right to education, but also they have the responsibility to make sure that they don't take that right away from somebody else by disrupting a lesson, for example. And also from a teacher perspective, like, you know, being able to talk to students in an appropriate manner, I think it's gonna impact behaviour massively, hopefully.

SM: What would you define as an appropriate manner?

Teacher: So, not shouting.

SM: What are some of the challenges that you think the school faces that might relate to human rights.

Teacher: Um...the challenges I think, some of the challenges might be to do with the student population and how they work with each other currently, and you know, the fact that our student population is very diverse and they come from all over the world, and so they may not be aware, so I think education on human rights is necessary, so that everybody's aware of what their rights are as a sort of starting point, it's quite crucial.

SM: In your opinion, what do you think the goal of this project, what do you think the end product that amnesty is seeing is?

Teacher: Um, I think the end product is that all students and staff and governors and people in the community are aware of what human rights are, that students are taught in a human rights friendly manner but also taught *about* (emphasis in audio) human rights and also how to take action if their human rights are not being met. So for example in the school community if their voice is not being heard what are the proper democratic channels to make sure their voices are heard. Like, you know and also but how to take action for people through human rights and not being affected in other parts of the world.

SM: What are your, do you see this going on yet? What do you see happening right now, for the project?

Teacher: Um, well I know what's happened in terms of the staff have all been trained on what the award actually is. I think that there's some staff who speak to students appropriately but not always all staff. I'm not sure it's filtered down to a student level as yet.

SM: Partnership. You've obviously been to AI as part of your training, but what are your expectations for partnering with an external organization like Amnesty, how do you see that going?

Teacher: Well, sorry just clarify the question, how would we work with Amnesty?

SM: Yeah how do you expect to work with amnesty in partnership?

Teacher: I suppose that Amnesty are the experts on human rights and human rights education so we would use Amnesty as kind of the advisors and the experts in such, helping us train students and giving us the advice and maybe using case studies if they've, you know giving us examples of different ways and talking through maybe the appropriate way for our school to go forward with the project. So, mainly as experts and, you know, coming in and supporting us moving the project forward.

SM: Ok. Now what about some of the areas that you feel that you would be the expert in that Amnesty might not be as familiar with? So they will have some ideas about what to do but they don't necessarily know the school context as well as you do.

Teacher: Yeah, so obviously that's quite important, like the classes, the students, the staff, obviously we know and the community like who we could get involved, we might have other people outside of the community that could be, in the outside community that could be involved. We know the students, we know the staff, so therefore we're the experts of our school. So, that's how we can provide, and maybe sort of talk through the best ways of introducing things and moving things forward that have worked maybe on different projects.

SM: So this project promotes really substantial changes in terms of how the school is run on a daily basis...

Teacher: Yeah.

SM: ...primarily related to democratizing the way the school is run, involving more school community members. What do you think the potential is for the project to really create lasting, structural institutional changes for the school, and what do you think that would look like. First question, is that potential there?

Teacher: So is it sustainable basically, is this project sustainable? Yeah I think if it's sustainable it has to have, it has to have value for the students and the students are the ones, and and staff are gonna make this project sustainable. Um, so obviously the house councils are being created at the moment, I think they're gonna play a key role.

SM: Can you talk about the house councils a bit?

Teacher: Yeah, so um, the house councils are being created at the moment, every form group is gonna have a member of key stage three and a member of key stage four so meant 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 as part of the house council. And then, they're going to meet and be trained and understand how to represent other people's views, and um how, yeah basically and then they're going to be trained in the democratic process, how they go about making change in schools.

SM: Will that training incorporate any of the work you're doing with Amnesty? Is it gonna bring in the human rights stuff or is it just training on how to be a part of a house council?

Teacher: I'm not sure yet.

SM: Is this different to the Buckingham Student Voice?

Teacher: It is part of Buckingham Student Voice. So that's mainly to do with like the house system, because each form is in different houses so it's having a representative from the houses, and there's four houses. The other part of Student Voice is to do with like learning, and um being learning advisors, and there will be two students in key stage three in every class that will be trained as learning advisors. So, to give feedback to teachers.

SM: Right, so some of the students have talked about that as well. Are all these particular positions elected positions? Do students get to vote on who represents them in the house council?

Teacher: Well, yeah. In my form we're currently voting today, the students who have put themselves forward, they're gonna give a speech, and then the class is gonna vote. But I don't know if everybody is doing it that way.

SM: Amnesty is a highly political advocacy organization and they have explicit political goals related to human rights, but they also can be I think somewhat controversial in schools. How do you see the potential political issues playing out in the school? Amnesty has particular views on certain issues. How do you think politics will come into play in the implementation of this project? It's a difficult question.

Teacher: [Laughs] That is a really difficult question. Um, ok how will politics come into play and, I'm not sure I can answer that question. I don't know if, obviously amnesty have particular viewpoints in relation to different cases and working in different countries and things like that. I do think it's important that students are taught about controversial topics, and you know, how to weigh up bias and, you know, we can say right, we're working with Amnesty International, this is their viewpoint, but also teach the students if or, that there might be another viewpoint as well. I think that's all part of the learning process because there's gonna be political parties out there that are gonna have different viewpoints, and students need to be aware of this when they grow up.

SM: Do you see um participation with AI in this project as something that's potentially a problem for community members? Or do you see it as something that would be accepted by the community?

Teacher: No, I don't think it would be a problem.

SM: Do you think that the type of change envisioned by the project, do you think it's possible for all of the members of the school community to really be involved in how decisions are made here, and if so what would you say is the best way to go about that?

Teacher: I think it is possible for all students to be involved in, students and staff and members of the community, I think that's the ideal goal isn't it, to have everybody involved. I think we need to think carefully about how we do that to make sure that you know, that everybody does have on a basic level some kind of decision making power. I'm not sure how to do that though.

SM: Citizenship and HRE question. What type of HR or citizenship education are students in the school already receiving?

Teacher: Citizenship is currently taught cross-curricularly, so it's taught mainly, well I'm currently mapping key stage three, and um, I've been in contact with the humanities departments, drama, science, maths and English. So they're the main departments that have been teaching it but it's not, at the moment we're working on making sure it's taught explicitly. So with regards to human rights when I've been meeting with linked teachers, they say oh yes we do slavery for example in history, so it's about me making sure that they make the citizenship explicit in those schemes of learning.

SM: How do you do that? Does that involve a conversation with teachers?

Teacher: So basically I've been meeting with the key people, I've asked heads of departments to nominate teachers who will then meet with me. I've met with everybody now and I've asked them to identify where they're covering certain parts of the citizenship curriculum and obviously human rights is one of the parts. Um, so we're just at the stage where we're mapping in the citizenship aims, skills and objectives. Um, the next stage is that it's made explicit in the lessons through using a logo so that the students are aware that citizenship is gonna be taught in this lesson.

SM: Is it a citizenship logo?

Teacher: I haven't decided on the logo yet.

SM: What access do teachers have to materials on citizenship or human rights education at the moment?

Teacher: Just the internet and what I provide. Because it's not a discrete subject.

SM: Have you had access to the materials for the Human Rights Friendly Schools project?

Teacher: Yes, the booklet.

SM: Obviously you've received training as part of the visit there.

Teacher: Yeah.

SM: Ok, um and finally I just wanted to get your view on this idea of a whole school approach, because you know a lot of external organisations will come into schools to provide teacher resources or they'll do discrete projects in one or two classrooms, but this is quite an ambitious approach, what they're attempting to do is quite holistic. What do you think the value is of that, what do you think the possibilities are of a whole school approach?

Teacher: I think it's a great idea because I think often you know there's certain groups of students that get picked, or certain members of staff that get picked to be involved in certain projects. With this being the whole school approach I think everyone feels like they're involved so therefore the vision of what Amnesty in the school are trying to achieve is, everyone is gonna be aware of it, so therefore it's more likely to be sustainable and it's more likely to happen, because it's a way of communicating, it's a way of you know, people being educated and students and staff knowing their rights and you know, being involved in making decisions, so. It is an ambitious project but I think it's a great project.

SM: What would you say the level of awareness is right now, in terms of, about the actual project and about the fact that Buckingham school is trying to become a HRFS?

Teacher: With staff, all staff have been trained, so they are aware of that, the award. In terms of students, I don't think many students are aware as yet.

SM: Who would you say in the school has some sort of knowledge of what their human rights are?

Teacher: Ok so, um, maybe um, the JLT [junior leadership team] because they were on the training. Maybe at a very basic level in geography, we've been teaching the students about development in year 9, and wants and needs, so we've used, so at a basic level, maybe year 9 might know. Also year 10 students who are gearing up for democracy day might be aware of some of these rights and responsibilities.

## **Appendix 9**

### **Teacher and Student Focus Group Questions**

#### **BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL HRFS RESEARCH VISIT TEACHER FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

##### ***Purpose of the Focus Group:***

To gain insight on teachers' perspectives on

- a) NGO-school partnerships
- b) Human Rights Education
- c) Whole school approaches
- d) *Impact of a), b) and c) on student learning*

##### ***Tips:***

- Create a diagram of the focus group and write participants' names down according to where they are sitting to remember their names.
- Once learning (and writing down) names, refer to individual teachers by name when asking questions, particularly to invite participants who have not talked as much as others
- Try to ensure that everyone participates

##### ***Introductions***

Introduce yourself and the purpose of your research visit, and then ask participants to introduce themselves by saying:

- Their name
- The subject they teach
- How long they have been at the school

##### ***General Warm Up Questions***

1. Briefly describe your experience as a teacher in this school.
2. What do you like about this school?
3. What are some of the challenges or problems that your school faces?

##### ***A) Partnership Questions***

1. What do you know about Amnesty International?
2. What has your involvement in *HRFS* been so far?
3. In your opinion, what is the objective of *HRFS*?
4. What are some of the challenges that your school faces?
5. What are some of the opportunities for partnerships between NGOs and schools?
6. What are some of the challenges for partnerships between NGOs and schools?
7. What do you think the partnership and *HRFS* project can do for your teaching?
8. What do you think the partnership and *HRFS* project can do for the school?
9. What are the things you think that can be done to make the partnership more effective?

##### ***B) Human Rights and HRE Questions***

1. Can you talk about what human rights means to you?
2. What role do you think human rights education can play in making schools better places? (Opportunities)
3. What are some of the main issues in the school that human rights can potentially address?
4. What kind of access have you had to HR or HRE materials (either through AI, from the school, or on your own)? These can be either teaching resources or general information.
5. Did you participate in the human rights temperature exercise, and if so, what was the experience like?

##### ***C) Whole School Approach Questions***

1. What is your opinion on the whole school approach strategy for this project? Does it seem like this project is happening in the whole school with everyone's involvement?
2. Do you think it can be effective or not, and why?
3. *HRFS* aims to involve all school community members, including students, non-teaching staff and parents in having a real say about what goes on at the school. How do you think this is possible? Is it possible?
4. What would need to happen for school policies to change to become more human rights friendly, and for more members of the school community to have actual decision-making power?
5. What needs to happen in order for these types of changes to become embedded in school culture, and how do you think *HRFS* could be sustained over time?
6. Can you speak about whether you think your role and status as a teacher will change as a result of participation in *HRFS*? Specifically I want to know how you feel about the elements of *HRFS* that emphasize improved community relations.
7. What kind of access have you had to *HRFS* materials?

## BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL *HRFS* RESEARCH VISIT STUDENT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### ***Purpose of the Focus Group:***

To gain insight on students perspectives on

- NGO-school partnerships
- Human Rights
- Whole school approaches

### ***Introductions***

Introduce yourself and the purpose of your research visit, and then ask participants to introduce themselves by saying:

- Their name and age
- Their school year
- One thing they like about their school

### ***General Warm Up Questions***

1. Briefly describe your experience as a student in this school.
2. What do you like about this school?
3. What are some of the challenges or problems that your school faces?

### ***A) Partnership Questions***

1. What do you know about Amnesty International?
2. What do you know about *HRFS*?
3. In your opinion, what is the objective of *HRFS*?
4. What are some of the opportunities for partnerships between NGOs and schools?
5. What are some of the challenges for partnerships between NGOs and schools?
6. How do you think the project can change your experience in school as a student?
7. What do you think the project can do for the school?
8. What are the things you think that can be done to make the project effective?

### ***B) Human Rights and HRE Questions***

1. Can you talk about what human rights means to you?
2. What have you learned so far in school about human rights?
3. What are some of the main issues in the school that human rights can potentially address?
4. Did you participate in the human rights temperature exercise, and if so, what was the experience like?
5. What do you think about students being given an opportunity to participate more in how the school is run?

### ***C) Whole School Approach Questions***

1. Does it seem like this project is happening in the whole school with everyone's involvement?
2. *HRFS* aims to involve all school community members, including students, non-teaching staff and parents in having a real say about what goes on at the school. How do you think this is possible? Is it possible?
3. What would need to happen for school policies to change to become more human rights friendly, and for more members of the school community to have actual decision-making power?
4. What needs to happen in order for these types of changes to become embedded in school culture, and how do you think *HRFS* could be sustained over time?
5. Can you speak about whether you think your role and status as a student will change as a result of participation in *HRFS*? Specifically I want to know how you feel about the elements of *HRFS* that emphasize improved community relations.
6. What kind of access have you had to *HRFS* materials?

## **Appendix 10**

### **Sample Focus Group Transcript (Students)**

SM: What I'd like you to do is just go around and do a quick introduction. Name, what year you're in, and your age.

██████████, Year 9, I'm 13.

██████, Year 9, 13.

██████████, Year 9, and I'm 14.

██████, I'm in Year 9 and I'm 13.

I'm ██████████, Year 9, I'm 13.

██████████, Year 9.

SM: What do you like about your school?

Students: Laughter

Girl: The library

Boy: The multiculturalism. Everyone can speak to each other and meet each other.

Boy 2: The teachers are very enthusiastic about what they do.

Boy 3: Everything. Um, the only things that I don't like is some, the school timings, actually, that's the only thing that I don't like. It's um, they told us it would finish at 2:50 but now it finishes at 3:00.

SM: What do you think some of the challenges or problems your school has?

Boy: Shortage of teachers, they used to have that and now they don't.

Boy 2: Teachers who can't teach properly (Laughter). I'm not gonna give any names, but like only do worksheets, it's like, 'worksheet for you.'

SM: what's your idea of teaching properly?

Boy 2: Like, you're active, you make the children laugh, they learn something, they have fun. And in the end of the day they get something down on paper as well.

Boy 3: and also the teachers have to know what they're doing cause some of them just hand you the worksheet, they read from the worksheet, so that's exactly what we learn because they don't know their own stuff that's the problem sometimes.

SM: Are you familiar with AI?

Students: Yeah.

SM: Can any of you tell me what you know about the organization.

Boy 3: Alright basically they work on human rights and stuff and um they came to Buckingham this year when they did the conference, the international students conference, and the theme was human rights and they came, they called in a few speakers and basically told us about what they do and stuff.

Boy 1: We've got these badges, Amnesty ones.

SM: What did you learn about what they do besides what you've just told me?

Boy 2: I really like what they do cause like, it's quite a issue, it's like a strong thing. But if they like do good, like one of the speakers, he's been in prison for so long, and they saved him, and then he came out and he gave this speech and it like nearly made me cry, which is quite good.

Boy 3: and another thing is they got a group on Facebook, I joined it, that basically every so often they give like some news reports, like people who are up for execution, how to stop them from being executed, or how to help people being in a bad condition and all that stuff.

SM: Have you all joined the facebook group?

Students: Yeah.

SM: So this is the AI UK facebook group? So what do you know about HRFS project? When I say that to you, HRFS, are you familiar with that?

Boy 1: Not really, we know that Amnesty is working with Buckingham but we don't exactly know about that.

SM: What do you know about the work AI is doing at Buckingham?

Boy 1: Every so often, they came to the conference, that's the only thing we know that Amnesty does, but then every year they're with the conference, they're supporting, they've got a really big role at the conference.

SM: Are you learning about HR in your classes at all?

Boy 1: No.

Boy 2: Very little.

SM: What about outside of your classes?

Boy 3: In drama.

Girl: In RE, about executions and the death penalty.

SM: Is this something you've learned about in the past or is it new.

Boy 1: It's kind of new to this year, that's the curriculum they do that every year.

SM: Now what about outside of the classroom, are you hearing anything from teachers or your fellow students or heads or assistant heads about human rights?

Boy 1: Quite often actually, cause it's not exactly, we don't hear the word human right but basically it's all connected to that, all the assemblies and everything, yeah.

SM: Can anyone explain to me what you think the concept of *Human Rights Friendly Schools* means?

Boy 1: it's like trying to teach students about human rights but like more.

Girl: It's like they consider that if like some people are treated unfairly and acting up, to treat people fairly, like just give them a peace of mind.

Boy 2: Trying to teach like young people to like think about if it ever happens in the future then you can stop it and you can be part of it, and we can like feel good after it.

SM: How do you think HR can change your experience as a student, what do you think will happen if there's more human rights?

Boy 1: It can make us like more aware about problems in the world.

Boy 2: It can make me more sensitive towards issue. So if I hear it anywhere, usually I'll be like yeah, human rights, but I'll be like, now I know actually how it feels, I'll be like, 'oh, yeah.' I'll be like really sad.

SM: Are HR about just sadness? What do you think they're about.

Boy 1: Basically everything, living conditions, um. Sometimes they like, on Amnesty they like, most of the advertisements they put up on fb is for people who are facing execution, and if enough people like joined up, then they won't be executed. So it's like a kind of petition thing.

Boy 2: Freedom.

Girl: Marriage. To marry who you want.

SM: What do you think, let me ask you about how you participate in what goes on in your school, do you think that you have a say in what happens in your school?

Three Students: Yeah.

SM: Ok can you tell me a bit about that?

Boy: Yeah there's this thing called Buckingham Student Voice, basically, yeah. And basically it's like everyone gets a say in how the school should change, how it can change and they have a few governors meetings and some of us are invited over as student representatives of the school. And we talk about what could be improved and what's good about the school. That's what happens every, um, I don't know how often it happens but it did happen last year

SM: You were all involved in BSV?

Students: Yeah.

SM: What does that involvement look like? Does that mean that you, specifically students would go to meetings or does that mean that you'll hear about meetings?

Boy 1: It's in general actually, everybody in Buckingham is in BSV, cause they all get a say and it's not exactly meetings that sometimes they just organized, but otherwise yeah you can have your say anywhere.

Boy 2: Yeah like in lessons. And we're learning advisors so we go there and watch the lesson and we give them like constructive feedback on how to be like, how to make it better for the people, and they'll do it. And yeah we'll keep doing that.

SM: And have you done that yourself, personally?

Boy 2: Yeah, a few times.

SM: And how was that experience?

Boy 2: It's quite effective with the teachers cause then the next time you go in the lesson you see the them trying their hardest to actually do it. That makes you like it.

Boy 3: Then you see some improvement and the lessons are improving as well.

SM: Now what do you think the benefit of BSV is?

Boy 3: It kind of like makes the teachers aware of what you think, how it should happen, like she said the learning advisors kind of lets the teachers know how you think the lessons can go.

Boy 2: yeah it's like the best way of getting feedback from everybody.

Girl: The teachers can know like how you learn best instead of like, how they do it, because pupils know what pupils want.

SM: What about the decisions, do you think you have any say about how decisions are made in the school?

Boy 1: Yeah. Through BSV, basically it's like recently they got all these Macs everybody was saying. Cause there were quite a few there was just a small amount of Macs in the school before, um last year, but then everybody wanted more Macs cause they got filed in the library. Every body wanted more so they bought some for classrooms, yeah for the rooms.

SM: How did they make it known to the school that they wanted more macs.

Boy 1: Everybody in the school was saying they wanted more macs.

SM: But who organized it, how did that come together?

Boy 1: Actually, what happens is that people in the playground, like teachers on duty, they just hear random conversations about Macs and stuff, about wanting to get Macs, and they report back to the head teacher, so the head teacher decided to get a few Macs for technology and everything.

# **Appendix 11**

## **Classroom workshop**

### **BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL HRFS RESEARCH VISIT STUDENT RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Objectives of the In-Classroom Workshop**

Participants will be able to:

- Give their feedback on what human rights means to them
- Discuss their experiences learning about human rights
- Complete a short quantitative survey

#### **Materials Needed**

- Participant information sheet (1 per student)
- Large paper or newsprint (15 pieces)
- Markers (2)
- Felt pens for student group (1 per student for secondary; 6 packs of 20 color pens for primary)

#### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)**

1. Introduce yourself and the reason you are there to the classroom.
2. Ask the students to stand up in a circle so we can all talk about what is going to happen during the workshop.
3. Do a quick go-around where everyone says their name and one thing they like about school (or, alternatively, one thing they would change about school).
4. Pass out the **participant information sheet** and go over it with the students.

#### **ACTIVITY ONE (10 minutes): Classroom Brainstorm**

Procedure:

1. Write the phrase **Human Rights** on the board and circle it.
2. Ask the students to volunteer any words or phrases that they associate with human rights. If you are having difficulty soliciting responses, offer some suggestions as to how they might respond. For example:
  - a. When you think about human rights, what comes to mind?
  - b. Why do you think human rights are important? Or are they not important?
3. Write the answers on the board as they are given.

#### **ACTIVITY TWO (20-25 minutes): Silent Brainstorm**

Rationale: This activity will allow the students to write comments, questions, and answers about their experiences with the partner school.

Procedure

1. Arrange the students into groups of 3-4. Give each group felt pens for every student.
2. Each group will receive a piece of A2 paper with a word or a photo in the middle that signifies a particular human rights issue (either an instance of a violation of human rights, or of human rights being respected)
3. Explain to the students that they are going to do a Silent Brainstorm.

4. Each group must write a **question**, a **comment**, or **answer someone's question** or **ask a question or comment on someone's comment** about the picture or word in the middle **without talking to anyone in their group**. Explain to the students that they can still have a conversation with their group members by writing down questions, answers and comments. But they cannot talk. Tell them that they have five minutes to do this exercise.
5. For the picture, you can use:
  - a. A photo of a situation where human rights may or may not be being violated
  - b. A photo of a situation where human rights are being respected
6. For the **first** photo below, some example questions could be: "what did he do," "why is he being held down like that," and "what are his rights?" For the **second** photo some example questions could be "why are they marching," "what are their rights" or "are they celebrating or protesting?" Explain to students that it can be any question at all that you have about the picture.
7. At the end of the five minutes, instruct the students that they can now talk to each other, and that they should take a couple of minutes to discuss their questions, comments, and answers.
8. **SEGUE:** Explain to students that as researchers, our task is to ask questions, and that we are going to examine the questions they've asked today and hope to use some of their questions in the research. Instruct them that for the last part of this exercise, we will ask them three questions about what they think about the school link.

#### **ACTIVITY THREE (5 minutes):**

#### **Discussion/reflection on Buckingham's participation in *Human Rights Friendly Schools***

Initiate a conversation on what students think the goal of *Human Rights Friendly Schools* is:

1. What do you think your teachers/Amnesty want you to learn?
2. What do you think your teachers/Amnesty want you to be able to do as a result of your participation in this project?
3. What do you think your teachers/Amnesty want you to be able think differently about as a result of your learning?

#### **ACTIVITY FOUR (5 minutes): Closing Reflection**

1. Give participants opportunity to reflect on the workshop today. Did you enjoy it? What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it?
2. Ask the participants to go around and share one thing they learned today.
3. Thank the students for their time and tell them that they are welcome to contact us if they have any questions.

## **Appendix 12**

### **Student Participant Information Sheet**

#### **PhD Research Study – Student Participant Information Sheet**

Dear Student,

I am a PhD researcher at the Institute of Education at the University of London. For my PhD project, I am interested in learning more about your experiences as a student at Buckingham School. In particular, I want to know about what you are learning by participating in Amnesty International's *Human Rights Friendly Schools* project.

Some important things that you should know about this study:

- I have designed these research activities to be enjoyable learning experiences that can benefit you by giving you the opportunity to think and talk about your learning experiences in the classroom.
- I will not use your names in the research report.
- You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at all. Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your participation in this research activity!  
Sincerely,

Sam Mejias

*Research Project Title*

**NGO and School Partnerships for Human Rights Education**

*Researcher Contact Information*

Sam Mejias, PhD Student  
Institute of Education, University of London  
20 Bedford Way  
London WC1H 0AL  
Email: [smejias@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:smejias@ioe.ac.uk)

*Description of Research Project*

I am exploring how Amnesty International UK and Buckingham School work together to implement the *Human Rights Friendly Schools* project, in order to learn more about the challenges and opportunities for the project to be successful.

## Appendix 13

### ***Human Rights Friendly Schools Stages of Development***

#### Stages of Development for *Human Rights Friendly Schools*

#### Key Area 1: School Governance (Linked to Global Principles 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7)

Key Area Component	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<b>School Governance: Values</b>	The school does not have a vision statement.	The school has a vision statement but human rights are not explicit.	The school's vision statement explicitly reflects human rights values, but they are not actively promoted or made real in the life of the school.	The school has a vision statement that reflects human rights values, and the values are made real in the day to day life of the school
<b>School Governance: Policies</b>	Policies are decided on by school management and do not incorporate or reflect human rights principles	Policies begin to incorporate and reflect specific human rights principles, but are still decided on by management. Consideration of the human rights impacts of school policies is not yet included in policy formation processes.	Policies incorporate and reflect specific human rights principles, and the school creates opportunities for the voices of school community members to be heard and considered in matters of policy.	Policies reflect human rights principles and clearly state their impact on the human rights of school community members. All members of the school community are involved in their development and implementation.
<b>School Governance: Leadership</b>	Leadership is concentrated within school management.	Leadership opportunities and roles are distributed to members of the school staff beyond school management, but not to all members of the school community.	Leadership opportunities and roles extend to all members of the school community, including students, teachers, administrators, parents and other school community members.	Leadership opportunities and roles extend to all, and the school actively supports different members of the community to take up leadership positions within the school. Different members of the school community are empowered to be leaders.
<b>School Governance: Participation</b>	Governance decisions are made by a small group of school management staff.	Governance bodies or structures are created for members of the school community in order to facilitate active participation. Participation does not include decision-making, and there may not be equal access to participation for all members of the school community.	Governance bodies or structures for members of the school community facilitate active participation, and are given limited decision-making authorities. Efforts are made to ensure equal access for all to participate.	All members of the community are involved in decision-making and decisions about how the school is run, and all are adequately supported in order to be able to participate in governance.
<b>School Governance: Accountability and Transparency</b>	Members of the school community are not aware of and do not have access to school policies and practices, and there are no mechanisms for addressing human rights issues within the school.	Access to school policies and practices is provided to all members of the school community if requested, but there are no mechanisms for addressing human rights issues within the school.	Access to school policies and practices is freely and actively provided to all members of the school community, and the school develops mechanisms for addressing human rights issues within the school.	School policies and practices are transparent, accessible to all, and accountable to human rights principles, and there are clearly established mechanisms for addressing human rights issues that function properly.

#### Key Area 2: Community Relations (Linked to Global Principles 1, 2, 4, 9 and 10)

Key Area Component	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<b>Community</b>	Students do not	Staff and students	The majority of staff	Staff and students treat each

<b>Relations: Staff-Student</b>	respect staff, and staff do not respect students. There are no mechanisms for mediating conflict between students and staff, and students and staff do not work together on issues that affect their relationship such as developing codes of conduct and discipline policies.	acknowledge the need to build a relationship based on mutual respect, and establish through dialogue basic codes of conduct and discipline policies for mediating the staff-student relationship. Staff and students may not yet have a mechanism for mediating conflict.	and students demonstrate good relationships and have a process for building mutual respect and trust through the establishment of codes of conduct and discipline policies. Staff and students work together to develop mechanisms for mediating conflict.	other with dignity and respect. There are clearly understood, functioning mechanisms for mediating conflict. Students and staff work together in all aspects of their relationship within the school.
<b>Community Relations: Student-Student</b>	There are negative relationships between students, and conflicts such as bullying or harassment are commonplace. No mechanisms exist for mediating conflicts between students.	Students acknowledge the need to build a relationship based on mutual respect, and establish through dialogue basic codes of conduct and behavior among each other. The school supports students to develop necessary skills for working together, but there are not yet mechanisms for mediating conflicts between students.	Students work together to improve relationships and to build mutual respect and trust among the school population. With support from members of the school community, mechanisms for mediating conflict between students have been established.	Students treat each other with respect and dignity, conflicts are managed effectively and peacefully, and the school supports the students to develop skills necessary for working together. All students, regardless of their background, interact and work with each other within and outside of the classroom in a respectful way.
<b>Community Relations: Staff Relations</b>	Staff members do not have good working relationships and treat each other differently based on position and status. There may be numerous incidents of bullying and harassment, and there are no mechanisms to address conflict.	Staff members acknowledge the need to build a relationship based on mutual respect, and establish through dialogue basic codes of conduct and behavior among each other. There may be numerous incidents of bullying and harassment, and there are no mechanisms to address conflict.	The majority of staff regardless of position or role have good working relationships based on mutual respect, and codes of conduct are followed. Some bullying and harassment occurs, but there are mechanisms to address this.	All members of staff treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of their position or role within the school, and work together to model good relations based on human rights to students. Bullying and harassment are rare but effective mechanisms have been developed collaboratively to address these issues.
<b>Community Relations: Parents and the wider community</b>	The school has little or very limited relationships with parents and the wider community.	The school reaches out to parents and the wider school community to participate in events, meetings, and other activities pertaining to the work of the school. The school clearly outlines to parents and community members the role it envisions for itself within the community and the human rights principles its work is founded on.	The school and its community members dialogue with parents and wider community to develop meaningful, supportive and reciprocal relationships. Opportunities for the school and wider community to interact and support each other are frequent.	Parents and other community members are deeply with the work of schools and schools engage in meaningful, supportive and reciprocal relationships with parents and the wider community. The school is seen as a community hub to which all community members can have access, and the school acts as a community resource that demonstrates and supports the realization of human rights.

### Key Area 3: Curriculum (Linked to Global Principles 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10)

Key Area Component	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<b>Curriculum: Policy and Practice</b>	There is no reference to human rights in curricular policy, and teachers do not consider the impact of human rights on their teaching practices. Students are not taught about human rights as part of their curriculum, and do not have any	Human rights is taught either as a part of another subject or explicitly. Teachers do not teach in a way that is human rights friendly, and the curriculum is not human rights friendly in terms of student input into and access to curriculum. Students are not involved in making decisions about the	Human rights is taught either as a part of another subject or explicitly. With support from the school, many teachers are beginning to use rights friendly approaches in their teaching practices. There are mechanisms for student input into and decision-making about the curriculum, and all	Human rights is taught explicitly in the school, but is also reflected in other subjects. Students are involved in decision-making about what is taught and how it is taught. Lessons are adapted to ensure that all students can access them equally. Teachers are supported to teach in a

	input into or access to the curriculum they are taught. Students are not involved in making decisions about the curriculum.	curriculum.	students have access to curriculum materials.	rights friendly way.
<b>Curriculum: Materials</b>	The teaching materials that the school uses are not accessible to all. Curricular materials do not embody HR principles, and HR is not taught explicitly.	The school provides access to teaching materials for everyone, but materials do not all reflect human rights principles. The school has a plan to ensure for the provision of human rights materials and the review of how existing materials can become human rights friendly.	The school has a clear process in place to support the provision of human rights friendly materials to students and teachers. Teaching materials are accessible to all, and school is actively adapting existing material to be human rights friendly.	The school's curriculum is accessible by all regardless of status, and all curriculum materials are human rights friendly. Members of the school community work together to collect and develop human rights curriculum materials.
<b>Curriculum: Teacher Training</b>	Teachers do not have access to teacher training on human rights and human rights approaches to teaching or any other means to build their capacity in teaching human rights.	The school has a process to support teachers to develop human rights friendly teaching skills. The school management asks teachers to input on how the school should develop human rights teaching capacity.	The school has an established dialogue between teachers and school management for the provision of regular training opportunities for teaching about human rights and in a human rights friendly way.	Teachers are supported to teach and integrate human rights into the curriculum, and to teach in a human rights friendly way.

#### Key Area 4: Extra-curricular Activities and School Environment (Linked to Global Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10)

Key Area Component	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<b>Extra-Curricular Activities and School Environment: Extra-Curricular Activities</b>	Extra-curricular activities do not embody human rights principles, and are only available to a small number of students. Extra-curricular activities are developed and managed by senior staff, and the community is not involved in any way.	The school community encourages and supports extra-curricular activities that are human rights-focused, and begins to identify where existing activities can be adapted to be in compliance with human rights. The school encourages participation by opening up the decision-making process regarding extra-curricular activities.	There are clear mechanisms for bringing human rights into extra-curricular activities, which are accessible to all people. Participation in extra-curricular activities is encouraged, and the school involves the whole school community to develop human rights friendly codes of conduct for extra-curricular activities. There are specific human rights-focused extra-curricular activities in the school, and human rights friendly guidelines have been established for all activities.	The school has extra-curricular activities with a human rights or community focus and all activities are human rights friendly. All extra-curricular activities are accessible to everyone (regardless of abilities and needs). Students and other school community members are active participants together with the wider community in developing and managing extra-curricular activities. All members of the school community are empowered to set up their own extra-curricular activities at the school.
<b>Extra-Curricular Activities and School Environment: School Environment</b>	<b>1-SAFETY:</b> School community members do not feel safe and secure, and special protection is not afforded to vulnerable populations. Discrimination sometimes occurs, as does verbal and physical conflict. <b>2-ACCESS AND ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS:</b> The school does not provide equal access to resources, activities, academic or career opportunities, and does not support economic,	The school involves the whole school community to develop mechanisms for the promotion of a human rights friendly school environment. All are encouraged to participate and are given some decision-making responsibilities. The school appearance and atmosphere may not yet reflect human rights principles, and	The school has a clear and participatory mechanism in place for integrating human rights in the school environment that is accessible to all members of the school community, who are endowed with decision-making authority. Members of the school community work together to promote a human rights friendly environment that is safe and secure, non-discriminatory, and	<b>(1).</b> All school community members feel safe and secure in the school environment, and feel dignified, respected and valued. The school is a place where discrimination is not tolerated. <b>(2).</b> The school supports realization of economic, social and cultural rights of all its community members. The school building is accessible to all and equal opportunities exist for all, including vulnerable populations. <b>(3).</b> Participation is encouraged throughout the

	<p>social and cultural rights (such as provision of school meals).</p> <p><b>3-PARTICIPATION:</b> There is no participation by members of the school community on decision-making about the school environment.</p> <p><b>4-APPEARANCE &amp; ATMOSPHERE:</b> The appearance and atmosphere of the school do not reflect human rights principles, and common areas in the school are not human rights friendly.</p>	<p>members of the school community may not yet feel safe or secure in the school. The school environment may not yet support economic, social and cultural rights.</p>	<p>supportive of economic, social and cultural rights.</p>	<p>school.</p> <p><b>(4)</b> The appearance and atmosphere of the school environment are shaped through collective decision-making processes to reflect human rights principles.</p>
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**Appendix 14**  
***Human Rights Friendly Schools Year One Action Plan for Buckingham School***

**Human Rights Friendly Schools – Year One Action Plan**

<b>Name of School :</b>	Buckingham School
<b>Country :</b>	UK
<b>Overall Vision Statement :</b>	TBC!

<b>Key Area Component</b>	<b>KEY AREA 1 – School Participation and Governance</b>				<b>EVALUATION:</b> <b>Setting Indicators</b> How will you know that you have reached or surpassed your goal?	
	<b>Questions for Further Reflection</b> (These questions are the same as those included in the <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i> and are intended to help you reflect on each key area)	<b>STARTING OUT:</b> Where is your school now? Where is your school placed on the Stages of Development for Human Rights Friendly Schools? How do you know that you are there?	<b>GOAL:</b> Where do you want your school to go? What is your long-term objective? What is your first year objective?	<b>Description of ACTIVITY</b> How will you accomplish your first year objective?		<b>RESOURCES</b> What resources will you need to develop and implement your plan? Who will be involved? How do you plan to work with your Amnesty International partner?
<b>1.1 School Participation and Governance : Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Does the school have an existing mission statement, ethos, motto, or operating charter? Does the mission statement reflect the school's values?</li> <li>✓ How can it be adapted or added to in order to include human rights?</li> <li>✓ In what ways may the adoption of human rights values affect existing school policies?</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 2 - 3.</p> <p>The schools' motto and values are linked to human rights and have some reference.</p> <p>The School development plan being drafted at the moment does show how we are moving towards stage 4.</p>	<p>To have a strong mission statement that communicates to the school community that Buckingham is a HRFS</p> <p>To articulate what this means, i.e. what core values will the school promote.</p> <p>That the SDP and the</p>	<p>JLT to consult with staff, governors and students to get their views on what a mission statement will involve.</p> <p>Writing of SDP and PDC will see this incorporated over the year ahead</p>	<p>Create powerpoint/summary document that explains the project to school community (starting with Governors) with [redacted] to develop [redacted] to ensure [redacted] regular content on</p>	<p>Mission statement displayed around school and in journals.</p> <p>Mission statement referred to at school events – eg Year 6 induction, STARS evening.</p>

<p><b>1.2 School Participation and Governance</b> : Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To what degree do students, teachers, and staff have a voice in the development and interpretation of school policies?</li> <li>✓ How could staff and students be more involved in the development or revision of school policies?</li> <li>✓ Is there space for staff and students to raise issues with school policies in a constructive way?</li> <li>✓ How human rights friendly are school policies such as the discipline policy or the bullying policy?</li> <li>✓ Do school policies refer to impact on human rights where appropriate?</li> <li>✓ Does the school have policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities?</li> <li>✓ Are school policies shared with parents and the wider community?</li> <li>✓ Has the differing impact of school policies on girls and boys been considered?</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>There is a large amount of sharing of policy development and opportunities given to staff and students outside of management to contribute.</p> <p>As such the policies do not explicitly state their impact on people's human rights, and not all members of the community are directly involved.</p>	<p>HRFS ideals embedded within all school policies.</p> <p>Governance decisions and policy development based on HRFS ideals and beliefs</p> <p>HRFS principles are fully embedded into culture, practice and ethos of the school.</p>	<p>Rewriting and drafting of many school policies.</p> <p>Training and information sharing with governors.</p> <p>HRFS ideas regularly revisited at governor meetings.</p>	<p>HRFS in school newsletter, keeping the mission statement and project in people's minds.</p> <p>PDC makes human rights values explicit.</p>	<p>Interviews and discussion with governors.</p> <p>Evidence of newly worked policies and evidence from minutes of meetings.</p>
<p><b>1.3 School</b></p>	<p>✓ What are the opportunities and</p>	<p>Stage 3 – moving towards</p>	<p>To have a much more</p>	<p>HRFS ideals have</p>	<p>Evidence in policy</p>	

<p><b>Participation and Governance</b> : Leadership for change</p>	<p>challenges for promoting shared leadership among members of the school community?          ✓ How will the school deal with resistance to change?          ✓ Who could act as human rights 'champions' within the school community?          ✓ How are leadership meetings and events organized, and what space is there for including students and teachers?          ✓ How can leadership roles be more inclusive of students, teachers, administrators, and other school community members (for example parents)?          ✓ What skills will new leaders who have not previously held leadership positions need to develop, and how will that development be facilitated?</p>	<p>stage 4          Students and staff have many opportunities for shared leadership. Roles are distributed among a lot of staff and the leadership of students is encouraged very strongly.          Students play key leadership roles within the school.</p>	<p>structured approach to student leadership and decision making.          We do not want to rely on the individual enthusiasm of students but there should be specific leadership roles for students.          Leadership opportunities should also extend to different members of the school community.          Fully integrated into school policies and vision setting.</p>	<p>been built into school development plan.          Most already done</p>	<p>documents.          Governors regularly discuss progress and fully informed – see minutes of meeting.          Student groups up and running and regularly working on issues of HR.          Curriculum planning and content evident.          Interviews with students, teachers and governors make this evident.</p>
<p><b>1.4 School Participation and Governance</b> : Participation</p>	<p>✓ How can school governance processes promote meaningful democratic engagement across the school?          ✓ How can all people in the school community have a say in the decision-making process?          ✓ What are some challenges of involving all school community members in governance activities? How can these challenges be overcome?          ✓ What skills are needed by</p>	<p>Stage 3-4          Co-construction of curriculum in years 7 and 8.          High levels of student involvement in school reflection and self evaluation.          Student Voice central process to all aspects of school work.          Elected student leadership group.          Student involvement in</p>	<p>House councils set up completely and effectively democratically to support work of the JLT.          All students to be fully aware of methods of how they express their opinion.</p>	<p>Work with heads of houses to ensure that training and selection of students take place.          To develop areas of the school website to make sure that there are forums and methods for students to understand and be fully aware of the</p>	<p>Website and use of website.          Regular meeting of councils with clear impact on knowledge of students as regards Human Rights Friendly School Award.</p>

	<p>students, teachers and other staff in order to participate in governance of schools?          ✓ How can the school ensure that the wider community is involved in governance of the school?          ✓ Is there equal access to governance, regardless of gender, age, disability or any other status?</p>	<p>selection of staff.          Student groups evaluate teaching and their opinions sought on it all.          Students fully involved in any aspects of school redesign.          Community governors make up governing body.</p>	<p>systems available for them to involve themselves in the decision making within the school.</p>	
<p><b>1.5 School Participation and Governance</b>          :          Accountability and Transparency</p>	<p>✓ How is the school accountable to the rights set out in the Global Principles for Human Rights Friendly Schools?          ✓ How transparent are the school's policies and practices to all its members?          ✓ What steps can the school take to become more accountable and transparent to the entire school community?</p>	<p>Stage 2-3          Many policies accessible to staff if not all students.          Regular feedback to staff and students on new policy ideas.          Positive Behaviour Mentors understand the issues and act on them.</p>	<p>To reach stage 4 for the guidelines</p> <p>Need support from head teacher with this as it is a large job from an administrative and practical point of view.</p>	

KEY AREA 2 – Community Relations						
Key Area Component	Questions for Further Reflection (These questions are the same as those included in the <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i> and are intended to help you reflect on each key area)	STARTING OUT: Where is your school now? Where is your school placed on the Stages of Development for Human Rights Friendly Schools? How do you know that you are there?	GOAL: Where do you want your school to go? What is your long-term objective? What is your first year objective?	Description of ACTIVITY How will you accomplish your first year objective?	RESOURCES What resources will you need to develop and implement your plan? Who will be involved? How do you plan to work with your Amnesty International partner? Students, staff and non-teaching staff.	EVALUATION: Setting Indicators How will you know that you have reached or surpassed your goal?
<p><b>2.1 Community Relations:</b> Student – Staff</p>	<p>✓ How do teachers and students currently interact with each other, and are there problems or challenges to overcome? (for example lack of respect)</p>	<p>Stage 3          Student feedback surveys highlight strong relations between staff and student.</p>	<p>To ensure the new house councils meet regular and talk about these issues and ways of making sure we can</p>	<p>Training for house councils.          Identify difficult</p>	<p>Decrease in behaviour incidents.          Even more positive feedback from student questionnaires.</p>	

<p>Relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do staff treat students with respect?</li> <li>✓ Do students treat staff with respect?</li> <li>✓ Do students and staff work together to develop discipline policies, classroom charters and other codes of conduct?</li> <li>✓ What mechanisms exist to mediate conflict between students and staff?</li> <li>✓ How is freedom of expression promoted, and how are the contributions of each individual valued?</li> <li>✓ Do staff involve students in decisions about what is taught and how it is taught?</li> <li>✓ Do staff encourage and support students to reach their full potential?</li> </ul>	<p>Individual departments have their own systems for mediating conflict.</p> <p>Student mediators work with students and staff on an ad hoc basis, there is room to make sure these students are higher profile and the system in higher profile.</p> <p>All the existing student Voice work is already very strong in this area.</p> <p>Students highlight some staff as failing to talk to students in a respectful manner.</p>	<p>move towards stage 4.</p> <p>Teams of students to work with challenging classes and students to help them manage their behavior and manner towards other staff.</p>	<p>students and challenging groups of students who need to work on moving forward.</p> <p>System in place where students support students and staff in developing a culture of respect through the whole school.</p>	<p>Pre-lesson and post-lesson questionnaires for sample of students and teachers – compare their perceptions of student-teacher relationships before and after the lessons/training.</p>
<p>2.2 Community Relations: Student – Student Relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Are conflicts between students effectively managed at the school?</li> <li>✓ Are students involved in mediating conflict between other students? Would this be possible in your school?</li> <li>✓ What policies exist that protect students from treating each other badly? (for example bullying)</li> <li>✓ In what ways are students taught to treat each other with dignity and respect? Do the students seem to carry these values with them when during their free time? (for example during lunch or recess)</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>Peer mediators</p> <p>Strong use of key students in dealing with issues.</p> <p>Strong anti-bullying policies in place.</p> <p>PDC and Re lesson and modeling by staff of appropriate manner in which one is dealt with.</p> <p>L2L encourages very strong reflection on students ability to develop</p>	<p>Student relationships are improved.</p> <p>Students have a greater understanding of how to respond positively to diversity (cultural, religious, ethnic, gender).</p> <p>Develop students led pledges about behaviour.</p> <p>Students design the charter and present to other students.</p>	<p>Active lessons on responding positively to diversity, peer mediation etc in Citizenship and PSHE/ PDC.</p> <p><b>And/Or</b></p> <p>Training for prefects on peer mentors, focusing on promoting inclusion – acting as ‘ambassadors for positive behaviour’.</p>	<p>[Student] to speak to HOD for PSHE/PDC. HOD to identify useful resources for lessons.</p> <p><b>And/Or</b></p> <p>[Student] and relevant member of staff to lead on organizing training for prefects. Training materials will be needed</p>

	<p>✓ Are students supported to develop skills necessary for working with other people e.g. through group work in class, team building days?</p> <p>✓ Is there meaningful interaction between students from diverse communities within and outside of the classroom?</p> <p>✓ Do boys and girls respect each other and have positive interaction?</p>	<p>their own skills of self-reflection and working in teams</p> <p>Students in year 8 even receive a level in this.</p>	<p>We want staff to feel there is a standard procedure for dealing with staff conflict.</p> <p>That all staff feel secure and that relations are modeled and practiced by senior staff</p>	<p>Revisiting of policies.</p> <p>Carry out staff well being survey.</p> <p>SDP action plan includes specific strategy for raising staff morale.</p>	<p>Advice on suitable lesson activities/training workshops from Amnesty and UNICEF RRS staff and Local Authority PSHE Advisor.</p>	<p>Questionnaires and interviews with staff to ensure practice is commonplace and rigorous.</p> <p>Evident in policies and minutes of meetings when matters have been dealt with accordingly.</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> <b>Community Relations:</b> Staff Relations</p>	<p>✓ How do teaching staff, school administrators, school leaders and other support personnel interact with each other?</p> <p>✓ How can staff practice and model good relations based on human rights to students?</p> <p>✓ Are there procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment amongst staff?</p> <p>✓ How are conflicts amongst staff members dealt with?</p> <p>✓ Do the school leaders treat other members of staff with respect?</p>	<p>Strong management practice deals with any internal staff issues of harassment.</p>	<p>We want the wider community to make a positive contribution to the learning process in school.</p> <p>School to be seen as a community hub and a community resource for the realization of human rights.</p>	<p>Community evenings and presentations to take place in the school.</p> <p>Continued introduction of coffee mornings and evening clubs and meetings for parents.</p> <p>Work with community</p>	<p>Support for parental engagement officer from Amnesty and DECODE in creating strategies for further community links and development.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in attendance of parents' evenings.</p> <p>Success and regular occurrence of community meetings.</p> <p>Parental questionnaires effectively and successfully carried out.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> <b>Community Relations:</b> Parent and Community-wide Relations</p>	<p>✓ How are parents involved in the life of the school?</p> <p>✓ How can parents and members of the wider community participate in the Human Rights Friendly Schools project?</p> <p>✓ How do members of the wider community engage with the school and members of the school community?</p> <p>✓ How can the school engage in</p>	<p>Stage 2-3</p> <p>New position of parent liaison officer proving very effective in promoting and further integrating parents into school.</p> <p>New models of parents evening very effective and well received.</p>	<p>Community evenings to take place in the school.</p> <p>Continued introduction of coffee mornings and evening clubs and meetings for parents.</p> <p>Work with community</p>	<p>Community evenings and presentations to take place in the school.</p> <p>Continued introduction of coffee mornings and evening clubs and meetings for parents.</p> <p>Work with community</p>	<p>Support for parental engagement officer from Amnesty and DECODE in creating strategies for further community links and development.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in attendance of parents' evenings.</p> <p>Success and regular occurrence of community meetings.</p> <p>Parental questionnaires effectively and successfully carried out.</p>

	<p>meaningful, supportive and reciprocal relationships with the wider community?</p> <p>✓ What does the school have to offer the community, and might the community have to offer the school? (for example community service, community meeting place, community resources)</p> <p>✓ How do school processes regarding relations between parents or guardians and other members of the school community uphold the principles of accountability and transparency?</p> <p>✓ How can good practices around human rights in the wider community have a positive influence on the school community, and vice versa?</p>	Dialogue gradually increasing.	First year target would be to see regular parent consultation days taking place and PTA meeting regularly.	<p>police officer to keep links strong and effective.</p> <p>Close work with parental engagement officer in moving forward towards PTA development.</p>	
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Key Area Component	Questions for Further Reflection (These questions are the same as those included in the <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i> and are intended to help you reflect on each key area)	STARTING OUT: Where is your school now? Where is your school placed on the Stages of Development for Human Rights Friendly Schools? How do you know that you are there?	KEY AREA 3 – Curriculum GOAL: Where do you want your school to go? What is your long-term objective? What is your first year objective?	Description of ACTIVITY How will you accomplish your first year objective?	RESOURCES What resources will you need to develop and implement your plan? Who will be involved? How do you plan to work with your Amnesty International partner?	EVALUATION: Setting Indicators How will you know that you have reached or surpassed your goal?
3.1 Curriculum: Policies and	<p>✓ Are students currently taught about human rights? If so, through which subjects?</p>	Stage 2-3	Citizenship curriculum that is taught across all	Much already done	Support from Amnesty for specific	Student interviews and

<p>Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Of the possible strategies presented in the Guidelines for integrating human rights into the curriculum, which is most appropriate to your school?</li> <li>✓ Is teaching and learning in all subjects, including Mathematics, English and Science, linked to human rights where relevant? How can teachers be supported to do this?</li> <li>✓ Are students taught about respecting other cultures?</li> <li>✓ Do teachers currently teach in a way that respects human rights, e.g. using participatory methods?</li> <li>✓ Are students meaningfully involved in decisions about what is taught and how it is taught?</li> <li>✓ Are students provided with equal opportunities to use the school library or computer facilities for their class and home work?</li> <li>✓ Are lessons and tasks adapted so that all students are able to access them, regardless of their specific needs?</li> <li>✓ Does the school tailor the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of each student to enable them to reach their full potential?</li> <li>✓ Do class rules/ codes of conduct refer to human rights?</li> </ul>	<p>Huge amount of teaching about human rights and cross cultural awareness throughout humanities curriculum and citizenship curriculum</p> <p>Much in English and some in Science – less so in Maths.</p> <p>PDC curriculum covers many aspects of themes of human rights.</p> <p>Access to resources in library and online is very open to all students.</p> <p>Differentiation policy and SEN department ensure rights of all abilities is respected.</p> <p>Personalised curriculum in years 7 and 8.</p> <p>Stage 3</p> <p>School is very well resourced regarding HRFS.</p>	<p>subjects ensures that all 10 themes of HRFS award and fully covered.</p> <p>First year objective is to fully analyse all subject curriculum and to have identified exactly where there are gaps and at the same time ensure that parts of it all are adapted and changed to ensure full coverage of HR in all lessons.</p>	<p>through citizenship work. Our head of citizenship is very aware of the work of HRFS and integrates it successfully into her planning.</p>	<p>resources as highlighted by the audit.</p> <p>Some training already planned for next term with Amnesty.</p> <p>Continued support from non-specialist staff in the school from expert teachers.</p>	<p>evidence in SOLs.</p> <p>Citizenship assessment fully covers HR as well and these results will inform of the success in this area.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Curriculum: Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What materials does the school already have that would support, or could be adapted to support the teaching of human rights?</li> <li>✓ What materials have been developed in the local context/ language that can be</li> </ul>	<p>Some work to be done on more materials that are specific to HR teaching.</p>	<p>Collect more resources and materials specific to HR</p>	<p>All materials in place organized and monitored by library.</p>		

<p>used/adapted for lessons?          ✓ How will the school collect and/or develop materials to teach about human rights? Who will be responsible for collecting and/or developing materials?          ✓ Do all teaching materials that the school uses embody the human rights principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation? For example, are they girl-friendly and inclusive?          ✓ Are teaching materials accessible to all students? e.g. do teachers differentiate the materials based on individual students needs?</p>	<p>Materials link closely to ECM agenda and therefore much of this is already in place.</p>	<p>Students experience high quality interactive and creative lessons on human rights in Citizenship classes</p> <p>All teachers understand what it means to teach in a 'rights respecting' way.</p> <p>Citizenship teachers feel confident teaching about human rights</p>	<p>Amnesty and UNICEF to run teacher training workshops for all staff at International Conference in Oct.</p> <p>Amnesty to work with Head of Citizenship to develop twilight training for teachers of Humanities, Drama, Science etc on how to deliver human rights citizenship lessons in their subject area. (from Jan)</p>	<p>Pre-training and post-training questionnaires for teachers – compare their confidence levels in teaching about human rights and in a rights respecting way before and after the training.</p> <p>To measure student experience of human rights lessons in Citizenship classes, ask Student Observers to feedback on lessons.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Curriculum:</b>  <b>Teacher Training</b></p> <p>✓ What is the existing capacity of teachers to teach about human rights?          ✓ Are there already some teachers who are enthusiastic about teaching human rights?          ✓ How can schools motivate all teachers to teach human rights? What incentives can be used?          ✓ Are teachers comfortable teaching in a rights friendly way?          ✓ Is it necessary to provide training to teachers to support the integration of human rights into the curriculum?          ✓ Is it necessary to provide training on a human rights approach to teaching and learning?          ✓ How best might this training be delivered?</p>	<p>Stage 3          Teachers have been trained by Unicef/Amnesty.          Support form in school staff.          Teachers in curriculum areas are moving towards teaching in a more and more HR friendly way.</p>	<p>high quality interactive and creative lessons on human rights in Citizenship classes</p> <p>All teachers understand what it means to teach in a 'rights respecting' way.</p> <p>Citizenship teachers feel confident teaching about human rights</p>	<p>Amnesty and UNICEF to run teacher training workshops for all staff at International Conference in Oct.</p> <p>Amnesty to work with Head of Citizenship to develop twilight training for teachers of Humanities, Drama, Science etc on how to deliver human rights citizenship lessons in their subject area. (from Jan)</p>	<p>Pre-training and post-training questionnaires for teachers – compare their confidence levels in teaching about human rights and in a rights respecting way before and after the training.</p> <p>To measure student experience of human rights lessons in Citizenship classes, ask Student Observers to feedback on lessons.</p>

Key Area Component	KEY AREA 4 – Extra curricular domain and school environment				EVALUATION: Setting Indicators
	Questions for Further Reflection (These questions are the same as those included in the <i>Guidelines for Human Rights Friendly Schools</i> and are intended to help you reflect on each key area)	STARTING OUT: Where is your school now? Where is your school placed on the Stages of Development for Human Rights Friendly Schools? How do you know that you are there?	GOAL: Where do you want your school to go? What is your long-term objective? What is your first year objective?	Description of ACTIVITY How will you accomplish your first year objective?	RESOURCES What resources will you need to develop and implement your plan? Who will be involved? How do you plan to work with your Amnesty International partner?
4.1 Extra-curricular domain: Before- and After-school Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Which of the school's existing extra-curricular activities may already be human rights friendly?</li> <li>✓ How can existing extra-curricular activities promote human rights values?</li> <li>✓ Are all students, regardless of their abilities or needs, encouraged and enabled to participate in before and after school activities?</li> <li>✓ Is the school able to run breakfast clubs to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to eat before school?</li> <li>✓ Does the school have a school nurse to support the health of pupils?</li> <li>✓ Are students and staff free to set up their own clubs if they want to?</li> <li>✓ Is there a school newspaper/radio that students run?</li> <li>✓ Is the safety of staff and student's taking part in extra-</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>Amnesty Youth group being organized in winter term.</p> <p>Huge range of extra curricula activities.</p> <p>Training from Amnesty organized.</p> <p>Members of staff not directly responsible for HRFS, given specific roles. Widening pool of staff being used successfully.</p>	<p>Ensure all extra-curricular activities are human rights friendly, ie. they promote human rights values (inclusion, participation, respect, etc).</p> <p><b>And/or</b></p> <p>Set up an Amnesty Youth Action group.</p> <p><b>And/ or</b></p> <p>Get human rights issues discussed on the school radio station. Encourage student voice and active participation</p>	<p>Create guidelines for making curricular activities human rights friendly and share with staff/students.</p> <p>Organise for an Amnesty speaker to deliver a talk to the 6<sup>th</sup> form IB students, inspiring students about human rights and explaining how to set up a Youth Action group.</p> <p>[Student] to look into setting up the school radio again and organizing a discussion about a human rights issue – e.g. gun crime</p>	<p>Staff/students feedback on guidelines and perceptions of 'human rights friendliness' of clubs, e.g. through questionnaire.</p> <p>Active Amnesty group set up and meets on a regular basis – e.g. once a month in term time (outside of exams)</p> <p>Radio station up and running. At least one feature a term on a rights-related issue.</p>

	<p>curricular activities a main concern for the school? E.g. how do students get home if they stay late after school? What are the pupil/teacher ratios for clubs? Are students ever alone with adults?</p> <p>✓ Is the wider community encouraged to use school facilities such as sports halls?</p> <p>✓ How can partnership with Amnesty International or other community-based organizations help support extra-curricular activity goals?</p>					
<p><b>4.2 Extra-curricular domain:</b> School Environment</p>	<p>✓ Do all school community members feel safe and secure at school regardless of position, gender or any other status?</p> <p>✓ Is there any area in the school where people feel less safe? What can be done to address this?</p> <p>✓ Does the school oppose and confront discrimination in all its forms?</p> <p>✓ Does the school provide equal access to resources and activities for all individuals?</p> <p>✓ Do students receive equal information and encouragement about academic and career opportunities?</p> <p>✓ Is the school's identity as a human rights friendly school reflected in the appearance and atmosphere of the school?</p>					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Are the corridors, playgrounds and cafeterias human rights friendly environments?</li> <li>✓ Are more vulnerable pupils supported at break/lunchtimes?</li> <li>✓ Is the school building accessible to all?</li> <li>✓ Is the school able to provide free school meals for pupils who need this? Is this done in a dignified manner?</li> <li>✓ Are school members involved in decision-making about improving the school environment?</li> </ul>					
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**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

Identify any potential internal challenges and/or external threats or constraints posed by the ideas you developed in your Year One Action Plan

Time for staff development.  
 Restrictions o key staff timetables.  
 Challenge of successfully involving parents in the work and development of the work.  
 Budget concerns this year has effected other aspects of our work at the school so could therefore impact on HRFS.  
 Spending too much time 'ticking boxes' on paperwork and not focusing on the more impact effective parts of the plan.  
 Concern at having to change policy documents to word it appropriately.

Also identify some strategies you might use to address the challenges, threats or constraints

Search for further funding and ideas to support the budget aspect of the work here.  
 Use training support from Amnesty as effectively as possible.

## **Appendix 15**

### **Amnesty Ireland's *Lift Off* primary whole-school HRE project**

Launched in 2001, *Lift Off* is a cross-border primary education programme for schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland arising from the 1998 Good Friday agreements (Morgan & Kitching, 2006). The project focuses primarily on teaching human rights using the UDHR and CRC as frameworks, and was supported by a series of bespoke primary education curricular resources (Amnesty International UK & Amnesty International Ireland, 2003a, 2003b, 2006). *Lift Off* also promotes the establishment of a “human rights-respecting” school environment and suggests creation of a rights-based code of behaviour for the classroom, involving students in school councils, and creating communal displays (Amnesty International UK & Amnesty International Ireland, 2006, pp. 7-8). However, *Lift Off* does not articulate a structured framework for whole-school implementation, and is primarily curriculum-driven.

Research on *Lift Off* in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland schools highlighted strengths of and barriers to implementation. *Lift Off*'s 2006 evaluation was its third since 2002, but the only published evaluation. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach across 33 schools that included a quantitative survey, and group, pair and individual interviews with 15 teachers and 15 students from 6 schools in the North and South. Teachers were queried about perceived impact, programme satisfaction, strengths and weaknesses of *Lift Off*, and recommendations for improvement. Students interviewed fell between the ages of 5-7, so the researchers engaged them in *Lift Off* activities to stimulate a discussion of their views (Morgan & Kitching, 2006).

Quantitative surveys found that all schools agreed on the need for HRE, and most teachers affirmed that there were uniformly positive benefits to involvement, agreeing with the provided answers given by the evaluators (e.g. “helps children understand their rights; helps children to be more sensitive to the feelings of others”). The evaluation acknowledged capturing limited and unstructured qualitative data from students, with student research restricted to conducting a *Lift Off* activity with one class and asking them to comment on their experiences. Findings showed that students were aware of the importance of their voices being heard.

The study found that teachers understood and supported using an HRE framework for their teaching practices, but not necessarily as part of a holistic approach. Whole-school implementation was defined as full teacher implementation of the *Lift Off* curriculum in participating classrooms, a narrow definition of whole-school HRE; *Lift Off* was “fully” implemented in only one school. In addition to focusing mostly on teachers, analysis of *Lift Off* did not assess whole-school outcomes, and so it is not possible to determine the kinds of effects *Lift Off* had across the school. However, the research illuminates perspectives linking the political and cultural context of Ireland to a need for increased HRE in schools, and provides further evidence of the ability of HRE to raise awareness of human rights knowledge and to also be linked to existing school practices.