

Submission to the Universal Periodic
Review of the United Nations Human
Rights Council
4th Cycle – 41st Session
Country Review: Bahrain

March 2022

By Ntchindi Chilongozi Theu

Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field.

Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquility in the society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization; and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. **Our goal is to work together with global partners to remove barriers to access to education and to take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.**



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0. Introduction

1. Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field. Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquility in the society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization; and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. Our goal is to work together with global partners to remove barriers to access to education and to take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.
2. The right to education is a fundamental pillar of children's rights. Achieving universal education, however, is a complex process that requires social policy to join with educational policy to develop strategies that bring about change. Bahrain is an island country located in western Asia, which, based on the projections of the latest United Nations data, has a population of about 1,773,831.

1. Issues to be tackled in Bahrain's Educational Sector

3. According to research Bahrain has been experiencing several violations towards the right to freedom of expression, therefore the education sector has deteriorated. Bahrain's government has an intolerance policy towards dissent that has impacted local students and teachers in the educational system.
4. Since the year 2011, hundreds of educators have been incarcerated, intimidated into silence, or lost their jobs. Also, hundreds of students have been deprived of education either due to imprisonment or being expelled from their educational institutions for participating in demonstrations.

Discrimination

5. According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, the Bahraini authorities are violating the right to education by continuing political or cultural discrimination and revenge against opponents.
6. The Center indicated that the World Education Report monitored in the year "2019" the deprivation of many students of their right to scholarships because of their political and religious beliefs, which indicates that the right to education in Bahrain suffers from severe sectarian discrimination.

7. According to Mahdi Abu Dheeb, the former president of the Bahrain Teachers Syndicate, about 400 students, all under the age of 18, were deprived of education due to torture and imprisonment until 2016. One student, Ali Al-Singace, was executed in 2017. The fact that he was under 18 years old at the time of his arrest constitutes a more severe violation of their freedom of expression, assembly, and education.
8. The above-mentioned numbers do not include students in higher education, the majority of whom were expelled from their educational institutions for participation in protests that took place in 2011. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry's investigation concluded that the University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic initially expelled 427 students out of 400 to 500 who participated in the protest of March 2011. Many of the expulsion decisions were later revoked; however, some students were prevented from ever again attending an institution of higher education in Bahrain. As a result, a great number of students in Bahrain to date are not able to complete their studies after being incarcerated. Their sentences vary in length.

Sexual abuse

9. Sexual abuse of children has been increasing 'under the radar' in Bahrain, as many families are anxious to avoid 'disgracing' themselves in the conservative society that stigmatizes these issues. Other victims and affected families keep these matters secret out of fear of legal action against abusers, who are very often family relatives. A care centre for family violence reported that it registered 408 abuse cases in 2011, including cases of violence against women. To date, Bahrain has not conducted a comprehensive study on child abuse, so very few official statistics exist.

Funding towards the educational sector

10. The Bahrain government allocates about 7.18% of its gross domestic product towards the educational sector, however an increase and support by private entities may help to improve the current education quality in the country.

Quality of performance

11. A report issued by the Education and Training Quality Authority revealed that 32% of schools in Bahrain, equivalent to 188 public schools. Based on the reviews of their quality of performance in the Third Review Cycle (2014-2018) conducted by the ETQA (Training Quality Authority), these schools received an "inadequate" rating.
12. This "inadequate" rating is given to any education institutions whereby the quality of the educational process and administration are reflected on the students in an inadequate way, or if performance levels are low. It is also given if academic achievement, personal

development, social responsibility, or teaching, learning and assessment are rated as "inadequate".

13. The performance of intermediate schools remains a concern due to the challenges that the schools are facing in improving the performance, as none of them received an "excellent" rating, while 12 of the 17 (or 71%) intermediate schools reviewed during 2017-2018 were rated "inadequate".

II. Recommendations & Conclusions

Broken Chalk recommends that Bahrain should:

14. Empower citizens to have a say in decision-making processes;
15. Raise awareness on issues of concern such as violence, abuse, and bullying in schools;
16. Pay more attention to children living in poverty, children in rural areas, and children with disabilities;
17. Monitor the implementation of the right to education and expose violations;
18. Allocate the resources necessary to ensure the high quality and accessibility of public education and regulate and monitor private schools to address inequality in the education system by building schools, providing supplies and training teachers;
19. Strengthen the quality of education;
20. Develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools, which includes public awareness-raising activities and the monitoring of the implementation of the national standards on water and sanitation facilities, and ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the implementation of the strategy;
21. Develop and promote high-quality vocational training to enhance the skills of children, especially those who drop out of school, with a particular emphasis on those in rural areas.
22. Create a supportive legal framework that encourages the inclusion of migrant/refugee children into formal schools;
23. Create a supportive legal framework that encourages the inclusion of migrant/refugee children into formal schools. This includes adopting flexible documentation requirements for school enrollment. Empowering decentralized education officers as well as school directors to make enrollment and placement decisions, and to organize support measures necessary for undocumented migrant/refugee children, will further lift barriers to school enrollment;
24. Ensure reliable multi-year funding. Supporting the needs of locals and migrant children therefore requires investment that is sustained.

III. References

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