

INTERVENTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS 2024



OIDEL

INDEX

Human Rights Council

Oral statements

Human Rights Council 57th regular session

- PD: The Family's Role in Supporting Human Rights
- ID: SR on Right to Development
- GD Item 3: Freedom of Education Index
- PD: Quality Education for Peace and Tolerance for Every Child

Other interventions

- Forum on Minority Issues: Panel: Minority Representation in Education
- Social Forum: ID: Financing for Development

UNESCO

World Conference on Culture and Arts Education 2024

PD on the Family's Role in Supporting Human Rights

We are concerned with the increase of mistrust in the family and the undertone of depreciation of the family by some actors of the international community.

We are concerned because of the evident and crucial role the family plays in the realization of the right to education. Two examples of that:

1) Research has shown that family involvement with the education of their children has a decisive impact on the academic outcomes of those children, more so than access to new technology or student-teacher ratio.

So if we want to protect the right to education of children, we have to take a family approach to education.

2) For the full realization of the right to education, children have to learn about morals and values. Those values are not neutral but depend largely on the context of the community, and therefore the family, to which children belong. If the values of the family and the values of the schools are in contradiction, children find themselves in a problematic situation, especially children who belong to cultural minorities. To avoid such situations, parents need to have the freedom to choose education for their children, as stated in the UDHR Art. 26.

In conclusion, we encourage the international community to be open to a family approach to education. As ICESCR Art. 10 states, "The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children."

Link to the intervention:

<https://www.youtube.com/watchv=tsnCSktYxMo&t=16s>

ID: SR on Right to Development

We welcome the report of Mr. Surya Deva that focuses on the right to development of children and future generations. We also appreciate the proposal of the five action pillars to overcome ongoing challenges in realizing the right to development of children and the four policy shifts to build an ecosystem supportive of the human rights of future generations that are well explained in the report.

There is an inextricable linkage between inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and the rights of the child. Paragraph 2 of article 6 in the CRC introduces the obligation for States Parties to ensure the survival and development of the child to the maximum extent possible.

In reality, at no time since the CRC was adopted, have children's rights been in greater jeopardy. The worsening of global migration, the refugee crisis and the proliferation of conflicts have had a devastating impact on the rights of millions of children worldwide, including their rights to life, survival and development.

Some categories of children are even more vulnerable to violations of their rights such as, among others, Roma children, children with disabilities, children living on the streets, Indigenous children and unaccompanied migrant children.

We do support the innovative vision of the Special Rapporteur consisting in a planet-centred participatory development that includes the concern for the environment and biodiversity.

Similarly, we welcome the proposal of using the language of rights instead of needs and interests when speaking of future generations.

Mr. Deva, you suggest to include all organisms in the concept of future generations; can you further elaborate on this? Could you further elaborate on this concept through some examples?

GD Item 3: Freedom of Education Index

Last year, we celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This milestone document set out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

With the then recent Nazi experience in mind, the international community understood that the best way to protect children is to enable a pluralistic system respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Because of that, Article 26 recognizes that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children". To assess how this article is being fulfilled by member states, we published the Freedom of Education Index 2023. From our findings, we would like to share one piece of good news and three concerning issues.

The good news: since 2016, national legislations have become more favorable to freedom of education. the challenges are the following: First, for most families, the ability to choose the education they want for their children still depends on their income.

Second, politically, educational pluralism has become a subject of polarization across borders. Human rights should not be subject to debate.

Third, some countries still do not trust their citizens to choose the education they want for their children. We specifically mention North Korea, Cuba, Afghanistan and North Macedonia in this regard. We encourage the international community not to forget that the right to education and freedom of education is not a right of the States, but a right of the children, in which families play a critical role.

Link to intervention:

<https://www.youtube.com/watchsi=uvpaj7VRJVxXxrw9&v=4hGJHi0NSjM&feature=youtu.be>

PD: Quality Education for Peace and Tolerance for Every Child

We've discussed critical thinking, negotiation, honest dialogue, mediation, and valuing differences. However, there is a fundamental precondition for all these skills.

The precondition is that children know who they are. This concept is rooted in the notion of learning to be and understanding that children are not isolated entities, but rather social beings, it is crucial for them to learn the history of the group in which they are raised. This includes understanding their mother tongue, the language of the country they reside in, their traditions, the ethos and rationale of their religion, and the principles that enable us to live together harmoniously.

Without this foundation, how can we engage in honest, open dialogue and negotiate our identities if we do not even know who we are? If we do not appreciate the beauty of our own identity, how can we value the beauty that others find in their culture, landscapes, or traditions? Minorities, in particular, know the pain of not being able to learn who they are. Moreover, they are aware that limiting education for citizenship to the provision of certain skills only benefits the hegemonic culture.

Children who lack a sense of identity are more vulnerable to isolation and manipulation. Today, many seem suspicious or even fearful of family, roots, and shared identity. As Hannah Arendt noted, totalitarianism is rooted in loneliness. We can prevent history from repeating itself by fostering belonging and encouraging children to embrace their identities and heritage.

Link to intervention:

<https://www.youtube.com/watchsi=MqoQmYcRzLi3Vfge&v=onitxAczR8E&feature=youtu.be>

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Other interventions

Forum on Minority Issues: Panel: Minority Representation in Education

Imagine a music room in which a group of children is practicing a song for a Christmas recital. One child, curious about a religious aspect of the song, asks the teacher. The teacher, knowing that the child belongs to a religious minority, mocks his question and some critical aspects of the religion of his parents. As a child, I witnessed this exact situation. I was shocked not only by how my classmate saw his identity caricatured but also by how, as a result, he was prevented from having relevant discussions about life and religion with his peers. This memory has stayed with me ever since, and this is, somehow, why I am here.

To successfully address this topic, we need to recall the aim of the right to education as it is recognized in the main human rights treaties. The primary aim of the right to education is the full development of the human personality—not merely the full development of our individuality. Two important considerations are required in order to grant the full development of human personality: First, knowing who we are. Second, participating in a common shared conversation.

The full development of the human personality requires learning who we are. A child raised in the wild does not behave like a human but like an animal. Human freedom always runs within shared cultural, moral, and social dimensions. Some of the most beautiful pages of humanity could not have been written without a shared culture or without the conviction that there is a God who loves us. For minorities, taking into account these dimensions in the educational process is particularly critical. I want to point three reasons for that. First, because our personhood is embedded in these realities, and our freedom flourishes within them. Second, without knowing who we are, we cannot engage in a fair and relevant intercultural dialogue. Third, without knowing who we are, we cannot think critically of ourselves and of our community.

We need more than neutrality, as behind neutrality often lies the reflection of a hegemonic culture that, subtly and unconsciously, becomes de facto discriminatory. This is why it is crucial to ensure a certain educational pluralism so that families outside the mainstream culture can introduce each generation to their own culture.

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Link to intervention:

https://youtu.be/KTfFOre3lFgsi=S4nr9BvY6yzU5SSq_

Social Forum: ID: Financing for Development

As reflected in Art. 1 of the Declaration on the Right to Development, this right implies the right to self-determination. Self-determination affirms that people have a right to take paths reflecting their values and culture. Self-determination allows people to develop as human beings and leads to the freedom of living fulfilling human lives. As economist and Nobel prize winner, Amartya Sen stated: "Development must be concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy." Therefore, when financing for development, we should have the development of the human person in mind.

One example of this we can see when it comes to the realization of the right to education.

According to ICESCR Art. 13, "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality".

This requires freedom, in this case, freedom of education.

The same article requires States to grant the "liberty of parents to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

For parents to choose, they need non-governmental options and, of course, that costs something. Unfortunately, many States only partially support freedom of education and thus compromise the freedom and development of their people, especially of cultural minorities.

Dear panel, in this forum we focus on financing for development as a tool for advancing human rights for all. What are good practices for the advancement of other human rights, that could be applied to the advancement of the right to education?

World Conference on Culture and Arts Education 2024

The path to fostering informed and rich cultural diversity in our society begins in the early childhood of each individual and continues through all stages of life. Along this path, cultural and arts education should provide individuals with opportunities for intellectual learning and exchange. However, we must reflect on what type of cultural education is helpful and appropriate at each stage of the journey. For someone to contribute to intercultural dialogue, the individual must first have a proper understanding of their own cultural background; they need to know who they are.

Therefore, cultural education at an early age must focus on transmitting the cultural heritage of the individual's community. In this way, the child develops their identity as a relational being—an identity that is interdependent with family and community. And who are the most important transmitters of context-relevant education in the earlier stages of a child's life? Parents and family.

For most people, including many of us in this room, parents and the wider family were the first and most prominent actors in transferring cultural knowledge during our childhood. It is essential to understand that cultural education for younger learners must be rooted in their cultural context, allowing them to contribute later to intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that parents are best equipped to convey culture to these learners.

We can now turn to one of the questions posed in the session notes: how can we collectively ensure the participation of relevant actors in the design and implementation of quality cultural and arts education policies and practices? This can be achieved by including parents and local community leaders at all stages of the policy decision-making processes that shape these policies.

Link to intervention:

<https://www.youtube.com/watchv=tbcUFtMxY3M&t=24s>



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