



**BROKEN
CHALK**

Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the United
Nations Human Rights Council 4th Cycle – 50th Session

Right to Education

Country Review: Honduras

Submitting Organization: BROKEN CHALK

April 2025

By

Emile Safar

Harmonielaan 63, 1111 PE

Diemen, Netherlands

+31687406567

upr@brokenchalk.org

www.brokenchalk.org

Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council 4th Cycle –
50th Session

Right to Education

Country Review: Honduras

Submitting Organization: BROKEN CHALK

April 2025

Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 that monitors and minimises worldwide human rights violations in education. We aim to promote universal and equal access to education for all.

We encourage and support achieving societal peace with our international sponsors and partners by advocating for intercultural tolerance, preventing radicalism and polarisation, and tackling educational inequalities.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Brief overview of the last UN-UPR cycle	3
III. Out-of-School Rate	4
IV. Privatisations and Mismanagement of the School System.....	5
V. Violence	6
VI. Recommendations.....	6
VII. References	7

I. Introduction

1. The following report has been drafted by Broken Chalk as a stakeholder contribution to the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review [UPR] for the Republic of Honduras. As Broken Chalk's focus is on combating human rights violations within the educational sphere, the contents of this report and the following recommendations will primarily focus on the Right to Education.
2. The education system in Honduras is structured into four levels: pre-primary (pre-basic education for ages 3-6), primary (ages 6-14), secondary (ages 15-17), and higher education (including university). [i]
3. Articles 155 and 156 of the Honduran Constitution guarantee the right to education and academic freedom. Article 157 stipulates that education is to be funded entirely by the state, except for certain exceptions in higher education. Article 171 of the constitution mandates one year of pre-basic education and all intermediate education, totaling 10 years of mandatory education, which are to be provided entirely unburdened by the state. [ii] [iii]
4. The Secretaría de Educación (Education Secretariat) is tasked with managing and regulating all policies related to education, as well as overseeing the national education budget.
5. In recent years, the government has undergone reforms that have decentralised state funding of schools and educational programmes, instead delegating the funding responsibility to regional governments. [iv] This has led to increasing privatisation of education in Honduras over the past two decades, where the government has struggled to meet the demand and needs of the population. [v]
6. The Honduran government has outlined a vision for the National Education System to be inclusive, effective, and efficient in meeting the nation's needs, regardless of region, providing life training for citizens that enables them to build well-being and contribute to the nation's sustainable development. [vi]
7. In 2019, Honduras received a grant of approximately \$ 40 million from the World Bank as part of an early childhood development project. The project spans from 2020 to 2025 and includes building, expanding, and/or rehabilitating public preschool centers in 224 classrooms, providing training and support to over 2,000 teachers, and increasing community engagement in preschool education. The progress on the project as of October 2024 was "moderately satisfactory." [vii] [viii]
8. Despite 10 years of mandatory, free education being available to Hondurans over the age of 25, the average number of schooling years is 6.4 years. Moreover, the out-of-school rate in Honduras is two and a half times the Latin American average in primary school and nearly four times the average in secondary school. While this issue is experienced nationwide, across demographic groups, low-income and rural communities are more affected. [ix]

II. Brief overview of the last UN-UPR cycle

9. Honduras was last reviewed in November 2020. The country received 223 recommendations, 203 of which were supported. Thirteen of the recommendations pertained to the Right to Education. [x]
10. Of the recommendations relating to the Right to Education, all 13 were supported. The main issues regarding education pertained to addressing high levels of illiteracy, decreasing the dropout rate, eliminating discrimination, and improving attendance, education quality, and funding through an increased budget for education. [xi]

11. The National report highlighted the government's efforts to provide regular meals to over 1.3 million children in the public school system and additional food to approximately 300,000 in the most vulnerable areas, thereby encouraging their attendance and upholding their rights to food and education. The government aimed to make schooling more inclusive by investing in specific areas and disability support. Regarding support for minorities, the government noted a 40% increase in attendance among indigenous and Afro-Hondurans between 2015 and 2019. ^[xii]
12. Regarding education, the stakeholder report emphasised that over one million minors remained out of school or did not attend regularly, of which minorities and those with disability were disproportionately affected. Stakeholders also noted that the proportion of the government budget allocated to education between 2010 and 2019 declined, which is a serious concern given the challenges to the right to property in Honduras. ^[xiii]
13. In regard to violence against children, the stakeholder report noted that increased attention needed to be given in schools to reintegrating children displaced due to violence into the school system. ^[xiv]

III. Out-of-School Rate

14. The most recent data on the out-of-school rate in Honduras is alarming. 42.1% of secondary school-aged children and 20.7% of primary school-aged children are not actively attending school. As these figures are several times the average in the region, it implies there are systematic issues in the right to education. ^[xv]
15. One of the main drivers of children dropping out of education is economic constraints, such as extreme poverty, which incentivises a transition out of school and into the labour force to support themselves and their families, as many families lack the resources to support a dependent child in high school. For some families, they are also forced to weigh the burden of education against financial stability, a choice that increasingly families opt for financial stability, particularly if the child faces academic challenges. ^[xvi]
16. As a result of leaving education to enter the workforce, adult males are 7% less likely to complete lower secondary education and 13% less likely to complete high school (upper-secondary education) than females. ^[xvii]
17. In some cases, where other issues do not prevent a student from completing lower-secondary education, they may be unable to continue their education after completing 9th grade, as their school does not offer upper-secondary education. This issue is particularly prevalent for rural communities. When a community or school cannot offer education (due to the number of students being below the minimum threshold), students are forced to travel to other villages or urban areas to continue their education, thus incurring additional costs. If a family cannot afford those costs or if an institution with upper-secondary education is too far away, the student's education is prematurely halted. ^[xviii]
18. Girls also faced additional hardships, as, based on studies and estimates, between 11 and 18.5% of female dropouts cite marriage or pregnancy as the main reason for dropping out. This marks a significant challenge to achieving gender equality from a young age, if the issue persists. ^[xix]

IV. Privatisations and Mismanagement of the School System

19. The Honduran government devotes about 13% of government spending to educations, this is roughly 5.8% of GDP, which are similar figures to what governments spend globally, however due to the high out-of-school rate and inefficient government education spending, the government has moved toward privatising education for increase 'efficiency and quality.'^[xx]
20. The move to privatise education in Honduras is the culmination of an education system that has not been effectively managed, where there is little consistency between education ministers and their policies.^[xxi] Transferring the responsibility of a portion of the education system to private actors, without sufficient public oversight, raises concerns about the right and quality of education.
21. There is a lack of government information on the exact policy of privatising the school system, as many decisions have been made in private or have not been published for public debate. Investigations have shown that the gaps in the education system resulting from privatisation have been filled mainly by international aid agencies and NGOs, rather than domestic actors, which could lead to a dependency on foreign aid.^[xxii]
22. Local reporting indicates that the inefficient and insufficient funding of schools has led to teachers devoting significant amounts of time to seeking funding, both public and private, thereby diverting them away from their core teaching duties. This issue has worsened since the policy of privatising education began.^[xxiii] Given that the Honduran government allocates a significant portion of its budget to education, it is seemingly not reaching certain parts of the educational system, namely the schools themselves, particularly in rural communities.
23. There have been notable cuts to social spending in Honduras, particularly in education, as the government prioritises paying down development loans and appears more attractive to foreign investment. Furthermore, although there is still significant funding for education, it is not being utilised efficiently. Together, budget cuts, inconsistent education funding, and ineffective use of funds can hinder the country's long-term development goals.^[xxiv]
24. Some reports note an increase in enrolment at private education institutions due to government policies. Concerningly, in addition to the other issues facing Honduras regarding education, some public education institutions have begun charging families fees to fund the schools. By collecting fees at supposedly free public education institutions, the most disadvantaged have yet another barrier to accessing education.^[xxv]
25. There should be increasing concern for private education companies that have been lobbying the government to decrease regulation regarding enrollment, student support, general oversight, and other governmental controls.^[xxvii]
26. Moreover, issues of corruption in the public education system's institutions have also infiltrated the private system. *12 *13 *15 Some private education companies and school directors have been reported to engage in corrupt activities, diverting funds away from the school's operations.^{[xxviii] [xxviii] [xxix]}
27. Some information on student results and achievements has been overstated or altered to look better for shareholders in private schools. In turn, some students may not be meeting the requirements or acquiring the necessary skills to progress to the next level of education. This information gap, where the government is unaware of the actual results of students, can lead to significant issues in determining the policies needed to benefit students.^[xxx]
28. In some cases where private companies have taken over schools, these educational institutions have been run more like businesses than centres for students to learn. A negative instance of this is that, to be more profitable, some experienced teachers have faced pay cuts or lost their

jobs. Those who have lost their jobs have reportedly been replaced by less-qualified staff. ^[xxxix] It is equally worth noting that the public system has its issues regarding teachers facing significant delays in receiving their salaries. ^[xxxix]

V. Violence

29. Honduras faces one of the highest rates of violence, including where adolescents are victims, in Latin America and the world, primarily due to sizable gang activity. ^[xxxiii] These activities are primarily recorded in urban areas and extend into the domain of education. Between January 2010 and March 2018, 1522 students were murdered in Honduras, which is highly concerning. While there is no more recent data on the homicides of children and students, the lack of policy and reporting indicates these issues must still be a high-priority concern. ^[xxxiv] While excessive violence is an issue, it equally poses a threat to the access and right to education and is acknowledged as such by the Honduran government. ^[xxxv]
30. Many, particularly poorer students living in urban neighbourhoods where gangs are more present than the local government, lead to a dangerous environment for children, which can be impacted by the violence that gangs engage in. Gangs can create additional safety risks to children and impact their access to education. Reporting and interviews in schools demonstrate that some students have felt gang dynamics enter schools in urban areas where they are attempting to recruit students, and instances of severe violence have been recorded ^[xxxvi]
31. In the two most significant urban areas of Honduras, over 500 educational institutions are in environments prone to violence and have a significant presence of organised crime. In these areas, violence and crime pose a significant threat to students, leading to dropouts. ^[xxxvii] When gang recruiting enters schools, this is a significant threat to the right to education as gangs engage in deceptive, coercive tactics to recruit, often the most vulnerable, thereby exacerbating other issues in the right to education, particularly poverty. The issue of gang recruitment in schools is chiefly an issue faced by adolescent boys and contributes to their elevated school dropout rate. ^[xxxviii]
32. A 2016 report notes that of 4700 adolescents in gangs, posing a serious risk to these children, that goes beyond merely their right to education. Although newer reports could not be found, this issue requires further research and a response from authorities to determine its current extent. ^[xxxix]

VI. Recommendations

33. Broken Chalk recommends that the Honduran Government publish additional information on the state of the education system, policies and development. Ideally, the government should conduct a yearly, transparent review and report on the education system, as well as more thorough reports every five years, which could include progress on government initiatives in education.
34. Broken Chalk recommends more transparency in the development and implementation of policies relating to education.
35. Broken Chalk recommends increased government investment in education as a whole, particularly regarding rural communities. Investment in rural communities should be targeted towards building and maintaining school buildings, ensuring communities have a complete K-12 teaching staff who are adequately paid and trained. Such an investment would help to keep children enrolled in schools.

36. Broken Chalk further recommends further investment in free meals for all students, or at a minimum, for low-income students, so that parents can incentivize students to continue their education rather than leaving school for work.
37. Broken Chalk recommends that the government provide sufficient, free transportation to the nearest school to boost the out-of-school rate, which will have long-term benefits for students in communities too small to warrant opening a school.
38. Broken Chalk recommends that Honduras implement policies to investigate and prosecute ministerial and low-level corruption more effectively, ensuring that spending dedicated to education in budgets actually reaches schools for the benefit of students.
39. Should Honduras continue its policy of privatising education, Broken Chalk urges the establishment of a department within the Ministry of Education to directly oversee private education institutions, ensuring they provide a sufficient quality of accessible education (both physically and financially). The government should be prepared to step in in regions where the quality and accessibility of education are insufficient.
40. Broken Chalk recommends that the Honduran government implement a campaign to keep organised crime and gang dynamics out of schools, so that students can prioritise their education.
41. Broken Chalk recommends additional security near schools in communities with high rates of violence or the presence of organised crime to ensure the safety of students and uphold their right to access education, without fearing for their safety.

VII. References

i

^[i] Paz-Maldonado, E., H. Flores-Girón, and I. Silva-Peña. "Education and social inequality: The impact of covid-19 pandemic on the public education system in Honduras." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 29 (2021): 133

^[ii] "Honduras 1982 (Rev. 2013) Constitution - Constitute," n.d. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Honduras_2013.

^[iii] Murphy-Graham, Erin, Diana Pacheco Montoya, Alison K. Cohen, and Enrique Valencia Lopez. "Examining school dropout among rural youth in Honduras: Evidence from a mixed-methods longitudinal study." *International Journal of Educational Development* 82 (2021): 102329.

^[iv] Levy, Jordan. "Reforming schools, disciplining teachers: Decentralization and privatization of education in Honduras." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (2019): 170-188.

^[v] Edwards Jr, D. Brent, M. Moschetti, and Alejandro Caravaca. "Globalization and privatization of education in Honduras— Or the need to reconsider the dynamics and legacy of state formation." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 44, no. 4 (2023): 635-649.

^[vi] Secretaría De Educación. "INFORMACIÓN INSTITUCIONAL," 2024. <https://www.se.gob.hn/se-detalle-institucional/#section3>.

^[vii] World Bank. "Early Childhood Education Improvement Project." *International Development Association*, December 9, 2019. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2021-11-program-document-honduras.pdf>.

^[viii] World Bank. "Honduras Early Childhood Education Improvement Project," October 1, 2024. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099100124074023054/pdf/P1691611cc18410e71b7a017bfe23868d22.pdf>.

^[ix] Murphy-Graham, Erin, Diana Pacheco Montoya, Alison K. Cohen, and Enrique Valencia Lopez. "Examining school dropout among rural youth in Honduras: Evidence from a mixed-methods longitudinal study." *International Journal of Educational Development* 82 (2021): 102329.

[x] Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Compilation on Honduras." *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, March 3, 2020. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g20/055/81/pdf/g2005581.pdf>.

[xi] *ibid*

[xii] Human Rights Council and United Nations. "National Report [Honduras]." Report. *Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*, February 5, 2020.

[xiii] Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Summary of Stakeholders' Submissions on Honduras." Report. *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, February 25, 2020. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g20/050/70/pdf/g2005070.pdf>.

[xiv] *ibid*

[xv] USAID. "Honduras Education." USAID Country File. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://idea.usaid.gov/cd/honduras/education>.

[xvi] Murphy-Graham, Erin, Diana Pacheco Montoya, Alison K. Cohen, and Enrique Valencia Lopez. "Examining school dropout among rural youth in Honduras: Evidence from a mixed-methods longitudinal study." *International Journal of Educational Development* 82 (2021): 102329.

[xvii] *ibid*

[xviii] *ibid*

[xix] *ibid*

[xx] Flores, Trino Fernando Lobo. "La privatización educativa como política encubierta. Un análisis del caso de Honduras."

[xxi] Edwards, D. Brent, M. Moschetti, and A. Caravaca. "Globalization and Privatization of Education in Honduras—Or the Need to Reconsider the Dynamics and Legacy of State Formation." *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 44, no. 4 (November 28, 2020): 635–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2020.1852181>.

[xxii] *ibid*

[xxiii] Levy, Jordan. "Reforming schools, disciplining teachers: Decentralization and privatization of education in Honduras." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (2019): 170-188.

[xxiv] *ibid*

[xxv] Flores, Trino Fernando Lobo. "La privatización educativa como política encubierta. Un análisis del caso de Honduras."

[xxvi] *ibid*

[xxvii] *ibid*

[xxviii] Edwards, D. Brent, M. Moschetti, and A. Caravaca. "Globalization and Privatization of Education in Honduras—Or the Need to Reconsider the Dynamics and Legacy of State Formation." *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 44, no. 4 (November 28, 2020): 635–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2020.1852181>.

[xxix] Lorente, Luis-Miguel Lázaro, and Míriam Lorente Rodríguez. "Violence and the right to education in the Northern Triangle of Central America." *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 12, no. 2 (2023): 225-241.

[xxx] Flores, Trino Fernando Lobo. "La privatización educativa como política encubierta. Un análisis del caso de Honduras."

[xxxi] *ibid*

[xxxii] Lorente, Luis-Miguel Lázaro, and Míriam Lorente Rodríguez. "Violence and the right to education in the Northern Triangle of Central America." *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 12, no. 2 (2023): 225-241.

[xxxiii] *ibid*

[xxxiv] McGrath, Antonia. "Teachers and students navigating urban violence in Honduras: A view from a school on the margins of El Progreso." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 118 (2024).

[xxxv] McGrath, Antonia. "Teachers and students navigating urban violence in Honduras: A view from a school on the margins of El Progreso." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 118 (2024).

[xxxvi] McGrath, Antonia. "Teachers and students navigating urban violence in Honduras: A view from a school on the margins of El Progreso." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 118 (2024).

[xxxvii] Flores, G. (2019). Informe factores que limitan el acceso y continuidad educativa en niñas, adolescentes y mujeres en Guatemala. Fe y Alegría.

[xxxviii] Lorente, Luis-Miguel Lázaro, and Míriam Lorente Rodríguez. "Violence and the right to education in the Northern Triangle of Central America." *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research* 12, no. 2 (2023): 225-241.

[xxxix] *ibid*