

## **HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

A case study of education and awareness on child rights among the Toposa of South Sudan

by:

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### **Abstract**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child regardless of their race, religion or abilities under the law applicable to the child majority of which is attained earlier.

According to the CRC article (1), a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

According to the Child Act (2008), article 22 (1-4) state that every child is entitled to protection by the state, caretakers and anyone who comes in contact with children.

It is therefore the role of the state to ensure that children are protected from any kind of abuse and that whoever is found a culprit of child abuse be punished through their concrete child protection measures put in place.

The Constitution of South Sudan (2011) is a national legal document for the Republic of South Sudan that talks about the Human rights of the citizens as well as emphasizing on the rights of the child in their various forms including the protection rights.

The Toposa are pastoralist community ethnic group whose livelihood is largely composed of cattle herding. They treasure their animals more than anything does because it is a symbol of wealth and prestige.

Child protection is a major concern especially among the remote communities in the country. The more the number of herds of cattle, Wives and children one has, the more prestige they are accorded with among the Toposa in South Sudan. Some of the child protection issues here that come because of child abuse include but not limited to early and forced child marriage, child neglect, child labor, sexual harassment etc.

Education for human rights describes an overt attempt to raise social consciousness to motivate action for social justice Covell. K (2013). I believe that when children are enlightened and sensitized on their rights, they get to understand the various forms of child abuse, and also be able to tell

when a fellow child is suffering abuse as well as where to report abuse cases and threats in the community. I have chosen this project on human rights education so as I can use the same opportunity to help children advocate for their rights. Just as Covell cites from Howe and Covell (2005), from an educational perspective, the Convention is engaging and of particular relevance to children because it appeals to their self-interest and is relevant to the everyday lives of themselves and their peers. The Right, Respect and Responsibility initiative (RRR) approach on human rights education as said by Covell) provides an example of the potential for effective human rights education to promote and sustain attitudes and behaviors supportive of social justice. Once the children are educated about their own rights, they are empowered on dealing with abuse and identifying those that are suffering abuse. The community also benefits from this approach as it will have the conscience on them the children and respond to children's needs.