



Research Report

Cals Model United Nations 2017



"Creating pathways to new opportunities"

Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: Promoting the right to education and combatting academic discrimination

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Introduction

The issue of academic discrimination and promoting the right to education is an issue that has been prevalent for a very long time: the world is very split on the issue, with many countries dishonouring this right. This research report serves to introduce you to the details of this issue and to inform you why we must address this issue.

In many western societies, the right to education is taken for granted. However, in many LEDCs, this right is only reserved for a select group of the population. This is an example of academic discrimination, and the discrimination can be instituted on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, etc..

If the right of education isn't available to all, many individuals won't be able to develop themselves to their highest potential, and many intellect could be lost.

Definition of Key Terms

Academic discrimination:

A situation where more privileged people get more opportunities in the academic world, especially in teaching and getting taught, while minorities get less opportunities.

The Right to Education:

The universal right to education. As mentioned in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right, education is a human right for all. Free, compulsory primary education, develop a progressive free secondary action and the obligation to develop higher education.

Millennium Development Goals:

Eight international goals created for 2015.

Sustainable Development Goals:

Seventeen goals created for 2030.

General Overview

Everyone has an equal right to education. However, some sadly are more equal than others. This is the problem that we are dealing with now.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reflected in Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, states:

"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. 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. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

This has also been emphasized again in the Convention against Discrimination in Education, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the second Millennium Development Goal, and the fourth sustainable development goal.^{1, 2, 3}

Summarising, there is plenty of legislation and regulation on the area of the right to education. There is also quite a lot of progress on this area: 91% of children now go to primary school. The majority of the 57 million children out of school are in the Sub-Saharan region and in conflict riddled areas. These 57 million children do also have the right to education, and need to get their rightful education.

Additionally, this legislation largely disregards the issue of academic discrimination. Often children are discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, sex, race, economic condition, disability and religion and not allowed to go to school.

The discrimination against disabilities has been addressed in the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities in 2015, and discrimination against women and girls has also been mentioned in legislation. Nonetheless, these problems, and the problems without a decent amount of legislation, have not been solved.

For example, Australia has a history of discrimination against indigenous people, China discriminates against people with disabilities, Cuba has a history of discrimination against Afro-Cubans and sexual minorities, Iranian schools have rejected people on basis of religion, and the United States of America still has racially segregated schools.

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

² <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_education

Because of the lower chances of education of minorities, and implicit bias, there is a smaller chance of them becoming a teacher as well, especially on levels of higher education. This results into a positive feedback cycle of not enough minority teachers, more implicit bias, less chances for minorities in education, less teachers, etc. This cycle needs to be broken, and more chances need to be given to minorities in education.

Major Parties Involved

UNESCO:

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. An organization within the umbrella of the United Nations that strives for peace by not only focussing on political and economic agreements, but also on education, science and culture. The education organization of the United Nations.

UN Women:

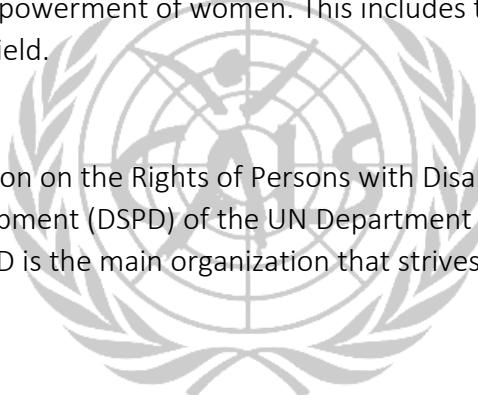
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Strives for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This includes the empowerment of women in the educational field.

SCRPD:

Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Part of the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The SCRDPD is the main organization that strives for solutions of people with disabilities.

OHCHR:

The Office of the High Commissioner. Focusses on human rights for everyone. This includes racial discrimination, discrimination against people with disabilities, gender discrimination, these all also within the educational field.



Timeline of Events

2010, Somalia - Schoolgirls in Somalia were forcibly removed to become 'wives' to Al-Shabaab fighters.

2012, Pakistan - Malala Yousafzai was shot in a school bus by a gunman.

2013, India - Girls attending a Christian school were abducted and raped.

2014, Nigeria - Boko Haram abducted nearly 300 schoolgirls in a school bus.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

The Malala Fund:

The Malala Fund is an organisation that advocates - at local, national and international levels - for resources and policy changes needed to ensure all girls complete 12 years of school. Although this organisation has achieved much in the past years, it can't resolve the whole issue by itself, or at least not without support from other parties involved.

Possible Solutions

Persecuting violators of a women's right to education:

A big issue is the fact that the violators often don't get punished for their deeds, and thus aren't persecuted. Persecuting violators of this right in any case would certainly help in achieving equality on this issue.

Useful Documents

Statistics on academic discrimination against girls:

<http://www.aworldatschool.org/issues/topics/discrimination>

