

# United nations convention on the rights education essay



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UNCRC recognizes the child as an individual who is entitled to his rights as a member of the community. It sets the basic standards for local governments to provide for and to protect the children in terms of basic needs like health, nutrition, education and other aspects. It was adopted by United Nations in 1989 as a tool to protect the best interest of the child and to ensure that every child enjoy equal rights to life, survival and development. As countries are obliged to make regular reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the state governments have moral obligations to provide for the children as stated by the UNCRC. International agencies and global charitable organisations like World Bank, International Monetary Fund provide loans and financial aids developing countries. In partnership with United Nations to protect children's rights, state governments may be further required to fulfill certain requirements when applying for aids from international agencies. One of the conditions may be to provide for and to protect children (Bellamy, 2005: p. 30).

In addition, since the turn of the century, government bodies and international agencies have focused mostly on the rights of children. World leaders have realized the urgency on the plight of children living in poverty. Most of the United Nations (UN) millennium development goals are focused on the realization of the rights of children, such as to bring children out of poverty, rights to health, survival and education (Bellamy, 2005: p. 8; Woodhead, 2007 as cited in Woodhead & Moss, 2007).

Further to UNCRC affirmation on rights of education, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child interprets education as child's right to learning and development which start from birth (Woodhead, 2007 as cited in Woodhead <https://assignbuster.com/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-education-essay/>

& Moss, 2007). As such, much significance is given to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in policies development globally.

Studies have shown intervention in early childhood may be crucial for the development of a child. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) may be referred to high quality care for young children from birth. It includes educating parents to provide and care for children in the aspects of health, nutrition, learning and development (Annan, 2001: p. 63). An infant, from the day he is born, needs quality care. Inadequate nutrition and unhealthy living conditions may adversely affect a child's development and ability to learn. As such, quality care and education from birth may have positive effect on children ability to learn (Engle, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009). Children may have equal chance to move out of the poverty cycle through early education as early interventions may have positive benefits in the long run (Grantham-McGregor, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009; Rosemberg & Puntch, 2003). Through early interventions, these children may be exposed to values and knowledge that may not be inculcated in their home. For example, they may learn social and cognitive skills which may be useful when they attend formal schooling. With the knowledge and life skills acquired in schools, they may be able to contribute to their community. Thus, ECEC may be useful tool for state governments and international agencies to protect act in the best interests of the child and to protect child's rights.

Economic benefits may be generated from investments in ECEC.

Governments and international agencies invest in early childhood care and education as the economic benefits generated from investment in ECEC will  
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churn greater gains in the future because it may lower health and social risks, like crime rates. Children who are gainfully engaged in learning may be able to contribute to the economy in future. Foreign investors may invest in a country if there are skilled workers who are able to work in their industries. Investment in children will provide them with the necessary skills to attract investments and to boost the economy of the nation (Barnett as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009).

In accordance to the non-discrimination principle in UNCRC, all children may be given equal chances in life. Governments and international agencies may be committed to ensure all children have the same rights to education. Every child may have a right to education as children will learn fundamental values like moral and ethical values, acceptable attitudes in community as well as basic skills. For example, if children living in poverty are not educated, they may not be able to attain knowledge to help them move out of the poverty cycle.

There are different ECEC programmes to cater to the needs of particular community of children. In developing countries, mothers may need to be educated on taking care of their children. For example, the mother-child education programme in Turkey provides others support for mothers in terms of child health issues. Mothers are taught to take care of their children and educate mothers on child health, parenting skills as well as to support child's development (Annan, 2001; Bekman, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009). In developed countries where health care are more advanced, the children may need support in holistic development. In United

Kingdom, the effective pre-school and primary education prepare children for primary schools (Sylva, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009)

Studies have shown that the more effective programmes include all aspects such as health, nutrition and development as well as parental and community involvement. Nimnicht (2009) as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead (2009) concur intervention programme for children may be effective if they is active participation from all the stakeholders such as families, communities and the governing bodies. This is in the case of PROMESA in Columbia, whereby the families and communities are actively involved in the programmes. As such, UNCRC may make a difference if there are commitment and active participation from governing bodies, international agencies, communities and families to promote child's right (Woodhead, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009).

It may be challenging to provide quality early childhood care and education to combat poverty. The state of children's health and development are adversely affected in children living in poverty. The relevance of early childhood models, social and cultural context, co-ordination within families, communities and government bodies play an important role in developing appropriate intervention programme to help children in poverty (Woodhead, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009).

For example, in the case of a developed country, like USA, one of the objectives of ECEC is to enable women to have equal participation in the workforce and to enable children to learn and socialize (Penn, 2005). As early intervention to curb poverty may not be the main priority, ECEC is left to

private operators which result in inequalities in quality of programme (Tayler, 2009 as cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009).

Inequality of quality and access as private sectors tend to cater to the affluent and not set up in poorer regions of the countries. For example, in USA, ECEC is left to individual providers so the quality of care and education is variable and there is inequitable access to these services (Penn, 2005). Individual providers are also more likely to set up ECEC centres in urban areas and this may be incompatible with the government aim to provide quality education for all children.

In the case of a developing country, like Malawi, the ECEC set up in rural areas are community-based with poor program and unqualified staff. Policies develop at national level may not be implemented accordingly at ground level due to lack of resources. There may be unqualified teachers, irrelevant curriculum as well as lack of support from the families and community. For example, the children may need to work to support the families. In some cases where there is AIDS in the families, they may be ostracized by the communities and therefore ECEC programmes may not be accessible to them (Clark & Tucker, 2010). As such, the effectiveness of early childhood education and care may not be positive and thus children in some of the poorest countries may not benefit from UNCRC.

In the year 2000, UN millennium development goals were established to improve the social and economic conditions of developing countries (Bellamy, 2005). Majority of the goals were related to children and are expected to be achieved by 2015. Some of these goals include reducing

poverty, improving health and living conditions, primary education, gender equality and families. However, statistics have shown that there has not been much improvement since these goals were set. Children are still living in poverty and poor health. Diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria are prevalent (Bellamy, 2005).

International agencies have been working with some of the poorest countries to ensure that priorities of international aids go to children for health and development. These schemes have not been successful due to poor co-operation between state and local governments and the communities (Bellamy, 2005).

Although many countries have become more affluent in the last decade, the poor still remain poor as the gap between the rich and poor countries widen. This may be due to decline in international aids, conflicts and war as well as to inappropriate use of fundings state governments. Thus children in poverty may still be living in poor conditions(Annan, 2001).

UNCRC may be an international law, besides, the legal jurisdiction in the countries which have adopted it, it calls upon the moral obligations by state government for enforcement (Annan, 2001). In order for UNCRC to make a difference to children, state governments and international agencies must be committed placing children in first priority. All decisions in nation-building as well as economic growth should be considered with the rights of children in mind. In addition, all stakeholders , such as, international agencies, government bodies, communities, families and children need to play their part in achieving the objectives set by UNCRC.