



# **MUNUCCLE 2018**

## **Human Rights Council**

### **The Rights of All to Education**

Chairs:

Hannah Jürgensen-Nikolay

Callum White

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

Article 26 of the charter of the United Nations provides for the following clear and concise points regarding education:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Hence, equal access to general education is considered a fundamental human right, protected within Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states namely that all must have access to education. However, this article is under threat in many regions, namely with regards to education for women, ethnic minorities and the poorer parts of the global population. And even where equal access is a reality, multiple threats to the right can exist, both within and without the education system, which can cause varying degrees of harm to those concerned.

Threats to the right can be common to a lot of countries in the world, such as developing countries and developed countries. There are multiple examples to why children are being cut off from their education as such, the following examples do not only apply to the cited nations.

## **Discrimination ... against girls**

In Africa, many young women are barred from higher education due to their social status as married and pregnant. This is generally because of the nation's cultural traditions of marrying and birthing at a young age (not always by choice). This trend is slowly being abandoned but it still stops these women from applying to a higher education.

The inequality between boys and girls occurs most frequently in the Arab States and in Africa and Asia. This threat puts the education of girls in jeopardy and is principally explained by the cultural, traditional and historical privileged treatment given to males.

These threats however do not exist solely in developing nations. The difference between gender discrimination in a developing nation and a developed nation is that one is overt the other, covert. The classic example is that of CEOs, Forbes published that of its *Forbes 1000* list, only 51 CEOs were women and of that only 24 broke the 500 mark. This is known as the Glass Ceiling phenomena where women are not legally discriminated against and are instead discriminated against without the aid of laws, i.e. covertly.

However, it must be said that society is moving uncharacteristically quickly about the topic of the Glass Ceiling. When Mrs. Clinton was the first lady, the company Walmart pulled a T-shirt from their stores because it was "offensive," saying that it went against the "family values" that the company held dear. That T-shirt was of an animated TV show character (Margaret from Dennis the Menace) that simply said "Someday a woman will be President!".

Recently in Japan, a prestigious medical school was accused of fixing their student's application tests such that women would find it harder to enter their school. This is as far as we know not a major trend in Asia but it still underlies that unless prejudice is rooted out from the system of education then it will continue to grow within and possibly spread to the next generation.

## **... against disabled**

Most nations do not display the percentile of disabled students that complete their education curriculums. A study on disabled students in South America showed that anywhere between 25 and 75 percent would not attend even basic levels of education, whereas in most cases, the same nations would have a minimum of 60 percent of their non-disabled youths complete the education course.

Another study, this time in Canada where in 2012, a report on the Ontario province found that many of the staff that worked for the medical service was prejudiced, biased and in many cases, closeminded about mental disabilities. These are people who are trained to help disabled people and I quote one surgeon stating to his patient after an operation ““had I known you were crazy, I wouldn’t have operated on you.””.

It is becoming a common practice in many nations to create separate schools for the disabled, this is a hot potato subject. This has two sides, the opinion that these people require dedicated materials, methods and people to help them clashing against the argument that this is just segregation under a different name and that they should be given an education that immerses them with the general public so as to change the public.

### **Financial resources**

Children can be held back from pursuing a higher education by being economically, socially or even geographically blocked from attending, as was the case in many old nation states, such as Tsarist Russia. The children either lived in poverty on farms, in poverty in industrial cities or in splendour in a noble’s mansion. This generally forced the children to work so as to provide support for their family or be groomed for a specific role such as inherit their family’s wealth.

Many countries do not have the adequate financial resources to create schools nor provide schooling materials. This is not always the fault of the nation itself. The example of South Sudan (with a national GDP per capita in USD of 228.034) shows that when a nation is economically ruined, the level of education that nation provided plummets due the lack of necessary resources.

### **Unequal relationships**

We should also bring up the sterling work non-profit organisations do to attempt to bring the same level of education/living that the developed world enjoys to the developing nations. This is not always a fair deal, as the organisation can force their terms on the recipients, such as whether they study the international baccalaureate or the French baccalaureate.

Unequal situations exist also within developed countries, such as the United-States where controversies about “affirmative actions” policies have been going on for years.

Projects developed by international organisations (such as UNICEF and Amnesty International) also help counter the many threats highlighted above, as such should you, the UN HRC, sponsor these organisations and if so how?

### **Universal educational system**

These NGOs and international organizations pretend to promote a universal and equal educational model. But in fact, they are sometime accused of adapting the Western values in a neo-colonial manner. China for instance considers any attempt to promote these universal values within its borders as an attempt to Westernised the nation.

Taking it to an extreme, in an attempt to defend their specific cultural or religious values, some may turn to terrorism such as Boko Haram. The kidnappings of 200 girls for years (with more than a thousand more victims of age for education) and the destruction of many schools in Northern Nigeria and in other neighboring countries, show that some view any attempt to educate as an act of aggression towards their community.

### **Tools needed to fight against prejudices and discrimination**

There have been 288 school shootings in the US since 2009 vs. 2 in France, 1 in Germany and 0 in the UK or Italy. Isn't it also a cultural specificity? How can we guarantee the protection of the right to an education without being under threat? Need we, as some American lobbyists insist, arm teachers? Need we turn schools into miniature fortresses? Need we, as the North Koreans have, turn schools into a place where propaganda and inclusion into a personality cult that insists we obey a single ruler, such that there is no dissent are taught?

In summary, access to education is becoming more important than ever in our growing global community, to allow everyone to keep up in a fast-paced world. The questions therefore arise of what can be done to ensure unhindered access to education to allow for the full development of the human personality in everyone, and how security can be guaranteed in an educational frame.

## **Sitography**

The Unesco Charter:

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education>

Discrimination against women...

In Japan:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/03/world/asia/japan-medical-school-test-scores-women.html>

In England (about the glass ceiling):

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2014/feb/12/women-headteachers-education-glass-ceiling-careers>

In Africa:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/16/africa-make-girls-access-education-reality>

In the Arab World:

[https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_26050.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_26050.html)

& [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3130234.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3130234.stm)

Discrimination against minorities...

Against Muslims in Germany:

<https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/wis/20928837.html>

Against Afro-Americans in the US:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/04/10/racism-in-schools-is-pushing-more-black-families-to-homeschool-their-children/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.b150e2465b02](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/04/10/racism-in-schools-is-pushing-more-black-families-to-homeschool-their-children/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b150e2465b02)

Against ethnic minorities in the UK:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2005/nov/30/accesstouniversity.highereducation>

Against disabled children...

In Canada:

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/persons-disabilities-canada-education-not-always-open-door-chrc-report>

in developing countries:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/aug/18/disabled-children-poorer-countries-out-of-primary-education-south-africa-human-rights-watch-report>

In emerging countries such as Brazil:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/brasil/education/inclusive-education>

Or India:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/19/millions-indian-children-are-being-denied-school-education-due-discrimination>

10 barriers to education around the world:

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-barriers-to-education-around-the-world-2>

Boko Haram kidnapping schoolgirls:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/11/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-girls.html>

& <https://www.dw.com/en/nigeria-fails-to-protect-schools-from-boko-harams-attacks/a-42737072>

Schools in Nigeria against Boko Haram:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-schools-to-counter-boko-haram/4513523.html>

Teaching creationism as an alternative truth to Darwinism?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/19/us/retro-report-evolution-science.html>

& <http://thecreationclub.com/how-evolution-infiltrated-schools-and-universities-david-rives/>

(a creationist' point of view)

The debate around “affirmative action” policies:

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000002298568/affirmative-actions-contentious-history.html>

& <https://www.economist.com/open-future/2018/06/15/what-is-affirmative-action>

& [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/07/03/what-you-should-know-about-race-based-affirmative-action-and-diversity-in-schools/?utm\\_term=.df5ea0bc8128](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/07/03/what-you-should-know-about-race-based-affirmative-action-and-diversity-in-schools/?utm_term=.df5ea0bc8128)

& [https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/03/us/politics/trump-affirmative-action-race-schools.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FAffirmative%20Action&action=click&contentCollection=timetopics&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/03/us/politics/trump-affirmative-action-race-schools.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FAffirmative%20Action&action=click&contentCollection=timetopics&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=collection) (Trump's approach)

Concrete actions of international organizations and NGOs, such as...

Unicef

[https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/A\\_Human\\_Rights\\_Based\\_Approach\\_to\\_Education\\_for\\_All.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/A_Human_Rights_Based_Approach_to_Education_for_All.pdf)

The Global Partnership for Education

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/about-us>

Aide et Action

<https://www.aide-et-action.org>

Fighting discrimination against girls

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/06/education-girls-world-civil-rights-malala>

& <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/11/260-million-school-global-fund-child-marriage-trafficking-labour>

Unesco

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/promoting-tolerance/>

Promoting tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org>

Amnesty International

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/human-rights-friendly-schools>

Initiatives after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, last February...

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/15/learning/lesson-plans/resources-for-talking-and-teaching-about-the-school-shooting-in-florida.html>

& <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/learning/lesson-plans/the-power-to-change-the-world-a-teaching-unit-on-student-activism-in-history-and-today.html>

Teaching the point of view of the other: the Israel-Palestine example:

<https://www.juancole.com/2015/07/teaching-tolerance-palestinians.html>

& [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-moshman/israel-palestine-and-the-\\_1\\_b\\_1659731.html?guccounter=1](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-moshman/israel-palestine-and-the-_1_b_1659731.html?guccounter=1)

A strong debate: is there a universal approach of education?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/mar/11/liberty-central-deconstructing-rights>

& <https://developmenteducation.ie/blog/2014/02/debating-human-rights-universal-or-relative-to-culture/>

& <https://www.economist.com/asia/2010/09/30/the-debate-over-universal-values>

(China's point of view in 2010)