GENDER INEQUALITIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN MALAWI

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ABSTRACT

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This instrumental case study applies an inductive method to explore and understand the relationships between national and international organizations in Malawi in their efforts of addressing gender inequalities through human rights education (HRE) programs. It uses the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP) as the unit of exploration and analysis. Interviews were conducted with senior human rights officers, legislative officers, curriculum specialists, head teachers, a project officer and a primary school education advisor. Most of the participants were involved in the MHRSP, and they shared their expertise and experience in HRE.

This study intended to address the following question: 1. How do international organizations play a role in human rights education in Malawi? 2. What relationships, if any, exist between national and international human rights actors in HRE programs in Malawi? 3. What are the resources available to human rights actors to address gender inequalities in Malawian primary schools? 4. How would human rights professionals describe the challenges/obstacles of HRE?

To address these questions, the study applies Risse and Sikkink’s spiral model and Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed. The Spiral model specifically addressed the collaborations among the human rights actors, while Freire’s theory analyzed the pedagogical processes used in the HRE projects. Three main themes emerged from the data collected, which include: 1. Cultural effects on human rights; 2. Domestic and international engagement; and 3. Institutionalization of human rights norms. The results show that the MHRSP established strong
collaborations among the international and domestic human rights actors. The UNDP Malawi provided the financial resources promoted capacity building. Although there were levels of inadequacy among the domestic actors, their efforts contributed to a significant increase in the levels of awareness about human rights. However, pedagogical processes used in the HRE programs were not as effective because they only banked information into the people’s minds, but unable to awaken their critical consciousness. This study emphasizes that HRE is not just about depositing information into the learner’s cognitive mind, but it should lead to the change of behavior. If not, marginalized groups such as women and girls continue to suffer in silence.
I dedicate this thesis to my family, friends, and professors for supporting me throughout the time that I was working on this project. It was not easy, but their encouragement and support kept me going.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

This study seeks to explore and understand the relationships between national and international organizations in Malawi in their efforts of addressing gender inequalities through human rights education (HRE) programs. The case for this qualitative study was a national initiative developed and implemented collaboratively by the UNDP Malawi office and other state and non-state human rights actors in Malawi. The study describes the importance of synergistic efforts, and gives voices to some of the key individuals who were part of the project to explain what they understand about the HRE programs. The main objective for this study is to explore and understand these relationships, and to see how the HRE programs address gender inequalities. Additionally, the study aims to understand the key roles that these human rights actors play, and the resources that are used to deal with the problem of gender inequalities. The study also wanted to give a voice to human rights professional and head teachers to describe the obstacles they face in HRE programs.

Significance of Study

There is a significant gap in literature on human rights education (HRE) in Malawi. A lot of research has been done on human rights and gender in Malawi (Kamlongera, 2007; MHRC, 2005; UNICEF Malawi, 2007), but little to nothing is available specifically on HRE and gender. This study will contribute to this gap in Malawian research. The results of the study will also lead to greater understanding of the importance of partnerships among human rights actors focusing on HRE programs as a strategy of addressing gender inequalities in Malawi. Additionally, this study will help human rights actors in identifying better pedagogical processes that will help them in the development of their HRE programs. I hope that this study will
encourage human rights actors to develop HRE programs that will awaken the critical consciousness of marginalized groups, such as women and girls, which will assist them to be liberated from their oppression (Freire, 1970) or their experiences of inequalities.

**Problem Statement**

After the establishment of a new constitution and a democratic government system in 1994, the Government of Malawi enacted a new Constitution and it was broadly based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (OHCHR, 1948). This approach was a means to protect and promote the rights of Malawi citizens (Malawi Government, 1994). However, although there has been progress in addressing human rights issues in Malawi over the past decades, the country is “characterized by weak capacity of human rights institutions, and actors, a failure to implement existing legislation, delays in reviewing and bringing legislation in line with international standards, and a lack of compliance with UN human rights reporting obligations” (Nuwakora, 2016, p. 6). Although human rights actors have invested a lot of effort in protecting and promoting human rights, Malawian citizens still experience limitations and constraints that prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights (Nuwakora, 2016), especially marginalized groups such as women and girls (MHRC, 2005; UNDP Malawi, 2016).

Despite being the majority of Malawi’s population, women face a lot challenges, and they are mostly marginalized as well as more likely to be poor than their male counterparts (UNDP Malawi, 2016; Malawi Government, 2015; SIGI, 2014). Women have limited job options, which limits their earning potential. Additionally, they have little control over resources, poor access to sexual reproductive services, hence "the levels of gender based-violence have reached alarming levels" (World Bank, 2013). Early marriages, unequal access to education, and employment are
among many of the gender inequalities constraining women and girls and preventing them to fully participate in their societies (UNDP Malawi, 2015).

Being a predominantly patriarchal society, traditional and cultural beliefs about gender differences label women as "followers" and make people believe that men should be the leaders. Research has shown that this mentality of leadership, which is an explicit show of gender inequalities and bias, is driven by patriarchal ideologies and traditional beliefs (Kiamba, 2008; Dibbie & Dibbie, 2012). With the decision-making power resting on the males, women have little to no say on issues surrounding them and affecting their livelihoods. Unfortunately, the women “are reluctant to distance themselves from tradition and culture out of fear of social exclusion” (Goslin & Kluka, 2014, p. 94). The status of being 'female' automatically places one in a marginalized state that limits the individual to reach their full potential. As such, it subjects women and girls to all forms of discrimination and inequalities.

Currently, issues such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and unequal pay and employment opportunities are still on the rise. These particular problems indicate that there is the lack of equality between men and women in Malawi, which is a violation of the fundamental principles of the United Nations' Charter that was established in 1945 (United Nations, 1945). Although the Malawi Government has implemented policies to address these inequalities (Malawi Government, 2014; Malawi Government 2015), there is a comprehensive need to largely promote human rights education so that the marginalized groups, primarily women and girls, understand that they are protected by their basic human rights. When women and girls are educated about their human rights, they understand that "some" cultural and social dynamics in society cage and limit them from reaching their full potential (OHCHR, 2017).
Organization of Chapters

This qualitative case study is organized in six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which provides the problem statement, purpose of study and significance of study, and organization of chapters. Chapter two is the literature review section, which includes relevant literature to the study and the conceptual frameworks that guide the research. This research uses two theoretical frameworks, which include Risse and Sikkink’s spiral model (1999) and Paulo Freire’s (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed. The spiral model is a social constructivist approach that looks at how transnational networks collaborate with domestic organizations to create an environment where international human rights norms are internalized and domesticated according to global standards. The pedagogy of the oppressed theory is an educational approach that describes pedagogical processes that engage people with the intention of transforming their oppressive structures.

Chapter three is the methodology. This section provides the questions that this study is trying to address, the case study approach, the participant selection process, the data analysis process, and the data collection processes. It also explains how participants consented to participate, the use of confidentiality and pseudonyms, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of the research. This chapter ends with the limitations of the study.

Chapter four provides the research findings. These findings are the themes that emerged from the codes and categorized data from the interviews and project data. There were three major themes that emerged from the data, which include, cultural effects on human rights issues, domestic and international engagement, and the institutionalization of human rights norms. All the major themes had subthemes that will be discussed in full details in the chapter. Chapter five provides a discussion on the research findings. This robust discussion uses the theoretical
frameworks and relevant literature to support the arguments made. Additionally, it provides the conclusion of the study. This is followed by a summary of the findings, analysis process, and discussion. The chapter ends with the researcher’s personal reflections and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides relevant literature and conceptual frameworks that are used in this study. It provides a background on the republic of Malawi, a history of human rights education.

Background on the Republic of Malawi

Demographics. The Democratic Republic of Malawi has a population of 18.5 million people and nearly 52 percent of the people are women. Interestingly, Malawi’s population structure is extremely young. Surveys shows that 46.53% of the population are between the ages of zero to 14 and only 2.69% are 65 years old and over. In addition, the median age for females is 16.6 years while the median age for males is 16.3. Although urbanization is proliferating, Malawi is largely rural and about 85% of the population resides in the rural areas of the country (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017; UNDP Malawi, 2016; Malawi Government 2015; FAO, 2011). According to the Gazette Review in 2016, Malawi was rated as the poorest country in the world with the lowest GDP per capita of $226.50 (Mojica, 2016). With the high proportion of its population residing in the rural areas, about 52.4% of these people live below the poverty line of $1.90 dollars a day (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). Furthermore, Malawi’s Human Development Index of 0.445 for 2015 positioned it at 173 out of 188 countries and regions in the world (UNDP, 2015).

Politics. After independence in 1964 from the British, Malawi was under the regime of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda who ruled as the President of the Republic of Malawi for almost 30 years. President Banda's reign was not without controversy, for he ruled the country "almost single-handedly" (Anders, 2009). Chirambo (2010) explains more about President Banda by saying, "while his supporters hail him as Ngwazi (Conqueror), Nkhoswe (guardian, protector, provider), savior or messiah of his people, and father and founder of the nation, his critics
describe him as a demagogue and a vicious dictator” (p. 3). Banda ruled with the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), and they mobilized local support and used coercion to maintain political power in the country (Chirambo, 2010; Anders, 2009). His presidency was seen as a rule of a single-party dictatorship, where the human rights of the people were not realized, protected, or embraced. President Banda would authorize political persecution, detention without trial, torture, forced exile and even the extreme measures of murdering those who opposed him (Chirambo, 2010; Africa Watch, 1990; Short, 1974). Banda also used harsh censorship laws and regulations to cut down the criticisms put out against his rule. He would also detain or exile individuals who authored critical materials about his regime (Zeleza, 1995). Banda and his party developed hegemonic political practices, and one of the primary practices that directly affect females was women's political dancing. During his presidential rallies and gatherings, women were coerced to participate and they were dressed in clothes with the president's face on them while singing and dancing to songs extolling the ruler. In other words, women were used as “performative bodies” that attracted people to political rallies and public events. Kamuzu Banda’s regime is characterized by the most severe abuses of human rights in the history of the country (Anders, 2009; Chirambo, 2010; Zeleza, 1995).

**Human Rights Education**

**Definition.** HRE is a global movement founded by the United Nations to promote values and principles that encourage all individuals to uphold their human rights and understand its importance to foster peace and stability among communities worldwide (OHCHR, 2016a). In recent years, Human rights Education (HRE) has become a trending issue of discussion in international conventions, policy-making fields, and in governmental and non-governmental agencies (Bajaj, 2011; Fibbitts, 2002; Fibbitts & Kirschlaeger, 2010; Holland & Martin, 2014).
Ramirez, Suarez, and Meyer (2006) agree that there has been a global rise of HRE. Suarez and Ramirez (2004), however, assert that the dramatic expansion of HRE started in the 1970s and that at a global level, this movement has been successfully growing stronger. According to Bajaj (2011), there are different models of HRE used across the world and countries may use varying contexts and conceptualizations. Furthermore, these countries emphasize different forms of education across the developed HRE concepts and contexts. The *Compasito*, a manual for HRE for Children for the Council of Europe provides the central values for human rights education that are presumed to be common for most HRE program. It also indicates the types of human rights educational programs, and the generations of human rights. The *compasito* emphasizes the interdependence that exists among human rights themes such as the environment, education, violence, gender equality, etc. It also helps human rights scholars to understand HRE based on ideologies and desired outcomes from the learners (Bajaj, 2011; Flowers et al., 2009). From this perspective, the learning of human rights is a practice that is indivisible and interdependent on the daily living conditions of the people and has direct consequence on how they understand their human rights (Flowers et al., 2009).

**History.** The history of human rights education (HRE) is relevant for one to understand how HRE has evolved. Through HRE, individuals learn legal principles that have been bound together internationally to help their communities to work towards equality (Holland & Martin, 2014). The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 after the Second World War (United Nations, 1948; Woods, 2014). The UDHR states the fundamental human rights that all individuals are entitled. To implement the decade of HRE, the United Nations adopted Article 26 (2) of the UDHR that states, “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for
human rights and fundamental freedom” (United Nations, 1948, art.26.3). This article contains some of the basic principles that HRE was built upon. In addition to reaffirming article 26 (2) of the UDHR, HRE strengthened and endorsed the United Nations Charter. The charter explicitly stated in Chapter I (article 1) that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to promote the respect for human rights (United Nations, 1945). Although the adoption of the UDHR might be viewed as a “political response to a particular historical moment” (Woods, 2014, p. 37), it established the foundation of internationally recognized human laws that led to the efforts of promoting and protecting human rights and human dignity (Donnelly, 2013). However, Flowers (2015) asserts that although the United Nations has been the primary instigator of the human rights framework, the organization in itself, was not actively involved in promoting HRE until the period between 1995-2004, which was the decade for human rights education.

Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General emphasized that "building strong human rights institutions at the country level is what in the long run will ensure that human rights are protected and advanced in a sustained manner" (Annan, 2002). With the global movement of ensuring that every individual understands and respects human rights, the awareness process is not limited to the elite or developed countries alone. After the UN General Assembly adopted the 1993 Paris Principles outlining the minimum standards for national human rights institutions, many member states worked on establishing or improving human rights institutions. Some of the governments in the developing world established independent national bodies that were given statutory mandates to promote the respect and protection of human rights. These institutions are commonly categorized into two groups, 'ombudsmen' and 'human rights commissions' (OHCHR, n.d.). Through their programs, these organizations advocate for social change and fight for equality in marginalized communities. Additionally, the government allows international human
rights actors to assist in creating robust human rights programs and ensuring that the culture of human rights diffuses globally.

In December 1994, the UN General Assembly proclaimed a ten-year period known as the ‘United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education’ from 1995 to 2004 in order to increase the awareness of human rights. HRE is founded upon principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter (United Nations General Assembly, 1994). During this decade, the OHCHR played an important role of promoting HRE to be practiced across the globe. In 2005, the OHCHR established the World Programme for Human Rights Education. This ongoing program provided guidelines that were designed in consecutive phases. The countries using this program implemented effective HRE initiatives that focused on all levels of education, and professional training programs.

The decade for human rights education also led to the establishment of international organizations that were solely dedicated to promoting HRE. One of the first international organizations instrumental in the development of the UN’s Decade of Human Rights Education in 1995 is the People’s Movement Human Rights Education, which was formerly known as the People’s Decade for Human Rights Education (PDHRE). The PDHRE is an international organization that was established in 1988 to promote and enhance the learning of human rights for individuals in every stratum of society (PDHRE, n.d.).

Through the proclamation of the HRE decade, the General Assembly established that HRE was more than just educating individuals about human rights. It involved all individuals from every stratum of society to respect each other’s rights and understand that HRE is a channel for eliminating inequalities and discrimination (United Nations General Assembly, 1994). Through the UDHR, the United Nations asset that all individuals have the right to know and
understand their human rights. This mandate is undisputable and the preamble of the UDHR explicitly states, “every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedom.” The UDHR assets the importance of HRE and the need for all individuals, groups and organizations to strive towards the education of human rights to ensure equality. Most governments, however, received this HRE decade half-heartedly. Despite its challenges and significant progression, Keet (2006) argues that HRE is a concept that is under-theorized and its activities have extensive implications on education systems, which demand intellectual involvement and conceptualization.

The Practice of HRE in School Systems

Human Rights Education (HRE) is among one of the ways of advocating for people’s rights (Tibbitts, 2002) and to make sure that people understand the dignity and freedom they deserve. People can learn and attain knowledge about their human rights starting from friends and family to international organizations and academic institutions. However, in the existing literature about HRE, there appears to be diverse perspectives on what the concept is all about, and that it goes beyond the process of imparting people with the basic knowledge of their human rights (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2002; United Nations, 1994).

In the early 1950s, HRE focused on cognitive learning and using a school-based approach to educate people about their human rights. During this time, HRE was limited to young people who were in school. Initially, the application of HRE excluded older people who had never attended school and those who already completed their education. In the 1970s, however, HRE was extended to all individuals due to the rise of human rights activists who stressed the significance of including individuals for all groups of society. This approach substantially led to
the recognition of human rights awareness and its need to effect social transformation. Additionally, the awareness of human rights gave individuals a unified cause and agenda to empower others and demand the respect and protection of their rights (Flowers et al, 2000; Human Rights Resource Center, 2000).

The idea of incorporating human rights into academic institutions spread throughout the world after the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the World Program for HRE in December, 2004. This program was a follow up for the United Nations’ Decade for HRE that ran from 1995 to 2004 and it focused on integrating human rights into primary and secondary school systems. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) developed trainings and education materials to support and governments’ efforts in HRE. The World Program for HRE followed a Plan of Action that was developed by experts in the field. The OHCHR is the primary body that coordinates the World Program and works to promote HRE by providing financial support on local and national initiatives.

The Office also provides instructional materials for cognitive learning for individuals worldwide. Reference tools and methodological materials are created in different languages for easy instruction in different school systems (2016b). OHCHR also created a Self-Assessment Guide for governments across the globe to include HRE in their primary and secondary school systems. The guide was purposefully designed to assist national authorities in the sectors of education to integrate HRE into these schools and to identify their stand, accomplishments, and the areas requiring attention. To develop this guide, the United Nations brought together delegates from 12 United Nations units who worked together for three years, from 2007 to 2010. The work was built upon the World Program and the entities focused on increasing cooperation among international human rights actors and ensuring that nations and other actors commit to
HRE (OHCHR, 2012). Although numerous challenges remained after the completion of the first phase of the World Program in 2009, the United Nations encourages countries to use the Guide to continue with the efforts of implementing HRE in school systems.

However, Tibbitts (2002) posits that using a lecturing approach for HRE may not be an efficient method of human rights learning. In practice, HRE programs are designed in a way that they have minimal content that address the UDHR. Tibbitts argues that “an interactive pedagogical approach” is one of the most efficient methods to use when programming HRE programs. Flowers et al (2000) have a similar position and they explained that HRE is more personal and involves one’s change in behavior and the ability to take action and advocate for one’s rights as well as for others.

Tibbits and Flowers et al concur that human rights education is more than just a teacher depositing information into the students’ cognitive minds. The methodologies employed need to engage the citizens and be more practical so that it leads to attitudinal transformation in the individuals. To ignore the interactive approach is to downplay the learning process of investing in people the knowledge and values of human rights. Furthermore, scholars (Tarrow, 1987; Tibbits, 2002; Flowers, 2004) also argue that due to HRE’s ambiguity, intertwining it into academic curricula results into adverse consequences, especially in its practice and implementation.

Despite all the debates around the methods of how to educate people about their human rights, using HRE in primary and secondary school systems is a good way of including the component of every individual’s right to education. This strategy allows education sectors to fulfill their fundamental objective outlined in the Aims of Education that were adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These objectives explain that education’s purpose is to
assist children to identify and respect human rights as well as appreciate human dignity. It further explains that education ought to be child-friendly and provide children with an environment and a culture that is infused with substantial human rights values as well as empower the child (OHCHR, 2001). From this perspective, HRE contributes to the effectiveness of the schooling process for children, which may subsequently benefit the countries’ economic and social development respectively. HRE’s role in creating a child-friendly environment and human rights-based atmosphere promotes inclusion, equality, and respect within the schools. Furthermore, Horn (n.d.) posits that HRE is intertwined with the students’ classroom education because the phrase “human rights education can refer both to the human right to education…and…to the content of education to develop substantive knowledge and understanding of human rights,” (p. 54) which is the most common case as well as the education to promote the awareness, knowledge and understanding of one’s human rights. This perspective promotes the Education For All concept, meaning that every child has the right to education.

The Progression of HRE in African School Systems

From the very beginning, the continent of Africa experienced problems with the adoption of Human Rights Education (HRE). During the December 1948 meeting on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in Paris, there were only two Sub-Saharan African countries and Egypt that voted in favor of the UDHR. The rest of the African countries were still under colonial rule hence they were represented by the colonial governments in their respective countries (UN General Assembly, 1948b). Subsequently, the legal conceptuality of human rights and the codification of people’s dignity arrived late in Africa due to the struggles and fight for independence in the colonial and post-colonial periods (Bosl & Diescho, 2009). However,
independence for the colonial powers was one of the major advantages towards the implementation and promotion of HRE. Flowers (2015) highlights that “changes in law and/or regime are often the impetus for HRE programs” (p. 7).

After most of the African states gained their independence, most joined the United Nations and became members of various important human rights treaties (Horn, n.d.). The Organization African Unity (OAU), which is the predecessor of the African Union (AU) established strategies to promote and protect the rights of the African people after its inception in 1963. The establishment of the OAU and its approach to promote human rights in Africa brought together various institutions, governments and human rights instruments to aim at promoting HRE in the regions of Africa (Bosl & Diescho, 2009). Viljoen (2007) highlights that by 2006, African states had signed or ratified international human rights agreements and the continent’s participation exceeded the international average. For example, a large percentage of these states have ratified human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-1966) among many others (Bosl & Diescho, 2009).

Despite the implementation of HRE programs across the African region, for a long time, there has been an ongoing debate among scholars on the concepts of human rights education reflecting a culture that is entirely Western hence its discourse is “not conducive to the internalization of human rights by the African People” (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru et al, 2016, p. 101). According to Cobbah (1987), it is quite difficult for non-western communities to embrace international human rights mechanisms and standards that are predominantly Western in nature. The major challenge discussed in these debates, given these biases, was that how do these non-
western cultures use human rights instruments that are historically understood as Western Concepts? The discourse will subsequently be mimetic primarily because the philosophies taught are of an alien nature to the African people whose philosophies are denied in the human rights discourse (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru et al, 2016). This affects the effectiveness of the programs and impact on the people. Cobbah highlighted the need for a cross-cultural understanding between the Western and non-western cultures in human rights discussions to create authentic international human rights standards (1987).

**Types of Education used in HRE**

It is important to understand the differences among the three types of education or learning because it helps readers to have a clear understanding of which pedagogical process is the most effective in HRE. These three types of education include formal, non-formal and informal education. There is a thin line between non-formal and formal education, as such people may tend to confuse the two (Singh, 2015). First, formal education is structured, and it is always recognized in a qualification or a certificate (OECD, 2005). Usually, it is associated with learning institutions such as educational facilities, or enterprises that provide training programs (OECD, 2005). Formal education has “clearly defined set of qualifications, competences, and profiles, indicating both learning and content and where learning is to occur” (Singh, 2015, p. 37). Dib (1988) also explains that formal education is administered through a given set of laws and norms which is presented as a rigid curriculum outlining learning objectives, content, and methods of teaching.

On the other hand, non-formal education (NFE) serves as a bridge between formal knowledge and informal aspirations that “constitute prerequisites for participating in life as a whole – professionally, socially, and personally” (Singh, 2015, p. 38). This type of learning does
not oppose formal education, but it sometimes serves as its alternative. NFE does not lead to formal qualifications, but it is inserted in planned activities and happens in an intentional manner. The distinctive characteristics of non-formal education show that it is “similar to everyday life skills” and it is active, reflexive, democratic and includes inter-cultural elements. It also plays a role in giving people vocational skills and life skills that fill the gap that is left by mainstream education provisions, but these are non-accredited educational programs. (Singh, 2015). In some countries, NFE can sometimes be highly organized national programs providing educational services for the population. For example, in Kenya, adult learning and continuing education have been going on for almost four decades now without a “nationally recognized or validated qualification framework” (Singh, 2015, p. 27). Werquin (2007) adds that NFE only happens in relation to formal education.

The final type of education is informal education. This type of education is “achieved outside of organized education or training provision” (OECD, 2005, p. 4). It is viewed as “experience” or learning that happens unintentionally. The learning process happens without the learner being aware of the skills or knowledge that is gained. Some view this type of learning as a “side-effect of life” (OECD, 2005, p. 6). Additionally, Dib (1988) explains that informal education does not correspond to an “organized and systematic view of education” (pg. 6). Objectives are not necessarily included and the topics or subjects learned are from the cultural and traditional experiences. Instances of informal education may comprise of activities such as watching television or listening to the radio, visiting the museums or exhibits, or reading a magazine or newspaper. Dib (1988) highlighted that a visit to the museum can be labelled as informal education if an individual decides to visit spontaneously. However, if this visit is planned and is part of an established school curriculum, then it can be associated with either
formal or non-formal education. The table below provides the differences between the three types of education.

Table 1. Types of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIS OF COMPARISON</th>
<th>FORMAL EDUCATION</th>
<th>NONFORMAL EDUCATION</th>
<th>INFORMAL EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Usually conducted at learning institutions such as schools</td>
<td>Usually conducted at institutions outside of schools</td>
<td>Happens everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Confers degrees, diplomas, or certificates</td>
<td>Does not lead to formal qualification</td>
<td>Does not lead to formal qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Prearranged, structured and administered according to a set of rules and school curricula</td>
<td>Prearranged, structured and flexible curricula</td>
<td>Unstructured and spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Student attendance is a requirement</td>
<td>Does not require student attendance</td>
<td>Does not “require” student attendance. The student is always present in every learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Led by a teacher/professor</td>
<td>Guided by an expert or teacher/professor</td>
<td>Usually learner guided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Dib, 1988; Singh, 2015; OECD, 2005; Werquin, 2007)

Human Rights Education in Malawi

The progress of HRE in Malawi. Much has been written about human rights issues in Malawi, but little has been written about Human Rights Education (HRE) in the context of most African countries like Malawi. The discourse on HRE is not fully internalized among the African people because some of the philosophies were viewed as “Western” and foreign to the people (Cobba, 1987). Although research shows the increase in the discussion of human rights
in Malawi (Amnesty International, 2013; CEDAW, 2015) but not much in the context of HRE. The United Nations has shown great effort in educating Malawians about their human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are the major international organizations that have largely impacted HRE in Malawi.

OHCHR and UNDP launched a project called ‘Assisting Communities Together’ (ACT) in 1998 to strengthen the relationships between local communities and the United Nations in the efforts of promoting human rights worldwide. Through this joint initiative, civil society organizations received grants to conduct human rights promotion activities for their local communities to strengthen HRE. This project had a ‘bottom-up’ approach, and Malawi was among one of the countries in the first three phases of the project. In the first phase, there were four recipients of the ACT grant in the country. Malawi was able to translate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into Yao, a native language spoken in the southeastern part of the country (OHCHR, 2016; Soudan Interior Mission, 2016). The Yao tribe is the third largest tribe in Malawi. Through the work of Mr. A. K. Phiri, thousands of booklets of the translated UDHR and the Bill of Rights were distributed across the Yao people. In addition, the NKhomano Center for Development (NCD) located in Blantyre, worked on teaching women and children their basic rights. Through their awareness campaigns, NCD was able to train six human rights educators, who made significant change making the communities wanting to learn more about their rights. The Youth Watch Society and the Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement (AYISE) also received grants to conduct HRE activities among the youth. The Youth Watch Society translated the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Malawian Bill of Rights into Tumbuka, a language spoken in northern Malawi. AYISE worked with 13 schools in
Thyolo, a district in Southern Malawi, and established 13 human rights clubs that involved students and teachers. In the second phase, a total of $14,600 was allocated to various civil society organizations with the same goal of developing programs on human rights issues. Phase three specifically focused on women’s rights, health issues, and HRE in the Malawian School system (OHCHR, 2016b).

Most of the HRE projects funded by the OHCHR were done in the late twentieth century. After that, there is no literature that discusses HRE in Malawi. Scholars and human rights experts agree that HRE programs are significant when trying to make communities aware of their human rights. Through the knowledge, skills and values they attain, individuals are empowered to preserve these rights as well as help other citizens in understanding their rights. The individuals understand the responsibilities that their government has in protecting their basic rights hence they have the knowledge to understand what it means to be discriminated and proper channels to follow when that happens (Flowers et. al., 2000).

**The Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP)**

The case used for this qualitative study is the MHRSP, which is a major contribution to HRE in Malawi. In this study, the case is a human rights project that was led by the UNDP Malawi office and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC). This project was a nationwide initiative that was started in June 2012 and ended in December 2016. This project had a budget of $3,500,00 and it was a collaborative effort among different human rights actors. The MHRSP was a strategy developed by the UNDP office to assist Malawi in fostering democratic governance through the respect of human rights as stipulated in the Malawi constitution and other international human rights instruments. It was also an approach to support national efforts in developing mechanisms and strengthening institutions that promote good practices and
democratic accountability. Additionally, it intended to promote gender equality and the rights of vulnerable groups such as women and children (UNDP Malawi, 2016). These efforts aligned with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MDGS II), which is a national development strategy developed for the period between 2011-2016. This strategy outlines Malawi's long-term development aspirations, and it aims to reduce poverty in the country through infrastructure and sustainable economic development (Malawi Government, 2011; UNDP, 2016).

To achieve these goals, the MHRSP aimed at enhancing coordination among human rights actors such as the MHRC, Office of the Ombudsman, and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional affairs. The project also aimed to promote collaborative planning and action, and equip the participating institutions with the appropriate skills they need to promote human rights. Additionally, the project was also oriented towards promoting gender equality and the rights of vulnerable groups such as women and children. According to the MHRSP, the following were achieved:

- Human rights actors (both state and non-state) collaborated to address gender inequalities
- Primary school head teachers received human rights training and expected to replicate the training in their schools
- A study on human rights and gender was conducted and the findings are expected to be incorporated into the new National Human Rights Action Plan
- Investigations on human rights cases were conducted
- Sensitization meetings on human rights were conducted in all Malawian districts (UNDP Malawi, 2016).
**Primary MHRSP Human Rights Actors.** The primary national human rights actors in Malawi that are part of the case study in this research include The Malawi Human Rights Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, Ministry of Justice and constitutional affairs and Malawi Institute of Education.

**Malawi Human Rights Commission.** Among the primary human rights actors, the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) is the leading state actor that was solely established to serve as a government chartered institution, with no legislative power, to lead human rights actions in the country. This commission was established in 1994, and it is the primary source of human rights knowledge and information for the Government of Malawi and its citizens. As an independent government entity, the MHRC was mandated under the Constitution of Malawi to protect, investigate and provide recommendations regarding human rights violations. The commission is responsible to provide the Malawi President and Parliament with reports, opinions, and recommendations on human rights issues on an advisory basis. With this role, this institution ratifies international human rights policies and ensures that national and international legislations are in harmony. It also examines legislations and judicial decisions to ensure that they conform to the basic principles of human rights and international standards. In order to do this, the MHRC cooperates with multilateral and international agencies such as United Nations agencies and other institutions focusing on the same cause. Through these partnerships, the MHRC assists and participates in the formulation of human rights education programs and research that are implemented in academic institutions and professional groups in the country (Malawi Human Rights Commission, 2016).

To fulfill its above stated mission, the MHRC developed a strategic plan to assist the organization in the protection and promotion of human rights as well as to develop a culture,
among Malawians, that respect the human rights of others. Since its establishment, the MHRC commission developed its third strategic plan in a five-year period from 2011 to 2015.

**Office of the Ombudsman.** The Office of the Ombudsman is another independent institution that was mandated by the Malawi Constitution to investigate cases involving government official’s violation of human rights and other acts of abuse. This office started operating in 1995 after Malawi became a democracy as an approach of fostering democratic governance and to promote administrative justice. The office of the Ombudsman is committed to promoting respect and fairness, and deals with issues of maladministration in public work places. This means that any person who feels unfairly treated at their work place that is a public institution can go to the Office of the Ombudsman to complain and report the issue. In 2015, the office received and registered 287 cases, and 2794 cases were carried over from previous years. In the same year, the Office of the Ombudsman conducted several awareness activities across Malawi as part of their civic education service through the UNDP Malawi’s Human Rights Support project (Office of the Ombudsman, 2015).

The advantage with institutions such as the MHRC and the Office of the Ombudsman is that they are less bureaucratic and they are easily accessible for common people (Peter, 2008). For example, the MHRC provides the opportunity for people to submit complaints directly to their office and cooperates with other human rights to promote and protect these rights. This was evident when the MHRC received 516 complaints from Malawians who reported experiences of human rights violations in 2013 (United States Department of State, 2014). The Office of the Ombudsman also receives complaints and they are delivered in person through the district offices located across the country (Office of the Ombudsman Malawi, 2015). However, despite being an independent leadership body, the lack of adequate resources results in the piling up of
cases, delayed results, and limited efforts. In addition, due to the low levels of education among nationals, the commission is responsible to create educational materials that are overly simplified in order to communicate effectively. This approach requires large amounts of resources which are very limited. Additionally, the lack of adequate funding forces these human rights actors to rely on donors and other partners who are sometimes temporary sources of funds (Peter, 2008).

**Malawi Institute of Education.** The Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) is a government subverted institution that was established in 1979 under the Education Act. It started operating in 1982 and it is the leader in the development of curriculum in Malawi. The MIE designs and develops curricula for primary schools and teacher training materials in order to provide them the continual professional development. Additionally, the institution also produces and publishes these school materials (Malawi Institute of Education, 2017). In the MHRSP, the MIE assisted in the institutionalization of the human rights norms. It helped in training head teachers from different Malawian districts (Nuwakora, 2016).

**Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.** This institution provides legal advice and services to the Malawi Government’s ministries, departments, and the public. The organization also represents the Government by prosecuting criminal cases on its behalf, vets agreements and international treaties the government behalf, and drafts legislations (Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2017). During the MHRSP, the office was given the role lead in reporting, implementing, and following up on the recommendations that were given to Malawi by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other international treaty bodies (Nuwakora, 2016).

**Malawi’s Universal Periodic Review**

In May 2015, Malawi’s performance on human rights was reviewed in Geneva under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). According to the Office of the High Commissioner of
Human Rights, “The UPR is a unique process which includes a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States.” (OHCHR, 2006). This process gives each state an opportunity to declare what actions have been taken in respective states as fulfilments for their human rights obligations (OHCHR, 2006). The UPR mechanism examined the Government of Malawi’s fulfilments on its human rights obligations and commitments. Seventy-four UN Member states participated in this dialogue and the review provided Malawi with 173 recommendations. The Malawi government accepted 132 recommendations, but it rejected 41 of the recommendations.

The recommendations focus on women’s rights, gender equality and child rights. Under this recommendation, the government ensured men and women have the same rights, criminalize child abuse and female genital mutilation, review legislations on abortion and other gender-related issues. The recommendations also focused on civil political rights, which included many issues that were accepted. The government, however, rejected seventeen recommendations that were made to decriminalize same sex relations. On this particular issue, the Malawi government only accepted to one recommendation to take effective measure that would protect the LBGTI community in the country. More recommendations were made on economic, social and cultural rights, national institutions, and cooperation with UN treaty bodies and special procedures (United Nations, 2015).

**International Organizations in HRE**

**Amnesty International.** Apart from the United Nations’ renown efforts in promoting and protecting the human rights of individuals in Malawi, Amnesty International (AI) is one of the major movements worldwide that works on campaigning for people’s human rights. This is an organization that is non-governmental and independent of any religious and economic
interests. AI primary goal is to have a world where individuals are safe and protected by their human rights that meet the international standards set by human rights actors and instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Malawi is among one of eight countries in Southern Africa where Amnesty International (AI) works with the government to protect the rights of the nationals. In May 2016, the Malawian human rights record was assessed under the Universal Period Review. According to AI’s Malawi report for the 2015/2016 period, major human rights issues that were identified after the review include: albino killings, the death penalty, same-sex marriages, and refugee rights. Malawi was given 199 human rights recommendations but it only ratified 154 recommendations and rejected the rest. The government refused to repeal the penal code that criminalizes same-sex marriages and the abolition of the death penalty (Amnesty International, 2016).

Most importantly, as part of its HRE initiatives, AI developed the ‘Rights Education Action Program’ (REAP) and ‘Using Fiction to Teach Human Rights Series’ to encourage HRE in different parts of the World. The Using Fiction to Teach Human Rights Series explores human rights and gives the students an idea of what their freedom looks like through the use of a book called Dreams of Freedom. It uses the words of individuals that are considered as human rights heroes such as Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai, and other individuals with similar legacies. The ideas are portrayed using beautiful illustrations created by international artists and it focuses on reaching out to children between the ages of seven to eleven to understand their rights (Amnesty International, 2015). AI also used REAP to train individuals that would teach human rights to larger audiences and make a bigger impact. Amnesty referred to the target population for this project as ‘multipliers,’ and it included journalists, teachers, religious leaders
and youths who were entrusted with the responsibility of educating others about their human rights in formal and non-formal settings (Amnesty International, 2010).

**Partnerships among international and domestic organizations.** In order to deliver effective and principled action, it is important to have equal participation among the organizations that are involved. According to the CHS Alliance, "a stronger combination of local knowledge and technical expertise is needed to ensure the needs and dignity of those we assist are met" (CHS Alliance, 2015, p. 42).

When a major problem in a country calling for international attention becomes more complex, the local and international community usually come together to deal with the problem. The challenge, however, is that the more the number of institutions involved increases, coordination becomes a little more chaotic and challenging. One of the best ways of dealing with such challenges is to focus on creating partnerships. These partnerships should not only focus on just international organizations, but it should also engage and include the local or domestic institutions. Emphasizing on these partnerships help in creating opportunities to combine skills, resources, and expertise that effectively contribute to delivering effective aid (Altahir, n.d.). The CHS Alliance explains that the partnerships developed "must build and protect the capacity of individuals and organizations who will continue their work long after international organizations have left" (p. 43).

**International organizations and foreign aid.** Most of the international institutions provide financial support towards human rights education (HRE) programs. Individuals, groups, and national governments provide financial resources to multilateral organizations such as the UN or the World Bank to advance their effort in providing development aid. The groups have the expectation that these finances not only assist in reducing poverty, but also empower the
people and their government. As a result, it becomes an important issue to know whether the donors are accountable (Stone, 2012).

One challenge that comes with international aid is that international organizations sometimes attach conditions to the money that they offer to recipient governments. Stone (2012) explains, “Because the recipient government are so poor and dependent on aid, they must do donor’s bidding to get aid and keep it flowing” (p. 276). In their study, Miller-Grandvaux, et al. (2002) explained that although governments believe that it is their legitimate right to control the activities in their country, it can be difficult for the activities to be fully regulated by them because the money is coming from a different source. As a result, such conditions give the donors an opportunity to impose their values and policy priorities on the poor people (Stone, 2012).

**Gender Inequalities, Human Rights and Culture**

There is a general assumption that issues of gender are primarily about women. Wittenberg-Cox (2015) thought in the same lines and she asked, “Is gender a women’s issue? Many women seem to think so. Which is why many men this so too” (para. 1). Furthermore, many Malawian communities also assume that anything about “gender” has to do with women. As such, based on these assumptions and for purposes of this study, the term “gender” will represent women’s issues through this study. In every traditional society, there are constructs that are embedded in ideas and values relating to the functions of women, children, and families respectively. Usually, individuals, consciously or unconscious, create mental attitudes of the differences and separation between men and women within a household. In some societies, women have been thought of as individuals who stay at home, have no voice, and are subordinate to men. Historically, tradition has played a significant role in people’s idea of using
“culture” to subordinate women, which subsequently led to major demarcations, abuse of authority and culture, as well as the construction of gender norms that have denigrated one gender while being an advantage to the other. Such sexism and paternalistic attitudes base themselves on culture and tradition inevitably touch upon the abuse of human rights and increase the rates of gender inequalities in a country (Kiamba, 2008).

**Gender Inequalities in Malawi.** Gender inequality is one of the primary factors perpetuating extreme measures of poverty in Malawi. Generally, there are significant disparities among men and women in different areas such as employment and education, which subsequently affects social and economic development in the country. Although women comprise 52% of the population, their inability to equally contribute and benefit just like their male counterparts leaves them vulnerable to the negative impacts of poverty. This situation has left a large percent of girls dropping out of school, and consequently leading to alarming levels of high illiteracy rates among women (UN Women, 2014; Malawi Government 2015). During the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Malawi was falling behind in some of its goals primarily the goal of achieving gender equity and women empowerment (UN Women, 2014). Unfortunately, this goal was not attained and inequalities still exist in decision making circles, educational enrollment, development opportunities, as well as women's access to health reproductive services. According to the Malawi MDG's Endline Report, socio-cultural factors are among one of the primary challenges that the Government of Malawi faced in their goal to attain gender equality and promote women empowerment (Malawi Government, 2015).

**Malawian Culture and human rights discourse.** Malawian people belong to various ethnic groups that are widespread in the Northern, Southern and Central regions of the country. Just like most African states, Malawi has a rich culture that is diverse. The people's culture is an
imperative element and a strong root for the identity of Malawians (Malawi Human Rights Commission, 2005). The social norms, beliefs, customs and practices are some of the foundations that guide people’s understanding of knowledge and influence their ability to process information. Particular responsibilities are acquired by birth and individuals automatically assume some roles with no means of escape (Donohugh, 1935).

Over the decades, the discourse of human rights has proved to be challenging due to people’s background and “culture,” especially in the African context because people’s understanding, experiences and interpretation of their rights can be greatly influenced by what they already know. Additionally, the approach that the “philosophical discourse of human rights is dominated by Western concepts of human rights” (Acheampong, 2000, p. 114) affected the development of human rights awareness in this part of the world. As a result, it is vital to consider the importance of culture as well as social and economic backgrounds because these factors will inevitably delineate the direction that HRE may take.

In Malawi, culture plays an imperative role in people’s way of life, and the belief systems, practices and values have strong influence over communities in the country respectively. Furthermore, the Constitution of Malawi, Section 26, asserts the importance of culture and it explicitly states, “Every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice” (1994, S26). However, cultural beliefs vary in different regions of the country due to the diversity among ethnic groups. Malawi has 15 major ethnic groups (Hickey, 1999; Joshua Project, 2016), which creates diversity among the people’s cultural practices. These cultural beliefs and practices are imparted upon the people through traditional practices and initiation rituals.
For generations, communities conducted their traditional practices and they are passed on from one generation to another. Some of the values and customs done by these ethnic groups have negative impacts on people, especially women and girls. According to the study conducted by the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC, 2005), practices such as wife inheritance, Kupimbira and Fisi are among some of the major traditional practices preventing women and girls from enjoying their human rights. Kupimbira is a practice commonly done in Northern Malawi. Parents or guardians give away their girl child in marriage to a wealthy man in order to repay debt or cancel the money that they owed (MHRC, 2005). On the other hand, fisi is a practice that is commonly done among the Yao and Chewa tribes during initiation ceremonies for girls after they come of age. During these ceremonies that are usually shrouded in secrecy, the young girls are prepared to be good wives and trained how to sexually please their partners. The fisi is a man chosen to have sexual intercourse with the girls after the initiation ceremonies to make sure that they are ready and have understood all that they have learned (Society for the Advancement of Women, 2001; Kamlongera, 2007).

The above mentioned traditional practices and many others that are done in different parts of Malawi are among many of the major challenges that prevent women and girls to enjoy their human rights and reach their full potential. A practice such as kupimbira is a form of child marriage which is a violation of human rights (Girls Not Brides, 2016; UNICEF, 2016a; UNFP, 2016; IHEU, 2007). Malawi is one of the countries in the world that has a high rate of child marriage. UNICEF’s State of the World 2016 report shows that Malawi in number 11 on the top 20 countries with high prevalence rates of this practice. Additionally, this 2016 report shows that 64% of Malawian girls are married off before they turn 18 while 9% of the girls are married before the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2016b). Cultural practices are among some of the major causes
of child marriage in Malawi (Girls Not Brides, 2016). As a violation of human rights, such practices prevent girls the right to choose their own sexual partners and strips off the sexual autonomy they have over their bodies. The consequences for such practices are very severe and detrimental for the girl child. Furthermore, these practices are detrimental for the girl child’s health. There are higher chances of contracting sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Plan International (2016), a global organization that works on advancing the rights of children and promoting equality for girls, is part of the fight in Malawi to end violence against these young girls. The initiation ceremonies that girls go through as part of ‘tradition’ in rural Malawi impart on them attitudes and values that affect their ability to claim their human rights, as this may appear to them as an act of defiance against their culture. Sometimes, the problem may be with the way the people are taught about their human rights. Hayes (2013) argues that the use of a poor and unorganized discourse of human rights teaching “undermines the rights of disadvantaged sectors of society” (p. 349) such as women and children.

**Gender Equality and its Legal Standing in Malawi.** Equality has been one of the primary goals of the United Nations since its establishment. The UN Charter explicitly states in its preamble that men and women from all nations, whether big or small, deserve the dignity of the human person and have equal rights (United Nations, 1945). In addition to the efforts of the UN, is the responsibility of every government to treat its citizens with equal respect and concern with the understanding that there is no group of citizens considered to be more capable or superior than another (Dworkin, 1977). The Government of Malawi ensures it promotes equal treatment for its citizens. As such, the constitution of Malawi explicitly states that it is the responsibility of the government to actively promote the implementation of policies and legislations to achieve gender equality in the country. Section 12 of this constitution, which
includes the principles of national policies, addresses the state’s obligation to ensure that the
welfare of the people is attained through the creation of policies that will promote the fruition of
gender equality. Through this approach, the Constitution of Malawi specifically works on
obtaining gender equality for women from the policy-making level to its implementation in the
societies. The Constitution promotes women’s full participation in societies and encourages the
government to implement policies that address discrimination and social issues affecting women.
In addition, the Constitution’s section 20 and 41 prohibit any discrimination towards individuals
based on their gender and promotes equal rights between men and women (Malawi Government,
1994). Despite all the progress, research indicates that Malawi is characterized by poor capacity
in human rights protection and promotion (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2015).

Despite the efforts set by the government towards promoting gender equality, Malawi is
one of the countries in the world with the highest rates of gender inequalities. According to the
Human Development Reports, Malawi is number 173 on the gender inequality index, which
makes it a country with low human development (UNDP, 2014). Additionally, the nation is still
struggling with retrogressive cultural practices and inadequate capacities among human rights
organizations (UNDP Malawi, 2016), which leads to successful failure of dealing with gender
inequalities.

**Raising A Girl/Woman in Rural Malawi.** In most rural families, which make up 80
percent of the Malawian population (CIA, 2017), children are raised differently. Depending on
the social and cultural setting, children usually grow up with extended families that may either be
patrilineal or matrilineal. The kinship arrangement depends on which community the child is
raised up (Peters et al., 2008). Children may migrate from one household to another because
families are more adaptive since family systems are strong. As a result, it is possible for a grandparent to become a child's guardian (Freidus, 2010).

Due to patriarchal ideologies and gender-based constructs, women do not have the power to speak or voice out their concerns (Kiamba, 2008; Marumo; 2012). Additionally, with the historical ideology that leadership carries "the notion of masculinity and the belief that men make better leaders than women," (Kiamba, 2008, p. 8) girls grow up being taught that they are meant to be followers of men. Since the power to lead and enforce discipline is associated with masculinity, women are viewed as incapable of competently contributing in these particular capacities. Subsequently, they are seen as less capable of disciplining their own children (Ngcongo, 1993 as cited in Grant, 2005). As the girls are raised in such environments, they grow up believing that "men lead and women follow" (Kiamba, 2008, p. 8).

Additionally, they are not given the opportunity to speak even on issues that surrounding them and directly affecting their daily lives. Unfortunately, the women do not speak up because they want to align their behavior with cultural expectations, and also because they are afraid of distancing themselves from their tradition and culture. They are afraid of being excluded from the society (Kiamba, 2008). Additionally, some societies will use the Bible scriptures out of context to support their ‘rationale’ of wanting women to be silent. For example, the Bible says, “Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church” (I Corinthians 14:34-35, NIV). Individuals try and misquote this to support their claims. Subsequently, as the young girls grow up, they develop with the mindset that they not speaking up and they see men as better leaders.
**Conceptual Framework**

This study uses Paulo Freire’s (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed educational philosophy, and a social constructivist approach that was developed by Risse and Sikkink (1999) called the spiral model. Although these two frameworks focus on slightly different aspects, they both contribute in providing marginalized individuals with an opportunity to attain freedom from oppression and promote social justice in order to transform their lives (Freire, 1970; Risse & Sikkink, 1999). The spiral model seeks to explain how transnational networks and international organization collaborate with domestic NGOs to create an environment where international human rights norms are internalized and states adjust their policies to conform to global standards of human rights. Basically, the spiral model focuses on the policy or national level and looks at the structural change in governments and their attitudes towards the institutionalization of international human rights norms. This study uses the spiral model to explore and describe the institutionalization and domestication of HRE programs in Malawi. Additionally, it helps readers to understand the relationships between the national and international human rights actors.

As for Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed, it is an educational approach that engages people with the intention of transforming oppressive structures for individuals who are marginalized. Freire’s theory is focused on using education as a “practice of freedom” (p. 80) and gives an opportunity for the learners to critically think about what they are learning. This study uses Freire’ pedagogy of the oppressed to understand the pedagogical process of the HRE programs and how the human rights institutions (teachers) educate the Malawi people (leaners) to understand their human rights.
The Spiral Model

As earlier mentioned, in this study, the spiral model is used to understand the relationships between international and national human rights actors, and how they institutionalize and domesticate international human rights norms in Malawi. Risse and Sikkink (1999) evaluated the impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) norms that are portrayed in different international agreements and treaties. The primary goal for this evaluation was to answer the questions, “have the principles articulated in the Declaration had any effect at all on the actual behavior of states towards their citizens? What are the conditions under which international human rights norms are internalized in domestic practices?” (p. 1). Basically, these authors sought to identify the elements and conditions that account for the differences in the degree to which human rights norms are implemented in respective countries. This theory provides the stages and mechanisms that explain how international norms such as those from the UDHR can lead to behavior change and the conditions under which internalization and domestic implementation of human rights norms take place.

The spiral model of human rights change provides the causal mechanisms and processes that show how international norms influence domestic structural change. This happens through the activities and linkages between domestic NGOs and international organizations, national transnational INGOs. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999), “the diffusion of international norms in the human rights area crucially depends on the establishment and sustainability of networks among domestic and transnational actors who manage to link up with international regimes” (p.5). The authors refer to these institutions and networks as ‘advocacy networks.’ The work that these advocacy networks do is referred to as the process of socialization. There are three types of socialization process that need to be put in place for the internalization of norm
to happen. These processes include instrumental adaptation and strategic bargaining, which are the early stages of the socialization of the human rights norms. Moral consciousness-raising, persuasion, dialogue, and argumentation are the processes that come at the second step of the socialization process. The final steps in the process include institutionalization and habitualization. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999) these processes happen simultaneously.

The spiral model is based on the international organizations that exist to regulate human rights norms and transnational advocacy networks. These institutions are loosely connected to individuals working for national governments, which are also termed as norm-promoting agents. According to Risse and Sikkink, the spiral model occurs in five phases which include, repression and activation of networks, denial, tactical concessions, prescriptive status, and rule consistent behavior. For the purposes of this study, I will focus more on the last two stages which are prescriptive status and rule-consistent.

The first phase is repression and activation of networks. In this phase, transnational advocacy networks collect information on the conditions of repressive stats and are determined to pressurize its government and mobilize international support. The second phase of the spiral model, denial, places the norm-violating government on the international agenda in order to raise public attention among human rights networks. However, the target states deny the validity of human rights norms and accuses the transnational affairs of imposing on their “internal affairs.” These states refuse to embrace the validity of international human rights and oppose suggestions that show that the nation’s practices are “subject to international jurisdiction” (p. 23). As the international pressures intensify, the non-violating state chooses to bring about cosmetic change to pacify the criticism from the international community. During this part of the third stage, tactical concessions, there are no expectations of stable conditions since the non-violating state
may seek to temporarily improve the situation. However, this cosmetic change may give an opportunity to repressed domestic opposition groups to gain courage to development their own campaigns to criticize the norm-violating states’ actions. Subsequently, the focus of activities is likely to move from the transnational level to the domestic level. This phase is extremely precarious because it may result in a backlash or towards a change in the conditions.

Additionally, two important changes take place in this stage of socialization. First, human rights claims are more likely to become a primary principle idea for opposition to suppressing states. The second change is that “non-violating governments no longer deny the validity of the international human rights norms when they start making tactical concessions” (p. 26).

The fourth phase is the prescriptive status, where the involved actors use the human rights norms to comment on their behavior. For this stage the ‘target state’ is considered to have accepted the validity of human rights norms when it ratifies the human rights conventions, institutionalizes the norms into the country’s constitution, provides its citizens with institutional mechanisms when they can complain if violated, and its discursive practices acknowledge human rights norms and engages in positive dialogue with domestic and international audiences that come with critics. For the discursive practices, Risse and Sikkink provide criteria that need to be adopted such as matching words with their deeds and argument consistency. The final phase is of the spiral model is ‘rule-consistent behavior’. States might, sometimes, accept the international human rights norms but continue to violate the norms. In some cases, the government is not fully in control of law enforcers or other groups in authority such as the police who violate people’s rights. It is important that domestic and international networks to continue pressuring the government for conditions to improve. Risse and Sikkink explain that the difficulty for this phase is that violations might decrease, which subsequently reduces
international attention. They also emphasize that at this stage, sustainable human rights conditions can only be achieved if the are continuously governments pressured to live up to their claims. This final stage can only be attained if “the international human rights norms are fully institutionalized domestically and norm compliance becomes a habitual practice of actors and is enforced by the rule of laws. At this point, we can safely assume that the human rights norms are internalized” (1999, p. 33).

Despite its significant contributions to the understanding of international human rights ideas, Shor (2008) argues that the spiral model suffers from three major theoretical shortcomings. He assets that the model “is over deterministic and idealistic in its proposition” (p. 117) and that there is no turning back from the path toward human rights compliance once it begins. Also, the model does not provide room to separate the different practices of human rights, but treats them all as homogenous blocks. The third weakness with the model is that it fails to account for the role that conflict plays in repressive policies or alternatives. Despite these detriments, Shor suggested that substantial modifications and the incorporation of other approaches such as international relations and sociological approaches would make it more useful for scholars to understand the processes of norm socialization.

Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire, a radical Brazilian educator, developed an educational approach that criticized the dominant banking model of education, but proposed a problem-posing education that focused on transforming oppressive structures. He provides a theory of oppression and source of liberation, which is important in the development of individuals’ critical awareness. This development can only happen through a pedagogical process that creates a good relationship between the student and the teacher. This relationship empowers the students and
allows them to engage in participatory action and dialogue with the teacher. Freire emphasized that it is important for the oppressed to develop a critical consciousness and take away from them the problem of the “fear of freedom” (p. 36). According to Freire, “the awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation” (p. 36). Throughout history, people have been dehumanized and this struggle distorts the vocation of becoming fully human. The dehumanized people are the oppressed while those that steal their humanity are the oppressors. Freire’s work not only influenced education, but also influenced struggles in national development especially in the third world. (Freire, 1970).

According to Freire, “men and women rarely admit their fear of freedom openly, however, tending rather to camouflage it – sometimes unconsciously – by presenting themselves as defenders of freedom” (p. 36). The fear of freedom among the oppressed is a problem that Freire highlights. He explains that for people to be liberated, it is important for them to see themselves outside of their situation, understand it, and start to think about how they can change their world. Because of this fear, the oppressed “refuse to appeal to others, or listen to the appeals of others, or even the appeals of their own conscience” (p. 48). Their fear of freedom makes the oppressed to produce ‘defense mechanisms’ and their own rationalizations that lead into their denial of the oppressive reality. A proper educational approach is the weapon that can create the dialogue that awakens critical consciousness and the thought for them to reclaim their humanity. Freire criticizes the banking education approach, but recommends and emphasizes problem-posing education.

Through banking education, the teacher-student relationship is dysfunctional and oppressive. The teacher retains control over the students’ thinking and actions. The students are
treated as followers, and are also expected to be passive and unthinking. All the teachers do is deposit information into the students, who are merely seen as receptacles. The teacher’s role of being the narrator, “turns them [students] into ‘containers,’ into ‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’ by the teacher” (Freire, p. 72). Freire criticizes this educational approach and argues that through this dysfunctional system, “it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best misguided) system” (p. 72).

Freire suggests a different successful educational approach, which is problem-posing education. This concept is viewed as the most appropriate mechanism for liberation and it is identified as a practice of freedom. In this pedagogy, the teacher and the student have a partnership, where they dialogue jointly and work together towards dealing with a problem. Freire explains, “Liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferals of information” (p. 79). The teacher does not solely predetermine solutions to rather work with the students and they learn from each other. The student is not a docile listener, but an active learner and co-investigator with the teacher. Through this educational approach, the oppressed can liberate themselves together with the oppressor (Freire, 1970).

Freire (1970) also emphasized the importance of dialogue in informal education. When people live in the community the converse and dialogue “with” others, which is way of learning informally. Dialogue involves respect since individuals work “with” each other, and it also deepens one’s understanding on particular issues. Freire explains, “thus, dialogue is never an end in itself but a mean to develop a better comprehension about the object of knowledge” (1970, p.18). He further clarifies that “banking education resists dialogue” while “problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality” (p. 83).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore and understand the relationships that exist between national and international organizations in Malawi in their effort of addressing gender inequalities through Human Rights Education (HRE). The research uses a case study qualitative methodology to better understand these relationships from the perspectives and experiences of the individuals who worked on the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP). I selected a qualitative case study methodological approach because it focuses on exploring a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978) that specifically addresses the issue. Additionally, the insights and experiences of the participants provide an in-depth exploration of the case and those involved (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative methodological approach creates the best opportunity to understand the phenomenon from the participant's personal experiences and the realities they construct. The interest for this methodological approach is primarily in the process, context, and discovery of the case that can directly influence future research and policy (Merriam, 1998)

Research questions

In order to understand the relationships between the UNDP Malawi office and the national human rights actors in HRE, this qualitative research intends to address the following research questions:

1. How do international organizations play a role in human rights education in Malawi?

2. What relationships, if any, exist between national and international human rights actors in HRE programs in Malawi?
   a. How does the UNDP Malawi office collaborate with the domestic/national actors?
   b. How do the domestic actors collaborate among themselves?
3. What are the resources available to human rights actors to address gender inequalities in Malawian primary schools?

4. How would human rights professionals describe the challenges/obstacles of HRE?

**Researcher Subjectivity**

It is important to acknowledge the position of the researcher in this study because the researcher plays an imperative role in qualitative research. Merriam (1998) emphasized the role of the researcher and she explains, "In a qualitative study the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data" (p. 20). Additionally, since qualitative researchers believe that it is impossible to separate personal views from the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2012), acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity assists in understanding the results and how the data was analyzed.

Being a Malawian national, my personal experiences growing up in the country may influence the way I view the human rights actors and their efforts in promoting HRE programs. I went to a private primary school, and the curriculum that we used at my school was different from the government primary schools. As such, my lens in viewing the resources used by human rights actors in Malawian primary schools may be influenced by my school experience. Additionally, when I was in Malawi, I worked with young women who were abused. Through this work, I conducted small and basic HRE projects. My personal experience working with these young women, whose human rights were violated, may lead to personal biases that subsequently influence the investigation.

**Case Study Approach**

In this study, the case is a human rights project that was led by the UNDP Malawi office and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC). This project was a nation-wide initiative
called the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP). The MHRSP was a strategy developed by the UNDP office to assist Malawi in fostering democratic governance through the respect of human rights as stipulated in the Malawi constitution and other international human rights instruments. It was also an approach to support national efforts in developing mechanisms and strengthening institutions that promote good practices and democratic accountability (UNDP Malawi, 2016). These efforts aligned with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MDGS II), which is a national development strategy developed for the period between 2011-2016 (Malawi Government, 2011). The nature of the MHRSP provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand the situation because of its unique characteristics. Additionally, the participants’ involvement in the projects provides an excellent basis for them to share their experiences on an HRE initiative that this qualitative study is focusing on. The participants’ experience and expertise in the MHRSP will help readers to understand the participants’ perspectives on the issue.

Furthermore, Merriam (1998) explained that case studies provide a ‘single unit or bounded system’ that provide an intense description and analysis of an issue. This qualitative study gives special attention to the MHRSP so that readers can be able to understand and get rich descriptions about the phenomenon. Additionally, the case study approach is very particular, which “suggests to the reader what to do and what not to do in a similar situation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). It also provides the reader an opportunity to obtain and get different opinions on the issues being studies since different people from the institutions that are participating in the MHRSP. Stake (1981) also explains that knowledge gained from a case study research is unique than any other approach because it is more concrete and more contextual. Given the above
characteristics and focus of this project, conducting this qualitative case study, with this project, was the most appropriate for this research's purpose.

**Participant Selection and Recruitment**

In this study, I used the purposeful and snowballing sampling techniques to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher is interested in understanding and gaining insights from a sample from which a lot can be learned in relation to the phenomenon (Patton, 1990). With the addition of snowballing, as individuals participate, they were asked to recommend another person who would be a great source of information. The technique used in identifying participants for this study aligns with Patton (1990) who identified, “cases of interest from people who know people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (p.182). At the beginning, I asked my initial contact to recommend individuals to be sampled. I recruited fourteen participants for the study, but only 10 were able to participate in the interview process.

When I was starting the study, I determined that the individuals I was going to recruit would be those who were part of the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP). The people had to be directly involved in the project, or had to be part of the training provided through the project. First, to find these specific individuals, I contacted a personal acquaintance who knew someone from the UNDP Malawi office. The individual contacted me and expressed their willingness to assist me in whatever way possible. I responded to her and sent her the consent form to provide her with more information about the study and ask her permission to participate.

She quickly responded and told me that she was not part of the MHRSP, but she gave me the name and contact information of a Project Officer who was one of the key individuals on the
MHRSP. It was through this purposeful snowballing technique that I recruited all my participants. Out of the 14 people recruited, four individuals were not able to participate in the interview process. Two of the individuals who did not participate were Primary School Education Advisors, and they had completely no access to the Internet and phone access was limited. The other two participants, who were officers from the Malawi Human Rights Commission, suddenly stopped replying to my emails. There was no communication from them about withdrawing from the study, so I ended up taking them off the list of participants. I was only left with 10 people voluntarily willing to participate.

It is important for me to highlight that my initial contact did not, in any way, approach my participants to request them to participate. I personally sent out emails with an attachment of my recruitment script to ask for their participation in the study. The individuals who participated in the study were from diverse backgrounds. I interviewed 2 primary school head teachers, 2 legislative officers, 2 senior human rights officers, 1 project officer, and 2 curriculum specialists. Some job titles for some of the participants were changed to protect their confidentiality. Additionally, pseudonyms were assigned to protect their identity.

**Informed Consent**

For those who replied to the recruitment email and expressed interest to participate, I would ask their permission for me to send them the consent form (see Appendix A) for the study. The consent form was given to them to ensure that they understood the research project and what it means for them to participate in the study. It also provided information about the researcher, purpose of the study, procedures that follow after consenting to participate. Additionally, I explained the voluntary nature of the study, and explicitly told them that they could withdraw at any time. I also assured them confidentiality, and provided them with the anticipated risks,
which were not greater than those normally encountered in daily life. The consent form also provided the potential participants with the data collection process, and stated approximately how long the interviews would last. It also included contact information for my advisor, and the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at my university in case they had any questions for them. The consent form was created according to the HSRB procedures (see Appendix B)

**Confidentiality/Use of Pseudonyms**

I made sure that my participants understand everything they shared with me will be kept confidential. In the consent form, I elaborated that access to the data recordings will be strictly restricted me alone. I informed them that I was going to save the recording files on a secure online server, which utilizes user authentication that only I can access. Furthermore, I protected anonymity of my participants by giving them pseudonyms and removed any details from the interview that could be used to discern the participant’s name or details. As earlier mentioned, I changed some of their position titles to protect their confidentiality. Please refer to table 2 below for more information.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL TITLE</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>PERIOD WORKING WITH INSTITUTION</th>
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<td>Legislative Officer**</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Participating Organization for the MHRSP</td>
<td>10 years</td>
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<tr>
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<td>About 2 years</td>
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<td>Malawi Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** The position titles have been changed to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants

**Data Collection**

In order to ensure that the participants voice their experiences without being constrained by my perspectives or any existing literature (Creswell, 2012), I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The primary method of data collection was interviewing. Merriam (1998) explained that interviews are necessary when researchers are unable to observe behavior. I designed three different interviews (see Appendix C.), one for head teachers and the primary school education advisor, the human rights officials and legislative officers, and the curriculum specialists. According to Creswell (2013), one of the advantages of conducting semi-structured
interviews is that it gives you the flexibility to stress or rephrase in order to increase one’s understanding of the issue.

The data collection process started in the summer of 2016. Since all the participants for this research were in Malawi and I was in the United States, I conducted telephone and Skype Interviews. I designed the research to conduct two rounds of open ended, semi-structured interviews with all the participants. The second interviews consisted of personalized questions to follow up on some of the ideas and issues that were generated after listening to the initial interviews. However, I was unable to do follow up interviews with the two head teachers, Elizabeth and Abigail, because communication with them was extremely difficult. However, most of their responses were adequate and a second interview was not necessary.

All the interviews were done in English. As earlier stated, I used the purposeful snowballing technique to identify participants for the study. Each interview was conducted around 30-60 minutes. The length depended on how much information the participant was providing. I had to make sure that I selected a time that worked best for my participants since we were in different time zones. One important element for such interviews is to have a relaxed and trusting atmosphere (Moustakas, 1994) and it is good to be very respectful towards the participant (Merriam, 1993). To do this, I ensured that I ask how they are doing, and then introduced myself and the work that I am doing. Before asking the participant the interview questions, I made sure I reminded them that the interview was being recorded, and that they should feel free to skip questions that they are not comfortable to answer and they can withdraw at any time. Additionally, I asked them if they had any questions before we started. After we started the interview and they mentioned something that I did not understand, I would ask them to clarify so that I get a deeper understanding of the information they were sharing with me.
During each interview, I made sure that I take notes and I was writing down my impressions of the participants.

**Data Analysis**

My first step in data analysis was listening to the interview recordings prior to transcription, and I took notes about my impressions of the participants. The next step was for me to transcribe the audio files. Transcribing is “the process of converting audiotape recordings…into text data” (Creswell, 2012, p.239). After transcribing I read the transcripts; I also took notes while reading the transcripts so that I have a clear understanding of what my data was saying. Maxwell (2013) explains that it is important to take notes during this listening and reading process so that “you can see or hear in your data” the tentative ideas and relationships that exist. This strong immersion into the data helps the researcher to develop three analytic options which include memos, categorizing strategies and connecting strategies (Maxwell, 2013). As such, the preliminary analysis that I did on every interview increased my knowledge about the phenomenon, and helped me with developing my analysis.

After reading the transcripts several times, I categorized them into codes until themes emerged, and the coding process was inductive in form. To analyze the data, I read the memos, notes, and interview transcripts several times. During the whole process, I analyzed the data by hand because I could easily locate text passages and mark it by hand. From the codes, a bigger picture emerged which are the themes that were represented through the narrative. Creswell (2013) described that the procedures of a case study analyze data holistically to uncover and identify what themes could clarify the case under study. As a result, particular emphasis was given to some aspects of the case.
Validity/Trustworthiness

When qualitative researchers conduct their studies, “they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, educators, and other researchers” (Merriam, 1998, p.199). Validity is a concept used in qualitative studies for the researcher to assess the accuracy of the findings, and deal with validity threats or ways in which “you [the researcher] might be wrong” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 123). Some qualitative scholars refer to validity as ‘trustworthiness’ and view it as an element of validation (Creswell, 2013). Maxwell further explains that validity are the strategies researchers use to discover threats to accuracy and how they were dealt with in the study.

Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in this qualitative study, researcher bias was a significant threat of validity. This threat is influenced by the researcher’s subjectivity, which may subsequently influence the conduct and conclusion of the study (Maxwell, 2013). Interestingly, qualitative research is largely concerned with understanding how the researcher’s expectations and values may influence the study (Maxwell, 2013). Another validity threat for this study was reactivity. There was a possibility that the responses of my participants were influenced just because I was interviewing them. In some of the responses that I got from the participants working for the government institutions, I could see that they were trying to impress me in their responses.

To address these threats and enhance validity, I used triangulation, rich and thick description, respondent validation, and peer examination. Triangulation is the processing of collecting information from multiple sources of data or using a variety of methods. For this study, I consulted existing literature about human rights Education. More specifically, I reviewed the project data that was produced by the UNDP Malawi office for the human rights
project that this study is exploring. I also made sure to interview participants who were involved in different stages of the project. The participants I talked to included experts in different areas of the project/case, and individuals who participated in the programs. This gave me a better assessment of the data and assisted me to explore the phenomenon holistically.

Rich, thick description provides “enough description” that can be used to detail the big picture and reveal what is happening (Becker, 1970, as cited in Maxwell, 2013). Such rich descriptions require the researcher to provide verbatim transcripts. Through interviews with participants, classroom materials related to HRE, and documentation from the project, this study obtained detailed information that provided a rich grounding for the conclusion. Peer examination is another strategy that I used in this study. When I was conducting the study, I consulted with my academic advisor, the committee members for the research project and scholars in my field of study. I asked them to give me advice about my themes and codes to see if they made sense of the narrative that I developed as well as the conclusion. Their feedback on the findings and conclusion helped me to identify and control flaws in my logic and researcher biases. Lastly, respondent validation, which is also known as member checks (Maxwell, 2013), was used to enhance validity for this study. I talked to my participants about my data and conclusion to solicit feedback. This was the best way for me to rule out any misinterpretations in meaning in regards to what my participants said.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was my location. I was not able to conduct in-person interviews with my participants because I was outside of the country. As a result, I opted for telephone and Skype interviews. Our differences in location made it quite challenging to schedule time for interviews. With the time differences, there were days when I had meetings
scheduled at odd times, but I always made sure that my participants select time slots that are comfortable for them and worked with their schedule. Additionally, when conducting the interviews on Skype, which is an application that uses the Internet, I found it somehow challenging because Internet connection for most of my participants was slow. As such, we would experience delays in our conversations. In addition, there were only a few people who were part of the planning and designing of the MHRSP. As such, I was limited in the number of people I could interview since there pool to select participants from was small.

Another limitation was that two of my participants reside in remote areas of the country where there is completely no Internet access and their phone access is sometimes limited. Because of this, I was not able to interview two of these participants myself. I asked one of my colleagues in Malawi to interview them on my behalf. The difference in this interview technique may have affected my participants’ response to the process and the answers that they gave. To ensure reliability of this process, I contacted my participants before the interview and told them in advance that my colleague will contact them on my behalf for the interview. This was a way to prepare them and explain why I was not able to conduct the interview personally. I also conversed with the colleague about the interviewing process and explained to him about. After that, I wrote a script for him that he used during the interview process. This script helped him to conduct the interviews exactly as I did them. Additionally, the whole interview process was recorded on a voice recorder and I was able to listen to the whole interview and create follow up questions for the participants.

Another limitation was that the case of the study was a project that focused on state and non-state actors, which had two challenges attached. First, it was difficult for me to have access to some government documents. I was told by one office that they are not allowed to provide
electron copies of their particular documents. I had to find an individual who was coming to the U.S. to bring me some hard copies, which was costly. Second, it was extremely difficult to get hold of some of the government personnel who were specifically working on the project. I talked to some of these government officials who consented to participating in the study, but later stopped communicating with me, and withdrew from the study without any communication.

It was interesting when one of my participants working with a participating non-state actor on the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP) mentioned, “there was a lot of inadequacy on the part of the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC).” This is similar to the experience I had with some of the individuals from the MHRC, the leading state actor on human rights in the country.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter introduces the participants and outlines the themes developed from interviews and data from the Malawi Human Rights Support project (MHRSP). The themes presented emerge from the common experiences that were shared by the participants and project data from the MHRSP. The themes will be presented with quotations from the interviews conducted with participants. The primary focus for this qualitative study is to understand the relationships between national and international organizations in their efforts of addressing gender inequalities in Malawi through Human Rights Education (HRE) programs. Ten individuals participated in semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. After coding the interview data, three major themes emerged which include: cultural effects on human rights issues; domestic and international engagement; and the institutionalization of human rights norms. These three major themes also include their respective subthemes that are outlined in this chapter.

Cultural Effects on Human Rights

There are some norms and beliefs that happen in Malawi that do not align with international human rights norms. Most of these issues predominantly affect marginalized groups especially women and children. This theme emerged with three sub-themes which include adult-child relations, traditional gender norms, and suffering in silence.

**Adult-Child Relations.** Most of the participants pointed out that sometimes, children are victims to some cultural practices that affect or restrict their ability to reach their full potential. Usually, parental control, which comes on because of the parents' role as the children's guardian, gives them the authority to make decisions on behalf of the children. Sometimes, the decisions made may not always be the best, but the child is left with little to no say in the issue
that is directly affecting his or her life. Charles, a legal professional who has worked with several human rights actors in the country, said,

> You have parents who say ‘this is my child here, if I say she should not go to school, that’s my priority.’ And it doesn’t end well, they can be some injuries to that. It is usually some cultural norms, if I should say that are detrimental. So even though the people are taught on what their rights are, it is hard for them to accept them. And that gives right to all these clashes

Because of this type of control, some children, especially girls end up in marriages that they do not even want to be part of in the first place. Charles gave an example of a case that he worked on about a young girl whose parents wanted to marry her off,

> We have a case where a child is seeking to be liberated which is not very usual in the Malawian context. Umm, the genesis of the difficulties was that she did not want to get married, but the parents wanted her to get married. She wanted to continue with school so they decided to freeze sustenance for her. Lucky enough, she had an individual that she knew who took out her issue and she was courageous enough to ask how to skirt around the issue. Umm...the parents in their defense they said, ‘it's our child, she has not yet reached majority’

Charles explained that at this time, Malawi has not yet arrived at the place where there are strong legislations that deal with child marriage. He said that the age of majority can start at 16 depending on parental consent or when supervised. If not, the age of majority can be 18 or 21. Although people are educated about the dangers of child marriage, some communities are still practicing it. Charles said that some parents/guardians even say it is their right as the child’s guardian to be able to make decisions for her. As such, the child is restrained and her future is
affected.

Charles' case shows how some parents control their children's choices about marriage even when the girls are too young to even get married. Richard, a legal professional who works with one of the leading state human rights actors in the MHRSP commented on this topic and he said,

As far as children are concerned, I think, the only thing that I have worked on is the issue of marriage and the harmful cultural practices that may harm girls. Should children be allowed to marry before the age of 16? Whether there is parental consent or not, is that appropriate? Should that actually happen?

In addition to child marriage, some families will go to the rural communities and get children to come and stay in their homes (in the city) to work as domestic servants. The children experience abuse and neglect, and it is usually impossible for them to be able to go to school or attend classes. Abigail, a head teacher from one of the primary schools in the Capital of Malawi explained,

We enforce that every child has the right to education- that is the main issue. And why they are here to learn, and what the benefit they get when they learn. Because most of the learners, mainly nowadays, we have learners who do not have parents. They are just here in town as a dependent to somebody. So, those ones do not know why they are here. They just think that they are here to be fed by the one keeping them, but in terms of education, we see that when that the learner comes here, he/she think of the problems [and mistreatment] that they have at the homes where they are coming from. Some people go to the village and bring the [child] here. That learner/[child] is used at the house to do house chores or domestic work at home. And when that learner comes here,
he/she is tired [and is not able to learn] and feels like he should go back home.

The children who are used as domestic workers in these homes usually perform poorly in school because they are tired from all the work they do. They are afraid to speak up and report because they are afraid that they can be sent back to the village where life is hard.

**Traditional Gender Norms.** Traditional gender norms are also a result of cultural effects that infringe the rights of women and girls. These traditional customs are inscribed in people's minds to the point that, even in the work place women are discriminated against because of their gender. Richard gave an example of a case that he worked on about a woman who was expelled from work because she was pregnant. He explained,

*There was another case where a lady wanted to go further with school but she was pregnant and part of the contract that she had had, was one that said that kind of scenario would not be entertained and it would have serious repercussions on the contract. And because we were kind of able unable to successfully challenge that when it happened, it just shows you that we have that cultural problem that even courts are siding with sentiments that can be blatantly out of touch like those.*

Tradition posits that women who are expectant are supposed to stay home and take care of the children. This attitude was reflected at this woman’s work place and she was expelled because of her pregnancy. The court systems, institutions put in place to serve justice to the people appear to be unfairly using their power and implicitly under the thumb of cultural norms.

Hanna, a Senior Human Rights Officer for one of the leading government agencies for human rights also discussed the issue of patriarchal norms and beliefs and how the negatively affect women. She explained that because a significant number of women in Malawi are illiterate, it is difficult for them to know or understand their human rights. She also explained
that some communities resist some human rights norms on the basis that they are Western concepts that do not relate to the traditional cultures. However, different community leaders are trying to address the problem. Hanna explains,

*A significant number of Malawian women are illiterate. In addition, human rights education is still battling to displace patriarchal norms and attitudes that promote gender inequality. Communities still resist human rights knowledge on the basis that it is ‘westernized.’ Some community leaders have been forthcoming and receptive but there is still little substantial change on the ground. The challenge remains with incorporating cultural beliefs and practices to advance gender equality, through means that communities are already conversant with.*

**Suffering in Silence.** As a result of all the abuse of authority and cultural discrimination, women and girls become victims of cultural biases and beliefs. In all the interviews, the participants either explicitly and implicitly mentioned that the victims suffer in silence. If the courts are at times biased, how will these women have the guts to speak up? Most of them are afraid of coming out in the open to report their problem because they are repressed, and they have the fear that they can be excluded from the society hence they keep quiet about their problems.

For some of the school kids, their guardians overwork them, especially those taken from the rural villages. However, because these people feed them and provide them with a roof over their heads, the kids are not able to report the problems anywhere. The child is afraid to say anything because he/she is surrounded by the fear that he/she may be sent out of the house and moved back to the village. For the girls that are being married off by their parents, they end up going to these marriages because their parental/authority figure has given them the order to do
so. Theodora, one of the Senior Human Rights Officers interviewed for this study explained, "...there are still some of those stubborn cultural beliefs that are still not dying down, especially when it comes to issues of girl marriages, early marriages for girls... just issues surrounding women; they are refusing to go."

As for the workplace, there is a lot of maladministration that takes place. This problem predominantly affects women in a number of ways such as late payment, sexual advances, and many others. Despite all the discrimination and oppression, women continue to remain quiet and they suffer in silence. With a heavy heart, Theodora explained,

...Something that has been bothering me a lot, is that in Malawi, we are used to suffering silently, and for me, I believe it all comes to our social orientation. Like, the way we believe that it is okay to suffer... You know, people just don’t complain. People are suffering and there are so many issues in this country, people just don’t complain. They just don’t come out. So it is that stubborn state of affairs, that we are still hoping to break, but it is quite a problem for me, especially in as far as this office is concerned. For people to have guts to come and complain... oh my God...that’s why as an office, we have come up with an initiative where we are saying we will be doing investigations on our own even when there is no complaint. Just to dig them up; because people are suffering.

Although there are institutions that have been set, both governmental and non-governmental agencies, people do not come forward to complain or report their issues. The major problem is that they have the "fear of exclusion." The women fear that they may be expelled from work if they report that their boss is abusing them. Theodora explained that most of the complaints that her office receives are mostly from men than from women. In the local communities, the women
fear that they will be excluded from their communities or marriages if they report their husbands hence they seek to 'save face' than to be left by their husbands. For example, Charles talked about an issue that he worked on that had to do with property rights during a divorce settlement. He explained,

_There is another case that we just concluded, umm, it was an issue of divorce but it mostly had to do with matrimonial property division. In this issue the husband was working and he was the breadwinner and the wife was not putting in much. So, in the lower court, the husband contended that he was entitled to the big share of the property because he was the breadwinner and the wife wasn’t really. Umm, the lower court had given him the ruling; of course we had challenged it but you could tell that he was thinking that by staying at home and taking care of the kids, in terms of how you could quantify that and attached it into the materials in the case, the woman was not really entitled to ownership. There wasn’t really much that she could do...because she was siding with her husband and she had this idea that what she was doing did not qualify as keeping a home. So we ended up missing our chance to help her because she did not even believe in herself._

The woman who was suing her husband in the first place, ended up siding with him and she subsequently lost the case.

Contrastingly, Richard explained that in reference to the past two decades, conditions have changed in Malawi and women have been empowered to do things they were not able to do 20 years ago. During the reign of Kamuzu Banda, it was extremely dangerous to speak up or report issues of human rights abuse because the regime did not embrace them. He explained that in this new era, a woman’s ability to report an issue depends on the social and economic context...
that she grew up in. Women from rural and poor communities are usually unable to speak about their oppression because that is how they are raised, but women from higher socioeconomic statuses are more able to speak up if they are discriminate against.

**Domestic and International Engagement**

Since human rights awareness has become trendy and a 'hot topic' among international communities and transnational networks, domestic and international organizations in Malawi have been on the move to address issues in this sphere. The MHRSP is one of the initiatives that have contributed to the development of collaborations and synergies among domestic and international human rights actors. This theme is revealed in three subthemes, which include governmental action, international organizations' contributions, and relationships among dominant actors.

**Governmental Action.** The Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP) is one of the major national initiatives whose primary goal was to ensure that "national institutions foster democratic governance and human rights to promote transparency, accountability, participation, and access to justice for all especially women and children by 2016" (UNDP, 2016). First, the research findings indicate that the Government of Malawi plays a role in addressing gender inequalities through the projects conducted by the major national human rights actors. The government implements the promotion and protection of human rights through the constitutionally mandated organizations such as the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) and Office of the Ombudsman.

Hanna spoke more about the organization that she works for and she said, "the human rights commission act actually mandates us to be a leading source of human rights education in the country." Hanna further explained that the government institution that she works for is also
responsible for "providing legal support to clients on various human rights issues with a special focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities, (and) conducting investigations on human rights violations." Additionally, these national institutions conduct human rights investigations and resolves cases relating to the violation of human rights in government offices, specifically through the Office of the Ombudsman. Theodora, a Senior Human Rights officer says, "the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman is to investigate allegations of injustices as per the constitution." She said that her office takes the initiative to conduct investigations on their own to make sure those issues of human rights violations are dealt with. Theodora also mentioned that the Malawi Government has several branches that work on addressing human rights issues such as the National Initiative for Civic Engagement (NICE). Theodore further explained, "You know NICE is mostly for civic education. So, they go into the rural area; that is their job. It is actually a government branch right now; it is a public trust. Their main function is to educate the general public; their responsibility is to create an active citizenry." Aiden, a Project Officer who was part of the MHRSP explained that the Malawi government, through the MHRC, conducted a gender and human rights study during the period of the project with the aim of contributing to the new National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP). Aiden explained, "The study that we conducted will help in providing new ideas and that will feed into the new National Human Rights Action Plan. Our object is to have a gender-responsive NHRAP."

Second, the findings indicate that there was an increase in the involvement and partnerships among domestic human rights actors during the project. One of the expected project outputs, according to the End of Term Evaluation of the MHRSP, was to strengthen partnerships between the leading national human rights actors and the non-state actors on human
rights, and to development effective partnership formation during the project (UNDP Malawi, 2016). Aiden said, "During the project, we were supposed to come up with a human rights action plan. This was done with a lot of coordination of different efforts and among actors. We worked with different local actors and we acted as one because we had one goal.” Additionally, project data shows that it was efficient in the development of effective partnerships and synergies among domestic organizations such as NICE, Office of the Ombudsman, Ministry of Justice and other non-state civil society organizations. Also, the MHRC also collaborated with the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) to train primary and secondary school head teachers on issues related to human rights education and democracy. However, not every head teacher received the training, the institution only selected a few individuals to participate. Elizabeth, one of the Primary School Head Teachers in a government school in the Lilongwe explained only a few head teachers in her area participated in the trainings. The other head teacher who participated in this study mentioned that she did not participate in the training either.

Finally, the interview data with participants hinted on a number of challenges that dealt with finances. The first problem was the lack of resources for governmental agencies. Theodora said, "I will tell you that it is because of the lack of money, resources, availability of resources. I don’t have enough money, I cannot go to Chikwawa to do my work, you know what I mean?" The other issue was the mismanagement of financial resources. The participants expressed their deep concern with how governmental and non-governmental agencies mismanage funds, which subsequently affects the progress of their projects. This, however, was not specifically mentioned with specific regard to the MHRSP. Charles, a legal professional who has worked with several human rights actors in the country said,

*Sometimes there would be a lot of project money that will be spent on running program*
logistics but not exactly on the practice of the actual projects that is still and ongoing at that time. So if you would have a budget of 80 million MWK (110,392 USD) for instance and you find that in calculations at the end of the financial year, you find that 40 million MWK (55,196 USD) was spent on administration and 40 million spent on the project, which should not be. You cannot have that kind of division of the resources. And with such organizations, you always find that there were difficulties with the practical deliverance at the end of the day; we always had problems with that. And I remember...umm, I can’t mention names but we had a lot when I was doing a human rights program, it was really a thorn for us.

The only financial issue specifically related to the MHRSP was the delay in the disbursements of funds because the available resources were not adequate.

**International Organizations' Contributions.** The data from the interviews also show significant contributions that international organizations have made in the efforts of promoting human rights education in Malawi. The UNDP office was engaged in strong collaborations and ensured the development of partnerships among the national human rights actors. Additionally, there has been a strong development of synergies, and collaboration between domestic and international agencies through the MHRSP. During the course of the project, the UNDP ensured the involvement of state and non-state actors in the development of the National Human Rights Action Plan. Forty-two institutions participated in the development of this action plan. Aiden said, "We worked with different actors...it was the coordination of state and non-state actors. It was these strong relationships that we wanted to achieve during this project." Theodore also concurred with Aiden about UNDP's efforts in fostering good relationships among human rights actors by saying, "The UNDP entered into an agreement mainly with the MHRC, but the
beneficiaries were the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of Justice and Constitutional Affairs/and human rights unit."

In addition to promoting partnerships, the UNDP and the Royal Norwegian Embassy supported the project financially. The initial provider was the UNDP, but the Norwegian Embassy joined the project in 2015. These international agencies were a significant "financial muscle" for the MHRSP. Theodore emphasized this role by saying,

*So basically, the UNDP was giving organizational and financial support to these organizations, so that they can fulfil a number of things under their mandate. So, over the period, the UNDP has funded us with a car, I think there is a car, and then a number of ICT stuff, computers, laptops, books. They also funded a number of investigations, a number of public inquiries, a number of civic awareness programs, a number of engagements with stakeholders...*

Richard also acknowledged the financial role that the international organizations play in HRE. He said, "*the strength with the organization is that... they do have the financial muscle and capacity to do what they want to do and achieve what they want to achieve.*" Although most of the participants emphasized the substantial monetary contributions toward the project, the project data and Theodora both hinted that outside of the collaborations with the international organizations, the domestic human rights actors, primarily the government institutions, do not have adequate resource to effectively operate. Theodore further explained,

*...Government funding has been very very small. You can’t really rely on that. I can confidently say, that three quarters of my work, the actual work, that is public inquiries, determinations, and whatever, that has been funded by the UNDP. So when you take UNDP out of the picture, the performance of the office, wouldn’t have been that good.*
Relationships among Dominant Actors. The final subtheme is the implicit tension that exists between national and international institutions working on human rights. This was specifically highlighted from the interviews with the participants. One of the issues identified was the idea that some of the participants were questioning the westernized concepts of human rights, which to some extent, are in conflict with some Malawi customs. One of the things mentioned by participants was the issue of LGBT rights. Richard explained, "I think the major weakness that the people have or the players have is number one, how do you bring human rights within the cultural contexts of Malawi? I think I have noticed that most people struggle between...because you see, Malawi has a culture, we have a way of doing certain things." The concern was that some of the human rights issues that are coming in are conflicting with the domestic customs and way of life in the country. Charles also asserted similar sentiments and he said, "I think that it boils down to the internal clash between the acceptance and universalism concept of human rights...there is a weakness in human rights teaching that everything else has to conform, it doesn’t necessarily have to corrode the existing norms." Richard continued to expresses his thoughts about how international organizations, through human rights, are introducing a new culture that is different from the norms of Malawian society,

People just want to bring in human rights and impose it on people without having regard to the social and cultural context in which people are living in and in which people operate in. And I think that always brings in resistance. I will give you a very typical example, umm, the gay rights issue, you just can’t bring that issue in an environment where socially and culturally that is not acceptable. It has nothing to do with human rights. It is a social-cultural issue...you just can't impose that.

Hanna also expressed her disappointment in the strategies that international organizations
use to achieve their self-centered agendas. She explained that some donor organizations attach conditions to the funds that they offer, which sometimes make it difficult for the organizations to achieve their objectives. Hanna explained,

*Just like with most donor projects and in spite of the existence of the Paris principles, the activities mostly leaned towards donor’s strategic objectives. The Commission could input into the project but we largely had to succumb to the donors strategic desires with regards to the project implementation. Hence, our prioritization of issues was not always as per the donor’s focus.*

Other participants, explained that despite the tension, good relationships exist between the domestic and international organizations. Additionally, the data indicate that domestic relations were also strengthened because the MHRSP brought together several actors to work collaboratively towards the same goal. Charles commended the relationships that existed by saying,

*I think that [the relationships are at a] very commendable level. Umm, because I think they have all come to the point to understanding that whatever the things that are attached to progression in this country have to first be attached to the understanding and at the center of human rights. So everybody understands that it is first protocol.*

These partnerships, through the MHRSP, assisted the Malawi Government to work towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) that was running from 2011 through 2016. The project was also commended as being the first project in Malawi that brought together numerous national institutions at the same table to work toward the promotion and protection of human rights. However, the relationships were not as strong enough to establish higher-level policy enforcement with high
level political offices such as the Office of the President and Ministers. There is still a need to create a strong force that can authoritatively push government institutions that were also part of this project, to be able to carry out their mandates. Hanna explained that these weak points in the project resulted into “fragmented and unsustainable outputs.”

**Institutionalization of Human Rights Norm**

Project data and interview data both show that one of the key project outcomes for the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP) was to increase the knowledge and awareness of human rights in all Malawian districts. To do this, the participating actors engaged in sensitizing people in academic and local community settings. Formal education of human rights, non-formal education of human rights, informal education of human rights, and implementation and institutionalization challenges are the three main subthemes identified for this section.

**Formal Education of Human rights.** One approach used to promote HRE through the MHRSP was to target the education systems in order to have direct impact on students and teachers. According to the project data, the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) participated in the MHRSP through its collaboration with the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) to promote the institutionalization of human rights at the school level. This subtheme focuses on teacher training, curricula development, and the collaborations in education.

Teacher training was an element that was highlighted in the project data and received a lot of attention during the MHRSP. The collaboration between the MIE and the MHRC led to the training of 1093 Malawian head teachers on human rights and democracy. Aiden expounded that this professional development was important because it prepared the head teachers to replicate the training in their respective schools. Out of all the head teachers interviewed for this study, only one out of four stated that she received training from the MIE on human
rights. When asked if they received any professional training in HRE, all but one stated that they did not receive any training. Abigail, a head teacher at a primary school in Lilongwe, responded by saying that her teachers have not received any of these trainings, but they participate in "school-based-inserts." Abagail explained, "For teachers, we have what we call "school-based inserts" whereby we tackle areas of these children’s’ rights and we also have some NGO’s who come to brief the children on their rights, even the teachers on how they can tackle these topics." On the other hand, Elizabeth and the teachers at her school have not received any training. They just rely on the knowledge that they acquired when they went to teacher training college. Elizabeth explained, "No, we do not have any training. Just because we went to teachers’ training college, we just study books, and follow the teacher’s guides because that is what we use."

Similarly, Diana, a Primary School Education Advisor (PEA) in Lilongwe who has a number of head teachers under her supervision explained that none of her head teachers have received HRE training "but then the topic of human rights is found in the books which the teachers use." As a way of address this issue, Raymond, one of the Curriculum Specialists interviewed for this study, said "...HRE is not a standalone subject in the curriculum; at primary school each and every teacher can teach human rights since HRE concepts are included in the teacher education curriculum and so teachers are already trained on how to teach these issues." Tristan, another Curriculum Specialist concurs with Raymond about how primary school are not required to receive specific training for HRE by saying,

...Malawian schools especially public ones both primary and secondary schools are taught by trained qualified teachers from different colleges. Regarding HRE, usually trained humanities teachers handle these subjects like trained in social studies etc.
However, teaching HR does not really require best training in the area.

Another major element of the MHRSP that was strongly highlighted in the project data and by most of the participants was that the infusion of human rights into the curricula. This approach was a strategy to educate school children about human rights norms. During the interviews, all the head teachers concurringly said that in the primary school curriculum, there is not a specific subject that solely focuses on human rights education. However, the concept is infused in a number of subjects, but it is mostly emphasized in Social Studies and Life Skills. On this point, Elizabeth said,

...the subjects that human rights are taught are Social Studies, Life Skills...it’s a combination anyway. Sometimes you can even find human rights in the English subject, depending on the topic that is being discussed with the learners in that particular subject. Maybe only Mathematics, but in Mathematics and Chichewa, maybe you cannot find human rights. But in all these other subjects, human rights are found there...

Abigail also explained that, "in other schools, instead of Religious Education, they teach Bible Knowledge. And in those subjects, there are topics which cover the rights of children." These human rights issues are incorporated into children's story book and other classroom materials. Additionally, in terms of the grade levels and the number of hours that students spend time learning about human rights, Abigail said, "life skills start from Standard 2 up to standard 8. And it is 5 periods per week. But Religious Education Starts from Standard One up to standard 8. But in all these classes it is two periods per week." On the other hand, Elizabeth said,

Social studies is 6 periods per week, but it is not human rights education throughout, because Social Studies include a mixture of History, Civic Studies, and Geography. So,
sometimes, the human rights lesson can be found inside these subjects/topics. But it is not human rights daily; No.

Tristan and Raymond, the Curriculum Specialists, said that their institution is one of the leading agencies that develop education curricula and syllabi for primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Malawi. In the development of the curricula and syllabi, there are a number of factors that these specialists identified as essential for consideration. These factors include:

- **Traditional views about gender**-the dominance of men/boys in the home, school, the work force and the community is greatly scrutinized
- **Beliefs about gender roles and importance of education** are also carefully scrutinize
- **Abuse of power by leaders**
- **Child abuse e.g. child labor in farms and companies, unsustainable use of the environment, moral decadence and political and religious intolerance.**

In addition, these specialists provided a long list of the major issues that are addressed in schools at the primary level. Table 3 below provides a list of these issues.
Table 3: Human Rights Issues Taught in Malawian Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE TAUGHT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS</th>
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</table>
| General issues | • Differences between human rights and responsibilities  
|               | • How human rights are violated  
|               | • Solutions of abuse of power and status  
|               | • Corruption  
|               | • Responsibilities for vulnerable groups such as the rights for children living on the street  
|               | • Promotion of human rights  
|               | • Capital punishment  
|               | • HIV/AIDS  
| Citizenship | • Human rights and responsibilities of citizens in the community  
|              | • Human rights and democracy  
|              | • Environmental rights and responsibilities  
| Education | • Human rights and responsibilities at school  
| Family | • Children’s rights and responsibilities  
| | • Abuse of power in the family, school, and community  
| | • Abortion- value of life  
| Religion | • Responsibilities of children in the church  
| | • How the church can help street children  
| | • Moral decadence  
| Sexual Harassment | • Causes, dangers, and appropriate ways and skills of protecting oneself from sexual abuse  
| | • Responsible people or organizations to report sexual harassment.  
| | • Sexual abuse in the home, school and community  

Note: Findings from interview with the Curriculum Specialists for this study.

Additionally, Tristan mentioned that there is a need to have diverse expertise in the development of HRE curricula since human rights is a crosscutting issue that touches on different areas. He explained,

*Author withheld* has curriculum specialists in diverse fields; *Human rights embodies itself in many areas as a cross cutting issue. Moreover, curriculum development is a*
process; design is just part of it. Different stakeholders are involved in curriculum development process in order for the curriculum to have a good representation.

Raymond also explained about the importance of incorporating a gender aspect into the curricula. He clarified this by saying,

*Gender issues have been incorporated into the curriculum as a cross cutting issue but the main carrier subject is Social studies. In addition, Malawi institute of Education has a curriculum specialist responsible for gender appropriate curriculum for the purpose of creating a gender sensitive school environment in Malawi.*

The gender expert's role is to develop classroom materials that are sensitive to gender issues that may affect the participation and performance of students. Also, the individual is responsible for training professionals in gender issues. Finally, Raymond adds that the gender specialist is responsible for "screening all curricula materials intended for schools to remove gender biases, and create more positive images of girls and women in Malawian society." The primary schools also try to create classroom environments that are gender inclusive. For example, Abigail explains that her school makes sure that students are not segregated because of their gender. As a result, the teachers make sure that they treat all the students the same, even through the way they layout the sitting plan for the students in the classrooms. They make sure that they mix the boys together with the girls so that they can equally assist one another. Abigail further explained, "...if we mix them, we see that things are on in that class. If we put them separately, even girls, they will be chatting, issues not concerning school, but issues about home, even the boys."

To get curricula work ready and set for school use, there are various collaborations that take place among human rights actors to promote HRE in school settings. For instance, Tristan
and Raymond both mentioned about the collaboration between the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and the MHRC in the development of a resource book titled, "Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Malawi." This book was created to promote HRE and democracy in academic institutions. Raymond further explained,

this source book is used to build capacity of teacher educators, senior education methods advisors, primary school education advisors, head teachers and practicing class room teachers by providing them with relevant knowledge and methods in order to promote the teaching and learning of citizenship education at school level.

The Royal Norwegian Government through the UNDP Malawi office provided the funding for developing this book.

**Non-formal Education of Human Rights.** Human Rights Education (HRE) was also promoted in the MHRSP through non-formal educational approaches. This subtheme emerged from the collected data and it focuses on the outreach programs in local communities, the target groups, and the level of awareness. According to the output achievements for the project, there were community structures that were instituted in 28 districts and over 5780 people were reached. This was enabled through the partnerships with the National Initiative for Civic Engagement (NICE). The project used NICE's already existing structures to conduct the community outreach programs. According to the project data, the level of human rights awareness improved from 50% to 70%. In addition, the MHRSP findings indicate that working with NICE helped the project to supersede its output target number two which aimed to "strengthen leadership and technical capacities of the Malawi Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman to deliver on their human rights mandates effectively." This substantial achievement benefits the organizations through the minimization of implementation costs.
The target groups that these programs revolved around were the important elements of these outreach programs. Although there was a small variety on responses about which groups were targeted, most of the participants mentioned that women and children were the groups that human rights organizations targeted. Charles explained,

> Umm, depending on the specifics of the project, for instance, in the general curriculum education you would target the kids, then you would target the parents, the guardians, and chiefs in other components. It was all attached to what issue or theme you were trying to drive through. So for instance, if you wanted to talk about an issue such as gender-based violence, you would have to target both guardians, as a primary target group and you would go on to people such as chiefs who are usually responsible for resolving those type of things.

He further explained that due to the deep focus on women and children's issues alone, the youth are sometimes left as a "last priority" to address. Richard agreed with Charles about the strong focus on women and girls and he said, "To be honest with you right now, in the current atmosphere, when you talk about human rights, mostly the target group is women and children. Those are considered to be the vulnerable groups, and those are the kinds of issues that I have been involved with..." He further explained that this was because a lot of the emerging issues such as abortion, child marriage, and other harmful practices are more detrimental for women than they are for men. As a result, most organizations seek to protect the rights of women and children (especially the girls) since the end up being victims in these issues.

However, to promote inclusion and the acknowledgement of other vulnerable groups, the MHRSP was specifically designed to educate Malawian service providers about the elderly and
people with disabilities. This was an effort to contribute to "increased levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills among service providers about the disability and elderly rights."

Finally, available data shows that the level of awareness has increased because of the outreach programs. This is mostly because there has been an increase in the number of organizations conducting outreach programs for the public citizens. For example, Richard shared his experience and he said,

_Umm, from the times I have been working in the government...umm, my friends and I in one of the discussions and just observations, we sort of noticed from the work we were doing that the knowledge of people in Malawi, as far as human rights is concerned, is growing. It is increasing. Because we have so many organizations that go around in the rural areas, schools, in secondary schools, primary schools, in village outreaches to inform people of their rights; to tell people of their human rights. So yes, I would say that the knowledge of people in as far as their rights are concerned and knowledge of their rights, has increased over time in Malawi._

Charles also explained that he worked with different governmental institutions that conducted outreach programs to sensitize Malawians about human rights issues. He explained, _"We would work with the Malawi Human Rights Commission, the Anticorruption Bureau, we would work with the Ministry of Justice itself on some outreach programs."_ Charles further commented on the level of awareness and he said, _"I think that at this level in this country, there has been enough sensitization. I believe that people are quite aware of at least the very basic fundamental rights that are enshrined into the constitution._"

**Informal education of human rights.** The project data and interview data do not provide evidence to support any form of informal education. The MHRSP focused its
implementation on formal and non-formal educational approaches. The design of the programs indicate that they focus on intertwining HRE in the primary curricula which subsequently leads to a qualification of the Malawi Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC). The other approach emphasized was the non-formal education that did not lead to a qualification, but was a part of professional development for the head teachers and some human rights officers.

**Implementation and Institutionalization Challenges.** There were a number of challenges that emerged in the implementation of the project and the institutionalization of the norms. There were a number of challenges that the MHRSP faced during the implementation. The project management team experienced a heavy worked load. This was because they had to combine the project work together with their employee responsibilities in their respective institutions. This sometimes made it difficult for the involved personnel to meet some deadlines in the implementation of the project. Also, according to the project data, government interactions were at a minimal level due to inadequate political will. This highlighted the need for the increase the dialogue between government ministers and human rights actors. Additionally, there was a domination of the MHRC since there was more participation from the institution. The lack of midterm review and the nonexistence of an exit strategy contributed to some of the ongoing challenges.

In terms of the institutionalization, there were a few problems that were experienced in the schools and communities. Curricula overload is one of the big challenges primary schools are still facing when trying to incorporate HRE into the classroom. This problem arises because HRE issues are constantly emerging hence there are a lot of interventions going into the curricula, which subsequently leads to curricula overload. The teachers may not be able to competently teach the material and it can be difficult for the students to understand the
information. For instance, a common problem identified and mentioned by all the head teachers and the primary school advisor was that most of the students do not understand the concept of human rights. Diana, the primary school advisor interviewed for the study, explained, "The bigger challenge is that many students fail to understand the concept of human rights therefore they come up with the wrong ideas and decisions hence thinking it is their right to do whatever they feel at that particular moment." To further clarify this challenge, Abigail provided a specific example of what the students do that shows that they do not understand the concept,

Mainly here in our country, when we hear about the freedom to learn, or the right to education, learners feel that they are there to do whatever they want [at any time], without anybody telling [them] what to do. When they come and feel [like they do] not need to be in class that day, they may just go out. If you ask them what are you doing there, they say “it is my right to be here, so today, I don’t want to learn.” [This is] because they [understood] the issues of human rights at the wrong angle. They do not know what human rights are to them. This is why...we teach them what their rights are and what they mean... And even the parents of some of these learners do not know the limits of what a learner should do at school, because of the misunderstanding of the 'freedom thing' I think.

According to the head teachers' responses during the interview, the recent trend of focusing on human rights and trying to infuse it into school system has come at a "late stage" in Malawi. As a result, it is somehow difficult for the young students to understand. With the experience that she has at her primary school, Elizabeth reflected on this issue and she said, “...you know the word 'human rights' has come at a very late stage. Such that most of our learners are not able to understand it better or know what it exactly means. As a result
sometimes, the learners lack responsibility." Abigail concurred with Elizabeth on this issue and she commented, "I think it [HRE] came late to our country."
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study is to explore and understand the relationships between national and international organizations in their efforts of addressing gender inequalities through human rights education (HRE) programs. The discussion in this chapter is based on the interpretations and experiences of individuals who have worked on a four-year national initiative called the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP). Through my interview questions (see Appendix C) I aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do international organizations play a role in human rights education in Malawi?
2. What relationships, if any, exist between national and international human rights actors in HRE programs in Malawi?
   a. How does the UNDP Malawi office collaborate with the domestic/national actors?
   b. How do the domestic actors collaborate among themselves?
3. What are the resources available to human rights actors to address gender inequalities in Malawian primary schools?
4. How would human rights professionals describe the challenges/obstacles of HRE?

As stated in the findings chapter, three major themes emerged from the interviews and project data. The major themes and subthemes that emerged include:

1. Cultural effects on human rights issues
   a. Adult-child relations
   b. Traditional gender norms
   c. Suffering in silence
2. Domestic and international engagement
   a. Government/domestic action
b. International organizations’ contributions

c. Relationships among dominant contributors

3. Institutionalization of human rights norms

   a. Formal education of human rights
   b. Non-formal education human rights
   c. Informal education of human rights
   d. Implementation and institutionalization challenges.

Although the responses from the participants indicated that there was a strong approach in using human rights education (HRE) programs, there was diversity in their explanations. It was interesting to see how individuals with similar job positions would have different opinions about an issue they were all involved in promoting. These differences helped me to notice the conflicting ideas among the participants, which was helpful in analyzing the data.

**Analysis and Discussion**

In this section, I will touch briefly on how the study has answered all the research questions. After that, I will expand the answers by discussing more on the themes that emerged from the data. Several theoretical frameworks and relevant literature presented in the literature review section will be used to discuss the emerged themes. These include the spiral model (Risse & Sikkink, 1999), a five-step social constructivist approach that analyzes the institutionalization and domestication of international human rights norms. Second, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1968), an educational approach that focuses on marginalized groups that are oppressed and dehumanized and seeks to transform the structures that oppress them. With reference to these theoretical frameworks and relevant literature, this chapter will provide a discussion on the findings.
Addressing research questions

As earlier mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study used an inductive approach to analyze the data. The first question tries to understand the role of international organizations in human rights education (HRE) in Malawi. According to the interviews with all the participants, a majority of international organizations working in these fields mostly aim at providing financial resources that assist in the implementation of the projects. At a smaller scale, they assist in designing and developing the actual HRE programs. However, the international institutions leave the ground implementation for the domestic or national institutions.

In regard to the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP), there were two major international organizations that participated. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP Malawi) was the key benefactor for the project from its inception, while the Royal Norwegian Embassy joined and started to co-finance the project in 2015. The Norwegian Embassy's keen interest in the project was solely to provide financial resources, but did not partake in the initial development of the project nor its implementation. On the other hand, the UNDP took on a greater role than just being the 'financial muscle' for the MHRSP. It made sure that its resources were used to provide robust capacity building support for the national institutions through the promotion and protection of human rights. Furthermore, the UNDP Malawi used this opportunity to primarily focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of the national human rights actors. According to the participants, the efforts of international organizations, especially the UNDP Malawi significantly contributed to the success of the implementation. Just as one of the participants mentioned, "I know for sure [with emphasis] that the office would not have done, [anything] at all, without the help of UNDP." Risse and Sikkink (1999) discuss the role that transnational organizations play in sourcing funds to support human rights projects in countries
that need human rights interventions. Just as the efforts shown by the UNDP Malawi, such advocacy networks assist governments to have access to foreign aid so that they can be able to establish practices that internalize and domesticate international human right norms.

The second research question specifically focused on the collaborations between national and international organizations working on the MHRSP. According to the project data, strong relationships were established between the UNDP and the state actors, which helped the Malawi Government to collaboratively work towards achieving the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MGDS II). On the other hand, interview data, shows that the project did not focus on primarily enhancing relationships between international and national/domestic human rights organizations, but rather aimed at improving domestic relations.

It is interesting to note that it was only the UNDP that initially participated as a key international player in this big national initiative. The Royal Norwegian Embassy joined almost of this end of the project in 2015. Most of the participants were more appreciative of the work of the UNDP because it was the institution that they kept referring to most of the time. The only problem, however, was that some of the participants were dissatisfied with some of the conditions that donor agencies attach to their money and only seek to pursue their own agendas.

In regard to the relationships among domestic actors, there were strong collaborations and synergies. However, from the data, there was “too much dominance” from the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC). Several actors were involved including Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), the National Initiative for Civic Engagement (NICE) among others. Since the MHRC had the role as an “implementing partner” for the MHRSP, they dominated in most of the activities. This may have both positive and negative outcomes on the project. The advantage is that it is easier to delegate and get things done since there is a ‘leader’ who is making sure that
groups are doing what they are supposed to do. On the other hand, it limits creativity and diversity, which may negatively affect the project’s outcome. Just as one of the participants mentioned, “[There were] weak collaborations amongst human rights actors on initiatives resulting in fragmented and unsustainable outputs.” According to the CHS Alliance, equal footing among partners delivers better results (2015).

Third, according to the participants, the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP) developed a teacher-training program and worked with the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) to develop primary school curricula that promote human rights and address gender inequalities. Initially, the participating organizations wanted to focus on upstream policy to address human rights issues in the primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. However, instead of focusing on the upstream level, they addressed the issues at the downstream level. The use of stories (story books) that the children can relate to or locally contextualized materials provides a better way for children to understand human rights issues. The literature on Amnesty International indicates the importance of using fiction literature to teach children about their human rights. It give the students an idea of what their freedom looks like through the cases and stories told in the books (Amnesty International, 2015).

The project data also shows that to ensure that the students understand, the organizations conducted Head Teacher training workshops in order to prepare the primary school teachers to effectively educate the pupils. The project data showed that 1093 head teachers were trained in order for them to replicate the trainings in their schools. However, all the head teachers who participated in this study explained that they never received any training, and that they are expected to use the knowledge they gained from their ‘teacher-training colleges’ to teach these new concepts. Although teacher training is a priority in HRE and in the MHRSP, the teachers
are lacking the specific skills to incorporate these new concepts. This lack of teacher training may be the reason why some of the young primary school students are not fully able to understand the concepts of ‘the right to education.’ For example, Abigail, one of the head teachers interviewed for this study explained that some of the kids will say, “it is my right to be here [outside of the classroom, skipping class], so I don’t’ want to learn.” There is a greater need for these human rights institutions to implement better approaches in ensuring that all the teachers at least learn the basics on how to approach human rights issue in their schools.

Lastly, the final question for this research looked at how human rights professionals who work with the participating institutions for the MHRSP describe the obstacles to human rights education (HRE). The interview data showed that the greatest challenge that HRE has in its effort of addressing gender inequalities in Malawi is culture. More specifically, the participants highlighted that patriarchal ideologies and traditional beliefs affect the outcomes of HRE programs. One major issue that was explicitly and implicitly mentioned by almost all of the participants was ‘suffering in silence.’ This is a problem largely evident in women who are in oppressive environments. Evidence show that the women and girls have the fear of exclusion hence they are afraid to speak up when discriminated. Theodora, a senior human rights officer who participated in this study said, “There are still some of those stubborn cultural beliefs that are still not dying down... we are used to suffering silently.”

So, even with the knowledge that these marginalized groups, primarily females, receive from the HRE programs, people are still suffering in silence and they are not talking. Evidence from the data show that the level of human rights awareness has significantly increased, people have come to know what their rights are, but the problem is appealing to their conscience for them to open up so that they can be liberate themselves. Freire (1970) explains that people are
afraid to openly admit their fear or oppression hence they tend to camouflage it, sometimes unconsciously. The only way to help these people is to use a proper approach to education that will not just ‘bank’ or deposit information into their heads. Rather, it should be a approach that is a practice of freedom and will awaken their critical consciousness to liberate themselves. I think that this is what the HRE programs, specifically the MHRSP lacks; the need to incorporate a problem-posing educational approach that will help liberate females from their cultural oppression.

**Cultural Effects on Human Rights Issues**

The first theme discussed in the findings is the effect of culture on human rights. According to the evidence from the data, women and children, especially girls, are the groups whose rights are mostly discriminated against. The senior human rights officers, head teachers and legislative officers openly explained that these two groups are the ones that are mostly discriminated against at home and in the work place. Concurringly, honorable Anita Kalinde, the former Malawian Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and UNICEF Malawi, both agree that women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men, because they are mostly marginalized and their ability to withstand obstacles is weak (Anita Kalinde, 2013; UNICEF Malawi, 2007). It is extremely unfortunate that women are more restricted, and they have little control over issues directly affecting their livelihood (MHRC, 2005; SIGI, 2014) mostly because of the cultural concept that men are the individuals that are supposed to lead and women should be the followers (Kiamba, 2008; Ngcongo, 1993 as cited in Grant, 2005).

Cultural ideologies and traditional beliefs are rooted so deep in Malawian societies (MHRC, 2005) that when raising their girls, they make them believe that ‘women are not supposed to speak in front of men.’ About 82% of the population of Malawi claim to be
Christian (CIA, 2017). As such, in some communities, some people even go to the lengths of ‘misquoting’ the Bible Scripture from 1 Corinthians 14 verse 34 to 35, and take it out of its original context to support their claim of wanting women to remain silent and stop them from speaking. Respondents mentioned issues of child marriage, which predominantly affect girls, as well as abusive work conditions that come in due to abuse of power from male dominated environments. Such conditions affect the females’ ability to speak up in abusive or discriminating environments. The participants discuss that the levels of human rights awareness have increased in the country, but the issue of ‘suffering in silence’ is on-going. Contrary to honorable Anita Kalinde’s statement that the “culture of silence has been broken” (2013), the evidence from this study shows that the problem is still persisting and it needs redress.

The work on developing HRE programs to address gender inequalities in Malawi by the UNDP, Royal Norwegian Embassy, the MHRC, and the other human rights actors (UNDP Malawi, 2016) is extremely commendable. Concurringly, the participants of this study even recognize the significant efforts that these institutions have done, and how people’s knowledge of their human rights has increased. However, these organizations are primarily focusing on just promoting awareness and making sure that people’s level of awareness increases. The way the MHRSP was designed, it seems that its aim is to highly improve and increase people’s knowledge, respect and understanding of human rights. In simple terms, we can say it is somehow teaching people the “do’s and the don’ts” of human rights in Malawian contexts. This type of education is what Freire (1970) calls the ‘banking model of education.’ This model of education is dysfunctional and it merely adapts people to the oppressive conditions, since all it does is treat people as containers that are empty and need filling. It is extremely impossible for such an approach to change people’s cultural attitudes and perspectives that negatively affect
women and girls.

People’s minds may be filled with information, but they will lack the ability to critically think of ways to liberate themselves. As participants in this study emphasized, women continue to suffer in silence even when they are filled with a lot of knowledge about their human rights. One of the reasons may be because the human rights education (HRE) they are receiving is designed in a ‘banking’ manner. They are treated as ‘empty containers’ that need ‘filling.’ Freire’s (1970) problem-posing educational approach is the best alternative that can be used in programs such as the MHRSP to not only increase awareness, but to also awaken the “critical consciousness [that] leads the way to the expression of social discontents” (p. 36). This pedagogical approach engages the individuals in participatory action and it helps them to deal with their fears of freedom. Additionally, it helps them to see themselves outside of their predicament, which is a good way for them to think about how they can change their world.

**Domestic and International engagement**

**Government/domestic action.** The Constitution of Malawi mentions that it is the responsibility of its government to afford the fullest protection and actively promote every citizen’s fundamental human rights. Furthermore, in Section 15 of Chapter IV of the same Constitution, it explicitly states that these rights shall be “respected and upheld by the executive, legislature and judiciary and organs of government and where applicable to them.” Although there has been some progress in the human rights protection and promotion, research indicates that Malawi has weak capacities in this area (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2015). Despite the clear declaration in the Constitution, the data from this study indicates that most government agencies and branches are not entirely committed in doing their duties mandated to them.

Although the establishment and utilization of the human rights commission and the
ombudsman’s office is a positive step toward the institutionalization of international human rights norms, it is important to ensure that these institutions have the capacity to effect change. Risse and Sikkink (1999) explain in the fourth phase of the spiral model that states provide their citizens with institutional mechanisms that they go to if they want to complain about human rights violations. Through the MHRC and the office of the Ombudsman, the Malawi Government should put in place stronger discursive practices that lead to not only the promotion of human rights norms, but also establish HRE pedagogical processes that target the change of attitudes and understanding among the people. As the institutions continue to engage with advocacy networks such as the UNDP, they should focus more on helping the citizens understand their oppression and how they can see themselves out of those situations to promote the engagement of domestic and international audiences to address injustices (Freire, 1970; Risse and Sikkink, 1999).

Research indicates that Malawi has weak capacity in terms of human rights protection and promotion (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2015; UNDP Malawi, 2016). This is supported through my research because a majority of the participants and the project data indicated that the involvement of the government was not as strong as it needs to be. The MHRSP data indicated that there was lacking political will from government interaction during the project. The data further showed that there is a need for ministers and other political actors to invest more political will for HRE programs to be more effective. Responses slightly varied across the participants. Some participants, especially those working with state agencies recognized the great work the government has done in ratifying international human rights treaties and implementing bills that empower women. On the other hand, some participants indicated that the misuse of resources in government institutions is a major issue that needs
redress. Accountability is an important factor in determining success in such initiatives and is lacking among the domestic actors.

**International Organizations’ contribution.** The respondents in my study recognized the work of international organizations especially their financial contributions to domestic initiatives such as the MHRSP. The UNDP’s financial support was the primary push for the MHRSP to go forward because the governments’ resources could not sustain the project. Some of the participants also mentioned that it was through these funds that numerous classroom materials were developed to education primary school education pupils and conduct teacher training programs. Only one participant expressed his strong dissatisfaction with how international organizations attach conditions to their aid, which at times, conflicts with the local culture and traditional norms. The problems arise because the recipient government is so dependent on the aid, to the point that it is left with little to no choice but to bow to the bidding of the international donor (Stone, 2012). The two legislative officers interviewed for this study mentioned that Malawi has had cases where international organizations have pressured the government to legalize same-sex marriages, which is an issue that contradicts with Malawian social and cultural contexts.

Additionally, UNDP Malawi’s action of funding the MHRSP can be seen as an approach to assist the Malawi government to maintain a “rule-consistent behavior” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999) in the domestication of human rights norms. Risse and Sikkink explain the need to sustain human rights conditions and supporting human rights education programs is one way of helping Malawi to have the habitual practice of normalizing international human rights practices.

**Relationships among dominant actors.** There is a famous Malawian proverb that says, “mutu umodzi susenza denga” which literally means, “One head alone cannot carry a
roof.” This proverb highlights the importance of collaborations, synergies, and group work. It also emphasizes the idea that one person does not have the ability to solve his or her problems alone. However, from the participants' responses, there is an implicit tension among the dominant human rights actors. The first issue comes in because the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) was given 'too much control' over the project, which made it look like they were dominating and overriding all the other domestic non-state actors.

Second, some of the responses from the participants show there is subtle tension between domestic and international organizations. This goes back to what some of the participants mentioned about attaching conditions to international aid. This subtle tension is one that a few of the participants explicitly pointed out, but mostly of them slightly hinted upon. The issue of LBGT rights is mostly avoided in such national initiatives on human rights because of the cultural conflict. Additionally, project data show that the Government of Malawi did not accept 30% of the recommendations that were made under the Universal Period Review. According to the United Nations, Malawi rejected all the recommendations made about decriminalizing LBGT relations, but only accepted to put in place measures that protect the individuals from attacks that may come from the communities.

In criticizing the exclusive focus on relationships with international organizations, the participants in this study highlighted the significance of domestic relations among human rights actors. This was even evident in the goals of the project because all the implementation was mostly done by domestic organizations through various collaborations among themselves. The development of classroom curricula, and the training of teachers was done through the Malawi Institute of Education. Community outreach programs were done through the collaboration between the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Initiative of Civic Engagement.
It was the collaborations among these domestic actors that made the going easier. Risse and Sikkink's (1999) spiral model highlights the importance of linkages and collaborative activities between domestic and international human rights actors. The theoretical approach emphasizes that the issue of human rights crucially depends on strong sustainable networks that will enhance the process of domesticating the international norms. Additionally, Risse and Sikkink (1999) agree with Freire's (1970) idea of creating dialogue and raising the moral consciousness of the people when domesticating HRE, which is something that was not focused in the MHRSP.

**Institutionalization of Human Rights norms**

**Formal Education of human rights.** Risse and Sikkink's (1999) theoretical model specializes in the institutionalization of international norms and fitting them into the local contexts. The findings from this study only apply to the last two phases of the spiral model, which is the prescriptive status and rule consistent behavior. The project data and the responses from the participants indicate that it is evident that Malawi, through the MHRSP, uses HRE to show its acceptance of the validity of human rights norms. The MHRSP uses formal education as one of the ways of teaching children in primary schools about these norms. The human rights materials are made part of the primary school curricula and syllabi. This makes it a requirement for students to learn these issues and complete the lessons in order for them to earn their primary school certificate. Research shows that formal education is structured, recognized in a qualification, and results from an instructional program (Singh, 2015; OECD, 2005), and this is exactly what the MHRSP is doing.

The curriculum specialists interviewed for this study explained that human rights issues are intertwined into the curriculum so that students can learn and apply them into different
areas. The curriculum specialists and the head teachers all agreed that Social Studies and Life Skills are the primary subjects that address specific human rights topics in primary schools. The participants also mentioned many topics covered in these classes and some of them include citizenship, child abuse, democracy, sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, abuse of power, abortion and capital punishment. However, I think that some of these issues are too deep and difficult for young children to understand. No wonder some of the participants, especially the primary school head teachers mentioned that the kids in the schools, do not understand some of the concepts that they are being taught.

In Malawian primary schools, classes range from standard (Grade) one to standard 8. Children in this level of education are as young as 6 years old. How would children at this tender age understand abstract and highly debatable concepts about abortion or capital punishment? I think that some of the topics should be reserved for higher grades, after the children’s cognition has developed and they have the ability to process the information competently. By saying this, I do not imply that the work that they are doing in not good enough, but there is just a need to be more cautious on what materials are taught to the kids and how age can be an important factor to consider. I, however, applaud the effort of using a Gender Specialist in curricula development to make sure that the material is “gender appropriate” and is void of all biases. Additionally, one of the curriculum specialists mentioned that they use books and stories to be able to teach children human rights concepts. The classroom materials that I gathered also used stories or narratives to teach about human rights. Using contextualized narratives can a better alternative of simplifying the difficult material. Based on existing literature, other institutions that focus on human rights use stories to teach about human rights. For instance, Amnesty International developed the “Using Fiction to Teach Human
Rights Series” to encourage and promote human rights learning for children across the world. The words of human rights heroes such as Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai and other individuals with similar legacies to tell teach these concepts (Amnesty International, 2015). Perhaps, if the Malawi Institute of Education and other human rights actors focus on this technique, it can help in simplifying the materials for the children.

**Non-formal education of human rights.** Evidence from my study indicates that public awareness sessions in local communities and teacher-training were the two major forms of non-formal education conducted under the Malawi Human Rights Support Project (MHRSP). According to the Organization of Economic co-operation and Development (OECD), non-formal education does not give learners any formal qualifications, but it is included in planned activities and take place in an international way. Additionally, it is not limited to academics, but it constitutes prerequisites that stretch out to individuals’ professional, personal, and social lives (OECD, 2005; Singh, 2015). First, the practice of conducting outreach programs in all the 28 Malawian districts was an on-going initiative under the MHRSP. The project data indicated that over 5780 people were reached through the collaborative effort of the participating institutions primarily NICE. This was an excellent opportunity to promote awareness and human rights norms in the local communities.

Most of the participants said that these awareness programs have been beneficial because people’s level of knowledge has expanded. One legislative officer actually mentioned that looking back to where Malawi is coming from, it is clearly evident that people know their rights. This is because there is an increase in the number of reports or cases about human rights abuse in Malawian courts compared to how it was 20 years ago. One of the senior human rights officers agreed about the increase in the levels of awareness, although she was concerned that it
is only men that report and women are silent about their experiences. Another participant mentioned that the ability for women to act largely depends on social and economic contexts. This participant mentioned that if a woman grows up in an environment where she is taught that men are equal and she has the right to talk and express her feelings, then she will not be afraid to speak up. He further clarified that women with a strong financial basis, and those who are not completely dependent on men are not afraid of “exclusion” after bringing to light their abusive experience because they know that they are their own breadwinners. The participants had various contrasting views about this issue. However, I think that regardless of social and economic status, it is important to make sure that the education that we are giving the people is going to awaken their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) so that they can see their oppression and be willing to liberate themselves.

The project data shows that 1093 head teachers were trained in HRE so that they would replicate the trainings in their schools. Some of the participants who were part of the administrative part of the project also mentioned about the training and how it was necessary to prepare the head teachers. However, the head teachers that I interviewed for this study mentioned that they did not receive any human rights training. They all said that none of their school teachers nor themselves have received any special training to help them in competently teaching these human rights issues. The head teachers said that their “teacher-training college education” was the only qualification they had to teach these issues.

Although all the participants have held their head teacher positions for no more than ten years, they have been working as teachers for more than 20 years. This means that they received their teaching qualifications a long-time ago, during an era when Malawi was under an oppressive government that suppressed human rights (Anders, 2009; Chirambo, 2010; Zeleza,
How would we expect these teachers to competently teach their students about specific human rights issues when they have not undergone any particular training to prepare them? Apart from the informal education they may attain about human rights from personal experiences, there is not so much that prepares them to educate their students competently. It is not surprising that all the head teachers explicitly mentioned that the primary school kids do not understand some of the major human rights concepts. Additionally, they used a similar phrase and they said, “human rights came late in our country.”

**Informal Education of human rights.** Both the interview and project data did not explicitly mention anything about informal education. The OECD defines informal education as the type of learning that is viewed as a side effect and an experience that happens unintentionally. Additionally, it does not have any structure, and the learner does not have an idea that he or she is gaining knowledge (2005). Evidence shows that MHRSP does not have any focus on identifying any informal education approach that would benefit their promotion of human rights education (HRE). This gives the assumption that the only way individuals can learn about human rights issues is through structured educational platforms (formal and non-formal education) that specialized or trained individuals can teach. This may mean that the informal educational approaches are excluded from HRE. However, if this pedagogical process is ignored, how will human rights institutions know that their efforts of using “formal/nonformal-educational approaches” are not being countered or opposed by the informal learning?

The use of theater, television and radio can be means of informal education for the audience. If people in the communities listen to the radio or watch television, they not plan to have a structured learning experience. However, they sometime learn unconsciously, and human rights actors can target these mediums which will certainly be informal education for the people.
Experiences unintentionally learned from church, initiation ceremonies, or even at the market places are sources of learning that affect the preexisting knowledge attained from the formal settings. One important element present in every informal learning process is dialogue. Freire (1970) emphasizes the importance of dialogue when pursuing freedom from oppression. Since informal education is usually gained through dialogue, it is a key element that can contribute to change in societies. He explained that dialogue involves respect and the deepening of understanding on a specific issue. Additionally, the dialogue does not only involve one person, but it engages everyone who is involved and they work “with” each other. Freire also highlights that dialogue is an indispensable tool that is used to in cognition development that unveils reality (1970). Concurringly, Flowers et al (2000) and Tibbits (2002) posit that HRE is more than just depositing information into the learners’ mind, but it result into attitudinal change. The pedagogical approach used by the MHRSP is not designed in a way that it can lead to change in behavior because of it exclusive focus on “improving awareness.” As such, if informal education is ignored in HRE programs, then there will be higher chances of failure in helping people to free themselves from their oppression.

**Implementation and institutionalization challenges.** The data showed that some of the challenges from the MHRSP include curricula overload, lack of adequate resources, cultural practices, poor capacity to enforce human rights, and the late response to human rights domestication. These challenges may be some of the reasons why Malawi has significantly slow progress in the promotion of human rights (Mo Ibrahim, 2015). Although most transnational networks and international organizations assume that giving money to poor governments to promote the institutionalization of human rights is a best approach (Rise and Sikkink, 1999), Freire suggests that using a problem-posing educational way would be most effective way to deal
with such problems. Governments may receive a lot of international aid to assist in promoting HRE programs, but if people being educated are “afraid of freedom” or they are not even aware of their own oppression, then it is extremely difficult to provide means of liberation. The financial resources should be invested in educational programs that bring this particular change.

Additionally, because of the idea that human rights norms are a “Western Concept,” some of the individuals viewed some of the norms to be alien nature and contradictory to the Malawian culture. During the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, most African states were still under colonial rule (UN General Assembly, 1948b). As a result, their colonial governments represented them and they were not able to present their culture and voice to feed into the UDHR. The assumption from this can be that “African philosophies” were not incorporated into the UDHR since most of the “actual members” from the countries did not represent themselves but were represented by “Western delegates.” This comes as no surprise that some of the international human rights norms that were developed are of an alien nature to the African people and some even deny the human rights discourse (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru et al. 2016). My participants expressed the same “attitude” about some of the human rights norms, and how it is difficult for them to be embraced by the Malawian people.

Conclusion

Summary of findings. After conducting extensive data analysis on the interview and project data, three major themes emerged. These themes emerged; cultural effects on human rights issues, domestic and international engagement, and institutionalization of human rights norms. The first theme, ‘cultural effects on human rights issues’ had three sub themes that explicated the strong influence of culture on people’s response to the knowledge they attain about human rights. The subtheme ‘adult-child relations’ described the challenges children face
such as child marriage and child labor. These issues are mostly created by cultural norms and it is their parents or guardians that bring these challenges upon the children who are unable to help themselves. Additionally, traditional gender norms prevent women from speaking on issues directly affecting their personal lives. As a result, they end up suffering in silence, which makes it extremely difficult for them to get help since no one is aware of their oppression. They subsequently get deeply engulfed in their oppression that they do not even see it as oppressive any more (Freire, 1970).

Because of the gender inequalities, national and international organizations work collaboratively to address the problem. Through constitutionally mandated institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), Malawi worked with the UNDP to conducted outreach programs in local communities, trained primary school head teachers, conducted a study on human rights and gender studies, and conducted investigations on human rights issues. The international organizations involved, the UNDP Malawi and the Royal Norwegian Embassy, co-financed the project. The UNDP Malawi also assisted in project design but gave the lead to the MHRC. These collaborations among domestic and international organizations assisted in establishing discursive practices that would enhance human rights protection in the country (Risse & Sikkink, 1999). The findings indicate that there were strong and significant relationships not only between the international and national human rights actors, but also among the domestic institutions themselves. However, there were some implicit tension on the use of financial resources, and some cultural tension on which human rights issues are more culturally or socially acceptable in Malawi.

As a way of institutionalizing or domesticating the human rights norms, the MHRSP focused on reaching out to primary schools and the local communities. For these outreach
programs, the human rights actors developed classroom materials that were used in all primary school class levels. The types of education used for this approach were formal and non-formal learning. The project, however, did not focus on informal education, which made the HRE programs seem more like “banking” of knowledge, rather than “problem-posing education” that would awaken the critical consciousness of individuals to liberate them from their oppression (Freire, 1970). As a result, the level of awareness increased, but people, especially women and girls, keep suffering in silence.

**Summary of analysis.** Data were primarily collected through interviews from individuals who were part of the MHRSP. I also used project data and classroom materials that were used for HRE. The collected data were categorized into codes, and out of these codes the above-mentioned themes emerged. Furthermore, the discussion for the study utilizes two conceptual frameworks. First, the study used the Risse and Sikkink’s (1999) spiral model. This is a social constructivist approach that is used to understand the relationships between transnational/international organizations and domestic organizations in the institutionalization and domestication of international human rights norms. This theory helped the study to understand how the human rights actors domesticated the norms. In simple terms, it helped in understanding the ‘administrative’ or ‘high-level’ element of the projects. Second, the study also used Friere’s (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed to understand the pedagogical approaches used in the MHRSP. Friere’s concept on problem-posing education, banking model, and dialogue helped the study in understand the better ways of teaching human rights concepts that will result in the change of an individuals thinking. Additionally, relevant literature was used in the discussion to provide a robust argument supported by existing literature.
Conclusion. Undoubtedly, the findings of this study indicate that partnerships among international and domestic human rights actors are worth investing. Not only do they bring diversity in solutions towards redressing gender inequalities, but they also help in capacity building. The MHRSP was one of a kind; it was the first national initiative in Malawi that brought together numerous human rights actors to promote and protect peoples’ human rights. Its contributions have significantly contributed to the increase in the level of awareness on human rights issues, helped in producing primary school materials to educate kids, and strengthened collaborations among domestic human rights actors. It has established training programs for teachers, and conducted numerous outreach programs for local community members so that everyone has a chance to learn.

However, it seems to me that these organizations are targeting the “wrong-outcome.” Their approach is brilliant, but their target outcome and means to that target appear to be slightly off. In conducting my research, I learned and understood that the MHRSP’s programs focus on improving awareness and knowledge about human rights, but what do people do with this knowledge? A good example can be the “Breast Cancer Awareness Month” in October. Pink ribbons are put everywhere and almost everyone can see them and is made aware of the problem. All that happens is that people become familiar with the issue, but it does not necessarily mean that knowing will automatically bring treatment or a cure. Similarly, with HRE, increasing awareness helps people to know, but it does not necessarily change the deep cultural beliefs that make women believe that they should not talk, but preserve their pain and suffer in silence. Just as one of my participants mentioned, “…there are still some of those stubborn cultural beliefs that are still not dying down...its that stubborn state of affairs, that we are still hopping to break, but it is quite a problem.”
With reference to Freire’s suggestion (1970), I think that programs such as the MHRSP need more of a problem-posing education in order to deal with such deeply rooted ideologies. This pedagogical approach will not only provoke dialogue, but it will help in awakening the critical consciousness in people, especially women and girls who are suffering in silence, to feel discontent of their oppressive situation. Additionally, it will help them to see themselves outside of their situation and to stop appealing to their own denial of the oppressive reality (Freire, 1970). I think that It is only when this type of education is incorporated in Malawian human rights education programs that we can see change from within.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This instrumental case study may not have considered all the angles of conducting qualitative research. Further research should include longitudinal studies that look at HRE projects from the inception to the end of the project. This would help the researcher have to a deep understanding of the project, its process, and how it has evolved. Second, conducting observations in the schools during HRE-related subjects would help the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the teacher’s ability to instruct HRE materials. Additionally, it will help in understanding how the students learn the material. Conducting interviews with the students may also help in further clarifications.

Third, my research only focused on the educational materials in primary schools. I think that a more detailed study that compares primary and secondary education materials would be a better approach to look at the resources used in different educational levels. I also think that a different methodological approach such as quantitative research would help in measuring the impacts that programs such as the MHRSP have on gender inequalities. Fourth, I recommend that primary school curricula should introduce a subject that is exclusively dedicated to teaching
human rights. This subject should be taught from standard 5 going up because the children’s
cognitive development at this stage is a little more developed. Additionally, this subject should
be specifically tailored and domesticated to fit into the Malawian social and cultural contexts so
that the students can easily relate and apply the material. Finally, I recommend that human rights
institutions that aim at developing HRE programs should use the approach suggested by Freire
(1970), which is the problem-posing pedagogy as their method for teaching human rights. This
will help in engaging dialogue, awakening the critical consciousness of the learner, and help
them to find ways to liberate themselves from their oppressive conditions.

**Researcher reflections**

This study has helped me to develop a deeper understanding of human rights education in
Malawi. I have also learned a lot about partnerships between international and domestic
organizations that worked on the Malawi Human Rights Support Project. As a Malawian
national, I did not know much about how culture strongly affects people’s understanding and
response to human rights in my country. My heart was heavy learning from my participants and
even from existing literature about how women and girls are suffering in silence even after
knowing that they are being discriminated against. But there is not so much they can do because
they are afraid of social exclusion and some do not even understand their own oppression.

This qualitative case study has strongly increased my passion in human rights education,
specifically in its efforts in addressing gender inequalities. As a researcher for this study, it is
my goal to be the voice for some of the Malawian women and girls who do not have the voice to
speak about their oppression. As a woman pursuing a Master’s degree in Cross-Cultural and
International Education, and having special interest in girls’ education, I envision myself pursuing
a career that gives me an opportunity to influence international education policies affecting
female education. With such cultural constraints affecting women, I think that it is important to incorporate Freire’s (1970) problem-posing pedagogy at early stages of education. International and transnational agencies such as the United Nations that are responsible for developing global goals for education should ensure that such educational approaches are encouraged and emphasized. Hopefully, this will prepare the minds of young women, not just in Malawi, but in other countries whose voice and abilities are restricted because of cultural beliefs to develop a critical awareness of their world around them. I hope that my research will help human rights actors in Malawi, and hopefully other countries, to aim at using HRE to not only increase awareness alone, but to also aim at breaking persistent “culture-caused behaviors” such as suffering in silence.
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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Introduction: My name is Pempho Chinkondenji. I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Cross-cultural and International Education (MACIE). My advisor is Dr. Christopher J. Frey, an associate professor at BGSU and the coordinator of the MACIE program. As a requirement for graduation, I am doing a thesis about the relationship between national and international organizations in the development of human rights education towards the reduction of gender inequalities in Malawi.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand the significance of collaborations between national and international organizations in promoting gender equality through human rights education in Malawi. For this study, I am doing a case study on the collaboration between the UNDP Malawi office and the Malawi Human Rights Commission on the Human Rights Support Project (HRSP). Although the study is not designed to help you personally, your opinions are valuable and may benefit your organization and Malawi in promoting gender equality through human rights education. In addition, it is expected that through this study, women and girls from Malawian communities will be enabled to participate equally in their society and economy just as their male counterparts.

Procedure: If you agree to participate in this study, I will conduct one interview with you that will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be done through the telephone or Skype. I will ask you questions relevant to human rights and gender equality in Malawi and your involvement in the HSRP. Also, I will use a voice recorder to record the interview. The recordings will be transcribed by me, and kept for a maximum of one year, after which they will be deleted. A pseudonym (assigned name) will be used on the transcripts and any subsequent publications. During the interview, you will not be asked to provide any demographic information. Within one month of the interview, I may contact you again with follow up questions that will not take more than 20 minutes of your time. I will also send you a copy of the interview transcript upon request.

Voluntary Nature: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality/Anonymity Protection: The information obtained from this research study will be kept confidential. Access to this information is restricted to the researcher. Consent forms will be stored separately from the data recordings and transcripts. I will lock away the consent forms in a secure file cabinet in my office. The audio recordings and transcripts will be stored on a secure online server, which utilizes server authentication that only I can access. The audio recordings from the interviews will be kept for a maximum of one year, after which they will be deleted. A pseudonym (assigned name) will be used on all the transcripts and publications. With the pseudonym, I may quote in published research some of the things you discuss with me during the interview. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings.

Risks: The anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. There are no physical or mental risks associated with your participation in this study.

550 Education
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0250
Phone: 419-372-9950
Fax: 419-372-8448

BGSU HSRB - APPROVED FOR USE
IRBNet ID # 928311
EFFECTIVE 08/23/2016
Contact Information: If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact me at +1(419)-819-5545 or email at pemphoc@bgsu.edu and/or my advisor Dr. Christopher Frey at +1(419) 372-9549 or email at cjfrey@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, +1(419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu), if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study.

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary.

Participant’s signature: ________________________________
Participants’ name (print): ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

BGSU HSRB - APPROVED FOR USE
IRBNet ID # 928311
EFFECTIVE 08/23/2016
DATE: August 23, 2016

TO: Pempho Chinkondenji

FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [928311-3] Relationship between National and International Organizations in the Development of Human Rights Education towards the Reduction of Gender Inequalities in Malawi

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: August 23, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has determined this project is exempt from IRB review according to federal regulations AND that the proposed research has met the principles outlined in the Belmont Report. You may now begin the research activities.

Note that an amendment may not be made to exempt research because of the possibility that proposed changes may change the research in such a way that it is no longer meets the criteria for exemption. A new application must be submitted and reviewed prior to modifying the research activity, unless the researcher believes that the change must be made to prevent harm to participants. In these cases, the Office of Research Compliance must be notified as soon as practicable.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Hagemyer at 419-372-7716 or khagemy@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Protocol for Head Teachers

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you teach human rights education at your primary school(s)?

2. How do your school policies, school management and extracurricula activities promote a human rights based learning environment?

3. Which subjects are used to teach human rights and how are your teachers prepared to teach these subjects?
   a. Which grades are these subjects taught and how many hours/periods a week?
   b. What are the key learning contents and objectives?

4. Have you or the teachers at your school received any professional training in terms of human rights education?

5. How many teachers have been trained, and where and when was this training done
   a. What did the training process entail?

6. Can you share, if any, the human rights programs undertaken by your school in conjunction with NGOs?

7. What major issues are addressed in the human rights curriculum?

8. How do the curriculums address gender inequalities?

9. What are the challenges and opportunities with infusing human rights in the school environment?

10. How do you think this approach is successful?

Thank you for your participation.
Interview Protocol for Curriculum Specialists

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Educational Foundations, Leadership & Policy
Master of Arts in Cross-Cultural & International Education (MACIE)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

All the questions will be in English

1. What are your roles and responsibilities at your institution?
2. Who are the main actors behind the development of curriculums related to human rights?
3. What factors (e.g. cultural or economic backgrounds etc.) do you considered when developing the human rights related curriculum?
4. What major issues are addressed in the human rights curriculum?
   a. How are they addressed?
5. What kind of expertise exists in curriculum design and teaching methodology for HRE in the country?
6. Which curriculum subjects in primary and secondary school that include human rights education?
   a. How many hours are dedicated to teaching these subjects and what grades?
   b. What are the key learning contents and objectives?
   c. Who teaches these subjects and how are they prepared to teach these lessons?
7. Can you give me examples, if any, of international organizations and/or government departments that have patterned with you in the development of human rights- related curricula?
   a. Who are the important people in this collaboration?
8. How do the curriculums address gender inequalities?
9. What are the other challenges and opportunities with regard to the integration of HRE into the education and professional development of school personnel?
10. Are there other challenges and opportunities with regard to infusing human rights in the school environment?

Thank you for your participation.
Interview Protocol for Senior Human Rights Officers and Project Officer

All the interview questions will be in English

1. Where are you working at the moment and what are your roles and responsibilities?
2. How does your office assist in educating the public and promote awareness and respect for human rights?
3. What are the common issues you get that relate to gender inequalities? If possible, may you please share any examples?
   a. How do you address such issues and determine the appropriate remedies?
4. What are the programs in your office that promotes the awareness of human rights in Malawi, if any?
5. What human rights education programs does your office have?
   a. How are these programs implemented in primary schools?
6. What was your office’s role in the Malawi Human Rights Support Project?
   a. What activities did you do under this project?
   b. What resources were used toward this project?
   c. What were the challenges with this project?
   d. What were the successes?
   e. How did the partnerships/collaborations develop with the other participating partners?
7. How do you think the knowledge of human rights affects gender inequalities, especially for women in the work place? If possible, may you give examples?
8. How do you think is the involvement of International Organizations in human rights education in the MHRSP?
   a. How has your organization partnered with other human rights actors?
9. Finally, what do you think are the weaknesses and strengths that human rights actors in Malawi have?

Thank you for your participation.
Interview Protocol for Legislative Officers

School of Educational Foundations, Leadership & Policy
Master of Arts in Cross-Cultural & International Education (MACIE)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

All the interview questions will be in English

1. Where are you working at the moment and what are your roles and responsibilities?
2. As a human rights professional, how do you understand human rights education?
   a. What do you think is difficult/easy about teaching human rights education?
3. How do you think is the involvement of IOs in human rights education in Malawi?
4. Describe the relationships among human rights actors that you have worked with.
5. What is your involvement with any governmental, civil society or international organization, if any?
   a. What was your role?
   b. Did they have any human rights (education) programs?
      i. If so, what were the target groups for these programs?
      ii. How do you think the administration of these organizations impact the progression of such programs?
6. Have you worked on any cases in the area of child rights, gender and women’s rights? If yes:
   a. What do you think are the major issues or common problems?
   b. What is your perspective about their knowledge of human rights?
   c. If possible, can you share with me any of the women’s experiences?
7. How do you think the knowledge of human rights affects gender inequalities, especially for women? If possible, may you give examples?
8. What are some of the experiences or examples that show your organization’s impact on national efforts in addressing gender inequalities?
9. With your experience in the human rights profession, what are your “legal” opinions about human rights (education) and its effects on any of the following:
   a. Gender based violence?
   b. Girls’ access to education?
   c. Child marriage?
10. Finally, what do you think are the weaknesses (challenges) and strengths that human rights actors in Malawi have?