

A Child's Right To an Education

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Preface

In our Western civilization, education is often thought of as attending school to learn skills like reading and writing. However, education can come in a variety of ways including both formal teaching as well as informal learning.

Every child around the world has rights. One of these rights is the right to a meaningful future through education. The purpose of this report is to provide insight on the status of education for children around the world. Having a good education can provide children with the opportunity to make choices with their lives. “It is critical to our development as individuals and as societies, and it helps pave the way to a successful and productive future” (“Basic Education and Gender Equality”). Education is more than attending a school to learn to read and write. An education is a tool which guides you to make informed decisions and forget ignorance and intolerance. Education is the key to a better future for all children.

Formal education will be defined as learning to read and write in a structured setting. For many countries, this may include a different curriculum than we experience here in Canada. Informal education will be defined as knowledge gained through life experiences.

This report will review access to formal education for children around the world. Reasons why not all children have access to a formal education will be discussed. Means of improving this access will be considered. Throughout the world, there are many informal education possibilities as well. For various reasons, many children are also missing out on these opportunities. By viewing the economic, political and social factors influencing this issue, a greater understanding of the issue will be presented.

Many adults around the world are uneducated in a formal sense. They have never learned to read or write. This need not be the general future for their children. Without an understanding of this issue, generations to come will be disabled. Education is a significant issue affecting children throughout the world. "Education is the foundation for the success of any given society." ("Literacy: Education") Without education, children are unable to further themselves in a society.

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Summary

What does an education mean to you, and how important is it to your future? This report will investigate these questions and provide insight into the world of education. “There are millions of children leading different lives, all over the world” (Unicef 3). Education is very important for the future of children everywhere. For many children receiving this education is not as easy as one may think.

“School is more than reading, writing and math. School is a place to learn about self-respect and dignity, and to find out about our rights. School is also where we learn about staying healthy and how to prevent disease” (Unicef 48). By reviewing the history of education, it will provide a better understanding of the role of education. According to The United Nations Charter of Human Rights, it is a child’s right to have an education, although in many countries there are various barriers that stop these children from getting what they are entitled to.

Major contributions of two renowned experts in the field of children’s education will be discussed. These experts believe in the importance of education for all children. It is important that everyone cares about this global issue. Children need to receive an education to allow them to be good global citizens. Their education must be based on what they will contribute through how they think and learn. Religious and spiritual beliefs have a tremendous influence on this cultural issue and will be discussed further in this report. It is important to educate the children of the world, since they are the generation of the future.

In order to find information about children’s education, research was compiled from articles of various sources. Books from the public library and Innisdale’s library were used to

gather facts. The internet was used to review many different sites relevant to the topic along with secondary text resources. By exploring, discovering and learning about the issue, a detailed report was composed.

1. Background

Ever since time began, older people have been passing on their knowledge to younger people. This has been displayed through cave drawings, traditional dances, songs, legends, folklore and rituals. The life lessons and skills of a generation are passed on, so that future generations are better informed about the ways of the world. "Each generation, since the beginning of human evolution and writing, has sought to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, morality, religion and skills to the next generation" (Kendall).

Up until the 1600s, education was defined as learning informal skills and understanding. The idea of education began long before there were schools. This education passed from elders to children. Parents, extended family and grandparents went about their daily lives while the children learned from observing them and imitating their actions. "The family was the basic unit of social organization and the main context within which almost all learning took place" (Gaffield). Few children of this time ever received a formal education in a school setting. The children would learn valuable life lessons, which would help guide them through life (Gaffield). Parents would pass on their rural knowledge of how to clear the land, grow crops, needle work and cottage industry of making clothing. It was felt that this was all the information the child would need to know for their life on a farm.

In 1690, an English poet and philosopher named John Locke presented the idea that the mind is a blank slate. He tried to explain to people that we are all born with blank minds, and

education was what would gradually help us develop. For this reason, he felt that education should begin in early childhood (Education Timeline).

The learning of skills by children from their parents and other contacts is the basis of informal education (Newman). This type of education was passed on orally and through observation and imitation. With the development of writing, there needed to be a new system to pass along this information. Formal education was introduced to ensure that people would learn the skills of reading and writing (History).

Formal education began with the education of priests, and other ranking members high in the church. They then passed on their knowledge of religion and writing down to the pupils. Although there were universities teaching during the time, not many people had the opportunity to attend, other than these high ranking people.

Canada has progressed to a formal education in a school setting. In many countries around the world today, people are still learning informally. Some children do not have access to, or cannot go to school. Now, in modern day and age, education in certain parts of the world is a much larger system.

Although formal education is widely available in Canada, there are still many barriers for children in developing countries, such as poverty. Children who are poor should still have the right to an education. "Every day throughout the world, more than 110 million children miss out on going to elementary school. This means that these children may never learn to read and write" (Duckworth). According to the United Nations Children's Fund, "some children live in places without schools or teachers" (Unicef 48). These children have no access to a formal education, and rely purely on informal education.

In some developing countries, families do not have enough money to send their children to school. There is no universal education set up in their nation. This means there is no set of guidelines for who attends school, and what is taught. Poverty is one of the largest barriers to education. Instead of going to school, these children work to help make money for their family. In some countries, girls have to stay home from school to help look after their siblings (Duckworth). Some families that cannot afford to send all their children to school only send their sons (Unicef 48).

Disabled children are often deprived of an education. Some families are embarrassed of their disabled child and choose not to send them to school. Other times, the disabled children are teased and bullied and choose not to attend school. It may also be that the school is not properly designed to enable a disabled child to attend. (Duckworth)

In many places, children roam around with no structure or supervision. "Street children are very unlikely to be given an education" (Duckworth). These children are merely trying to survive and learn how to take care of themselves. In a sense, they are educating themselves on how to live on the streets. They are not even thinking of a formal education of how to read and write.

Due to natural and manmade disasters, many children find themselves without a home. Their main focus in life is finding somewhere safe to live, and food to eat. "It is not easy to live when your world has been turned upside-down" (Duckworth) It is important for children in these situations to continue to be educated even though the subjects may be different than what they normally learn.

Inadequate food supply is another barrier to education. Some children do not get enough food and therefore cannot concentrate properly. Since they are so hungry all the time, going to school is out of the question. Instead, they must spend a great amount of time trying to find food, or working to make money for food.

“Although children’s right to education is internationally recognized, it is not completely fulfilled” (“The Convention”). There are still many barriers to education, and reasons why children are not being educated. In the world, there are also many organizations working towards overcoming the barriers and helping children with their rights:

In 1990, the Education for All (EFA) commitment was launched to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality. There is much work to do before the goal of Education for All is achieved. 75 million children are not in school according to UNESCO and by 2005-2006, as many as 90 million children were without access to education. (Basic Education)

“In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations relating to human rights, especially for children” (Martin). In this document, free and compulsory education was mandated for all children. Although improvements have been made for educating children, still not every child receives the education they are entitled to. “Education gives children the chance to build a better future for themselves and their families” (Duckworth). It is hoped that this will help more children to receive the education that they are entitled to.

2. Experts

In the very beginning of the eighteenth century, philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born. From a young age, many different family members had custody over him, which lasted for many years. This is why he never received a formal education. He received some informal education from his father, his aunt and his uncle. He experimented with many different occupations while he lived in Paris, but he ended up being a writer. One of his most influential writings about education was a book he wrote in 1762 entitled *Émile*. Although this book was a statement about education, it interfered with the Catholic religion, and so he was forced to flee from France. Being a philosopher, Rousseau had many great ideas that still influence people's opinions today. He believed that children are naturally good and that they are entitled to freedom and happiness. Rousseau thought that people develop through different stages that need different forms of education to be appropriate to each and that every mind has its own form. He felt that it is important to develop ideas for ourselves and overall he had a deep concern for public and individual education. All of these ideas are shown in his book, *Émile*.

There are many renowned experts on the issue of children's education. Usually, these experts are recognized by being presented various awards. Sixteen year old Thandiwe Chama of Zambia received the Children's Peace Prize in 2007. The Children's Peace Prize was created by the Kids Rights Foundation (James). This prize is awarded annually to a child who has made a difference in countering problems that have affected children around the world (About Children's Peace Prize).

Thandiwe created a campaign that attempted to bring child rights to Zambia. One of the rights that she focused on was education. Thandiwe's passion for education began when she

was 8 years old. At this time in her life, her school was closed down because there were no teachers available. Soon after, she led the 60 other students at her school on a walk to find another school. Thandiwe knew she had the right to an education, and she wasn't going to let anyone stop her from getting it. Ever since then, she has taken leadership roles which help better her community.

Thandiwe Chama has also lent a hand in the HIV/Aids organizations, and has written a booklet about it. This booklet is titled "The Chicken with Aids." She is part of the Children's Rights Club

Since 2000, the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (WCPRC) has awarded a prize for the outstanding contributions in the field of children's rights. An international jury consisting of children vote for the recipient of this major award. Mr. Craig Kielburger won The World's Children's Prize in 2006. This award consists of \$140,000 to be used by the recipient for the rights of the child. For over ten years, Mr. Kielburger has fought in an attempt to free children from poverty, and other violations of the rights of the child. Mr. Kielburger founded the Free the Children foundation in 1995. At this time, he was only 12 years old. Now, his foundation has built over 400 hundred schools for 35,000 students. This organization has made contributions to children's education in over 21 countries. Through Free the Children, over 500,000 children have learned to help other children. They learned that they have the right and power to demand that the rights of the child are respected (The World's).

Specifically, Mr. Kielburger has focused his efforts on the rights of the children and their right to an education. Through the 400 schools he has built, many children are finally receiving the education that they deserve. Approximately 207,500 school and health kits have been sent

to over forty countries, as well as \$15 million dollars. Along with sending money over to other countries, Mr. Keilburger goes to the country to influence the children and help change their lives. He tries to empower children to help other children. Free The Children believes in the power of young people. They are children helping children everywhere (Kielburger). This will help make a better future for all the children around the world.

3. Role of Control

“The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights” (UN Headquarters). In 1948, the members of the United Nations agreed to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This laid out the rights for all people, everywhere.

In 1989, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Rights of a Child (Wilsher). The United Nations Children’s Fund, or UNICEF was then created. Its goals are to look for solutions to problems faced by poor children and their families. UNICEF works to preserve the Convention on the Rights of a Child, in order to give basic rights to children everywhere. In 1999, Executive Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy stated “A century that began with children having virtually no rights has ended with children having the most powerful instrument that not only recognizes but also protects their human rights” (Wilsher).

In the Convention on the Rights of a Child, article number 28 states that children have the right to an education, including free primary education. Article number 29 states that

children have the right to an education which prepares her/him for an active, responsible life as an adult in a free society which respects others and the environment.

Once a country agrees to the Convention on the Rights of a Child, it must report back to the United Nation to prove how it has put the Convention into practice. For instance, in Angola, Africa, they have included the ideas of the convention into the laws that govern their country. In Burkina Faso, Africa, children 7 to 9 years of age are being taught their local language and given training in life skills (Wilsher). These both show positive ways the Convention is being implemented.

UNICEF works with government, charities and other organizations to help children all over the world. They work together to promote education, health and well-being for all children (Ross 28).

Education of children should be a concern of everyone. It is a moral responsibility to ensure that children are educated so that they can grow up to make intelligent, well informed decisions. "Basic education is the building block for higher learning. It opens the door to freedom from poverty and hunger and the learning of conflict resolution skills" (Education).

Currently, children seem to have the least amount of control in their situation. Oftentimes, they cannot afford to go to school, or maybe there is no schooling available in their area. In some instances, children probably want to go to school and need to have more control over their situation.

Parents are responsible for the children they bring into the world. In many countries, it is the parents who ensure their children receive the proper education available. They have control, and exert it. In other parts of the world, if the parent themselves are uneducated, they

may not see the need to educate their children, or fight for this right. These parents need more control in this situation. Sometimes, parents choose not to send their children to school, especially girls. They don't believe that girls need an education, and prefer to keep them at home, where they can put them to work.

Governments put forth the most control over the issue of education. In many developed countries, there are well established education programs and strict guidelines to ensure children have access to an education. Not every country is as fortunate. While many governments understand the need for an education, it is not a priority for their funding. Some governments do not want their people to have knowledge. With knowledge comes power. If the people are educated on their rights, they may revolt, or fight for what they deserve. Also, because of past political conflict, many countries are not willing to join the UN or UNICEF and are therefore entirely in control of their country's education.

In spite of who has control, something needs to be done in order to ensure that children get the education they are entitled to. People everywhere must act on this cause.

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no results. (Walters 210)

Regardless of what we feel or think, an education is a right for every child. If people speak up, maybe other countries will consider joining UNICEF, especially if they see the positive benefits their country will reap.

4. Religious and Spiritual

Religious and spiritual beliefs are varied throughout the countries that make up the world. Oftentimes, these are the root causes of wars throughout the world. In considering education, our belief systems shape us into who we are. Our beliefs may allow certain things to happen but block other things from happening. In looking at the right to an education, many countries do not allow girls to obtain a formal education. It is felt that girls should be at home looking after younger siblings while taking care of the home. In many of these homes, the boys would be formally educated while the girls would never receive this type of education.

In our world, there are some religions that forbid children from going to school. Many religions do not want people to be educated on anything other than their own religious beliefs. Cultures may also see education as a threat to their existence. With education comes power and with power, people can change. They do not want too many people with power.

Certain spiritual beliefs state that formal education is not necessary. The only instruction needed comes from firsthand experience around the home. Since these people believe their children are going to stay on the farm their entire lives, they have no need for a formal education.

When considering the Aboriginals, this group of people want their children to receive a formal education in a school setting. Along with this, they want their children to be educated informally from the Elders who pass down their own culture and ways of doing things. This way their children would follow their religious and spiritual beliefs as well as receive the formal education that other children are receiving as well (Burns 6).

Other religions have clearly set our principles for education as well. Judaism began in 2000 BCE. Jewish people believe that there is one creator and ruler of the universe. He rewards good, and punishes evil. They believe that the Messiah will arrive in the future and bring them back to Israel (“The Major World Religions”). In this religion, education is a crucial way to become closer to God. In some countries, Jewish Day Schools have been created. At these formal Jewish schools, children receive all the basic education they need, with a firm religious ground below them. It is a way of incorporating their education and religion into one whole. If parents choose to enrol their children in public schools, they will still receive a basic education about their religion, through their temple (Kennedy).

The Islamic religion was started by the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca. There are two books that Muslims read, the Qur’an and the Hadith. The Qur’an is the words of Allah, recorded by the Prophet Muhammad and the Hadith is a collection of Muhammad’s sayings (“The Major World Religions”). In order to read and understand these two books, children must be educated. There are two different ways that Muslims are educated, through the Western type of schooling, or acquiring the Islamic Education (Syed).

Christianity follows the same basic belief as Judaism, up until the time of Christ’s birth. They believe that there is one creator and ruler of the universe. He rewards good, and punishes evil. Then a man, Jesus, was sent to the Earth to correct people’s sins. Christians believe that Jesus was part of the Holy Trinity; God the Father, his son and the Holy Spirit. People who practice this religion are supposed to read the Bible, which means they need to be educated. In order to deepen their relationship with God, they must comprehend what the Bible tells them to do, and act on it (“The Major World Religions”). Christian schools have been set up in many

countries, because parents want their children to be educated in the most Godly way as possible. Some Christians do not want their children in public schools, because they don't want them to be taught by unbelievers (Slick).

Hinduism is the belief in the unity of everything. They believe that the purpose in life is to realize that we are part of God, and by doing so, we can leave the plane of existence and join with God. This enlightenment can only be realized by going through cycles of birth, life and death ("The Major World Religions"). Hindus recognize the importance of education, which will help achieve the four aims of life. The four aims of life are virtue, wealth, pleasure and liberation. Education is the way an individual can gain right knowledge, control their desires and learn to devote God. In the Hindu religion, an illiterate person is equal to an animal. This is because they will never be able to rise above the physical self (V, Jayaram).

Buddhism came from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who reached enlightenment in the year of 535 BCE. At this time, he gained the title of Buddha. Buddhists believe that people go through cycles of birth, life and death; this is reincarnation. The end goal, after many life cycles, is to attain Nirvana ("The Major World Religions"). Originally, Buddhism was considered a form of education, but is now looked upon as a religion. People practicing Buddhism usually have their children formally educated in a school setting, and they learn their religion at a temple.

Throughout history, people from various countries have been traveling to third world countries to work as missionaries. These missionaries often preach of their religion as well as educate the young people who are present. Many forms of Western education have made their way to other countries by way of the missionaries.

5. Case Studies

In considering education, it is important to think about what stands in the way of children attaining the knowledge they require. Three case studies from different parts of the world will be reviewed. This will broaden our understanding of how and why some children do not receive the education they are entitled to.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is located in South-Central Asia. Afghanistan is one of the least literate countries in the world (IRIN 5 Million children not in school). It is a country that since the late 1970's has experienced a continuous state of war. "Two decades of conflict in Afghanistan have destroyed more than bricks and mortar. It has torn its social fabric and created a long-lasting education crisis. An entire generation of Afghans have grown up with virtually no education" (The IRC in Afghanistan). This is because of war and Taliban rules.

In 1996, a political group called the Taliban began controlling parts of Afghanistan. They were a group who planned to get rid of the Russians and bring peace to their country by use of strict religious customs (Willis 55). For many years, the Taliban were in charge of making all of the rules. They intimidated everyone into doing what they wanted. Many restrictions were placed on people in the country, due to the Taliban's strict interpretation of the Qur'an. Usually, the Qur'an and the teaching of the Islamic religion gives women and men equal rights. The Taliban felt that in order to better protect the virtue of the women in Afghanistan, they should take away many of their rights including the right to leave their house without a male escort, the right to have a job and the right to wear whatever clothing they wanted. The Taliban feel that these new rules and laws have helped to protect the females in their country

("Afghanistan: Recent History"). The Taliban feel that by forcing the women to wear a burqa, they are protecting them, and giving them privacy (Ghafari).

Although many restrictions were placed on females, many restrictions were also placed on the boys. In order to go to school, the boy students must wear a turban. The Taliban have been known to say, no turban, no education. (Revolutionary Association). The Taliban believes that the boys should be taught by their fathers and the girls should be taught by their mothers.

In 1996 education for females in Afghanistan was banned by the Taliban (Education in Afghanistan). In 2001, the Taliban was overthrown, but they still have a strong hold on the country. In many instances, they harm the schools. "Insurgents have torched hundreds of schools and killed dozens of teachers and students over the past four years in a country which desperately needs more schools and teachers" (Afghanistan: Five Million). This is a very upsetting reality of the life in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, there is a huge cultural bias occurring. Here, girls are often prohibited from attending school. "My father says schools are not for girls and that girls should work at home" (Afghanistan: Five Million). It is believed that these girls should stay home and learn housework. These young girls cook, clean and raise younger siblings. Some must work to support their families. While the Taliban were in power, women were treated worse than any other time in history. The females here were not allowed to work, have an education, leave the house without a male escort, and they were forced to cover themselves from head to toe (Qazi). Many people still believe these rules of the Taliban should be followed.

Now that the Taliban is no longer in power, education is still limited, especially to females. In their culture, the girls get married young. Soon after they are married, they begin

producing children. This makes it hard for these girls to receive an education. Also, most of the teachers available in this country are males. The fathers will not allow their daughters to be taught by these males, so they end up with no education.

In order for a school to run, there must be a building or classroom to teach in. In Afghanistan, there are many schools that do not have a building to hold classes in. Students gather in tents or out in the open to receive their schooling (Afghanistan: Five Million). Not having a proper building makes education harder to receive.

The Food for Education Program in Afghanistan gives food to children who attend school. These children share the food with their families, which helps to promote learning and attending school. Many parents in Afghanistan require their children to work and get money for their family. They then use this money to buy food for the family. It is hoped that with the food the children receive for going to school, parents will no longer need them to have a job.

Since teachers are not paid very well in Afghanistan, there are not many teachers available. The Food for Education Program also gives food to the teachers, janitors, guards and anyone else who helps with the school. A curriculum is created that the children in this country really need. Special lessons are taught to help keep them healthy and safe. They learn importance of clean water, how and when to wash their hands and not to touch land mines. These children pass on their knowledge to their parents, which benefits the entire family. Once neighbours see other children attending school, they usually follow this lead. A ripple effect is created that spreads across communities. Since it is hard for females to get an education, Food for Thought has educated female teachers. So far, 23,000 females have received an education

that they wouldn't have gotten without this program (Bendall). It is hoped that with gains such as these, education will become more easily accessible to all in Afghanistan.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is an African nation that is considered one of the most ancient countries in the world. It has 79.2 million people living there, making it the second most populous nation in Africa. Between 25 and 40% of their population consider themselves Muslims. In Ethiopia, daily life is a struggle to survive. Throughout the country, many people suffer from poverty and poor sanitation. In 1984 – 1985, Ethiopia suffered a devastating famine. Prior to this famine they had received record low rainfalls which resulted in failure of crops. As a result of this famine, hundreds of thousands of people died and millions of people became destitute. Today about 16% of the population are living on less than one dollar per day (Ethiopia).

Half the population in Ethiopia is illiterate. For many years, the Ethiopian Orthodox church dominated education in Ethiopia (Ethiopia). It was not until the 1900s that changes in education took place. In Ethiopia, there were no formal school prior to 1960 (Lina). Today in Ethiopia, it is not required by law that children attend school (World Book Online). Since attendance is not compulsory many children do not attend school.

Education is different in Ethiopia, depending on where you live. In urban settings, 69% of the children are enrolled in primary school (Ethiopia). Although these children may be enrolled in a formal school setting, often the education they receive is inferior to education in other parts of Africa. This is a great contrast to the numbers of children from rural homes that attend a school setting. "Children in rural areas are less likely to go to school than children in urban areas" (Nguyen). Rural parents do not send their children to school, because the children

are needed at home to help with the chores and to work and provide an income to help the family (Nguyen). Instead, these children are receiving an informal education from their parents and from working. They are educated in survival skills and learning how to take care of themselves in the living conditions of Ethiopia (Duckworth 20).

Education in Ethiopia is not accessible to everyone; many girls are denied education because they are forced to work to support their families (Armstrong). These women do not learn to read and write, but they are trained in a skill that may help them sustain themselves. "Social Awareness that education is important is something that Ethiopia lacks" (Nguyen). In Ethiopia, it is often felt that work is more important than education, so for that reason, children with little or no education go out to work at a very young age. Some of the jobs they do are being servants, cooking and cleaning in other people's homes, selling vegetables, shining shoes, working in factories, workshops or mines (Duckworth 12). "If all children under sixteen attended school, Ethiopia's work force would be ravaged, as almost half of Ethiopia's population would be attending classes" (Campbell 65). Although the work force would be greatly changed, Ethiopia would need to consider other ways their work can be done. It is important that families realize that their children need some amount of formal education, in order for their country to progress as a nation. With this education, children will be able to reach their full potential, and become important, skilled people in their country. "Education helps children learn and grow into responsible and useful citizens" (Watson 14).

Since the males in Ethiopia are being educated in a school setting, the females should be educated too. If not, the male gender will be farther ahead in life. The Ethiopian females need to be educated as well, in order to create equality. The females should be educated on

everything that the males are learning, like reading, writing and math. Islamic children need to be educated about reading Arabic. Their holy book, the Qur'an is written in Arabic, so in order for them to study it, they must understand how to read it (Al-Awwal).

“Children in Ethiopia who receive education are lucky and privileged” (Nguyen). In order for more children to become educated, there needs to be a new curriculum made that is more practical and relevant to what the children need to survive in Ethiopia. Some of the things that the children should be learning are how to clean their water, keep themselves healthy, collect food, sell their products and keep the traditions of their culture alive. “Children have a right to learn about HIV and AIDS so that they know how to protect themselves” (Duckworth 25). Schools need to be built that are accessible to both urban and rural students. The whole focus of education must be looked at. In order for children to see the importance of an education, their parents must also value an education. Ethiopia must change the importance of education in their social structure (Nguyen). In the short term, it is easy to understand that education may be neglected due to urgent concerns such as famine and war. Nonetheless, as a long term strategy, it is important for Ethiopia to keep education as a priority in order to encourage their citizens to develop new ways to deal with these concerns.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a country situated in the South Pacific. It is composed of two main islands with various smaller islands surrounding it. “The first people to settle on the islands were the Maori, a Polynesian people” (Student Atlas). In the 19th century European settlers started to arrive in New Zealand. The Maori are now a minority, making up about only 9% of the population since many new settlers have come to New Zealand (Student Atlas). Even

though the Maori make up a small percentage of the total population, their language and culture has a major impact on all facets of New Zealand life (Indigenous Culture).

“New Zealand’s population is highly literate, with 99 percent of citizens aged 15 and older able to read and write” (Gillespie). They provide an educational system that is distinctly British (Gillespie). Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 in New Zealand. (Education In New Zealand). New Zealanders believe that providing quality education assures a good future for the country in their socio-economic system (Shepherd 118).

Even with free and compulsory education available, not all families feel that this education is what all children in New Zealand need. There is often a distinction between the Maori and other families living in New Zealand. Maori parents often won't take their children to school, not because they don't want them to be educated, but because they feel the schools don't meet their needs (Awatere). Many Maori people feel that the Eurocentric view and approach to learning that is present in many schools may not be relevant to the specific requirements of Maori. The Maori people have strong cultural beliefs and traditions that they must adhere to for their success (Gunn, Sue “Key Developments”). Maori want schooling for their children that includes both formal and informal learning, together with important aspects of daily life. Conventional Eurocentric approaches to education appear to have limited effectiveness for many Maori learners (Gunn, Sue “Addressing Inequalities”).

The Department of Education of New Zealand acknowledges that there are many problems facing the 70,000 Maori children in New Zealand’s schools (Booth). Academically, Maori students do not perform as well in school as their non-Maori peers. According to international surveys in reading, writing, math and science, Maori children performed at levels

similar to children in Iran, while Non-Maori children performed at levels similar to children in Canada (Rubie). Some of these differences may result from different value systems of various ethnic groups and the extent that these systems motivate success in school. School systems must acknowledge these differences between ethnic groups. They must have culturally appropriate methods of teaching and provide for a variety of evaluation options in order for all students to be successful (Harker).

Currently there are three different types of schools in New Zealand. All children in New Zealand, no matter what ethnicity, can decide to attend any of the schools (Booth). According to the Department of Education, all parents in New Zealand can choose to send their children either to an English-medium school, a Maori-medium school or a Maori bilingual/immersion program (Keegan). Maori-medium programs are taught in Maori, and the children learn about Maori history and culture (Kindersley). There are many English-medium schools and Maori bilingual/immersion programs available. Unfortunately many parents still do not have access to Maori-medium programs, due to a lack of schools available in the country (Keegan). Some non-Maori children choose to attend the Maori bilingual/immersion school, but very few choose to attend the Maori-medium schools (Hinton).

Maori specifically teach their children their native language as well as the history of their people and their unique culture. Understanding that there are differences between what the Maori want for their children compared to what other New Zealanders want for their children is a step in the right direction. Currently there are programs being designed that incorporate achievement in bilingual and Maori settings, encourage the development of Maori teachers and raise the expectations of Maori achievement (Gunn, Sue "Addressing Inequalities"). Programs

are now being delivered in a variety of formats, using a variety of delivery methods and settings that take into account the unique needs and preferences of Maori learners (Gunn, Sue “Addressing Inequalities”). The integration of indigenous learning with formal education, as well as the freedom to choose from several educational options, have made the New Zealand system an example of flexible and effective education for the rest of the world.

Conclusion

6. International Organizations

Throughout the world, there are many citizens concerned about the rights of education for children. Through caring and compassion, organizations have been set up to help children receive the kind of education they require to become important global citizens. “Organizations support various different purposes, which eventually leads to the betterment of humanity” (Why Non Profit Organizations Exist). The efforts contributed by international organizations have had a huge impact on the education and lives of children. Three international organizations, whose focus is on children, Save The Children, Free The Children and UNICEF, will be examined.

Save the Children has been operating since 1919 very successfully throughout the world. It is a humanitarian organization (also called a non-governmental organization, NGO). They are concerned that many children in the world do not have access to a reasonable standard of education. They believe there are strong connections between a lack of education, poverty and poor health. Living in poor conditions, due to poverty, may cause sickness and poor health. Without education, citizens do not know their rights, or how to improve their lives. Through this organization, Save the Children, they are able to provide community-based schools around the world. Often they cannot afford to provide fully trained teachers so instead, they find local individuals with 10 – 12 years of education and train them to provide the basics of reading, writing and math to younger children. Using this method, they ensure that learning is centered on the children and takes place in ways that are acceptable to the community. Local languages and customs are always followed (Parry).

Save the Children has been helping the children in Afghanistan for many years. They have contributed to formal and informal learning for these people. They try to promote education and the participation in school. They try to train the children for the future and the roles they will take on in a Taliban society. They support teacher training and children's education through innovative home based early childhood development activities and parenting education. Save the Children has created reading buddy programs for children that attend school, and children that are not in school, in order to improve literacy ("Afghanistan" Save The Children).

In Ethiopia, Save the Children has been around since 1965. They focus on many things, including the education of women. They have created Girls Clubs and Girls Education Advisory Committees, which help with educational opportunities for young Ethiopian girls. ("Ethiopia" Save The Children). The organization has built schools in many areas that run at night, after the girls have finished chores and taking care of younger siblings. This means that the girls can get an education they wouldn't otherwise get. These females are also taught how to make butter and yogurt to help support their families. This skill allows them to sell their product and have money to help support their family (Parry 29).

Two members of the Save the Children Foundation that help out in Ethiopia are Worknesh Mekonnen and Adam Keehn. Worknesh Mekonnen has been with Save the Children since 1997. So far, she has opened three community-based schools in three remote villages. She was overwhelmed by the amount of children wanting to attend the school, which has motivated her to open even more. These schools have helped to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and the community they live in (Parry 22). Being educated, the children

can make well informed decisions and take care of themselves better. They are also educated on how to keep themselves healthy and how to provide for their families. Adam Keehn works in Ethiopia, delivering food aid to families all across the country. He has helped millions of people, especially children. He has worked with Save the Children to set up Therapeutic Feeding Centers where they provide medical examinations, vaccinations and vitamin supplements. After all of this, the children are then fed enriched milk for a few weeks. This will restore their health very quickly. After these children return to their villages, Save The Children checks up on them, to make sure they are okay. This has helped the general lives of many people in Ethiopia. Once these children are healthy again, they can go to school and get an education (Parry 28).

In 1995, Free The Children (FTC) was founded by a 12 year old boy named Craig Kielburger. This organization works towards freeing children from poverty and other violation of the rights of children. Kielburger tries to empower children. He wants them to feel that they can contribute to a better world for children. To date, Free The Children has built 400 schools for 35, 000 pupils in 21 countries. They have also provided women with cows, goats, sewing machines, and land so they can earn money and their children do not have to work (Kielburger). Craig Kielburger was awarded the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (WCPRC) in 2000 (The World's Children's Prize). Kielburger has spent many years trying to find ways to help children achieve a better future (Parry). He believes that, "Every action we take, no matter how small, is important" (Kielburger 2).

UNICEF stands for United Nations Children's Fund (the original title was United Nations International Children's Emergency fund). It is an agency that is devoted to the welfare of children. Established in 1946, its focus is to provide long-term humanitarian and developmental

assistance to children and mothers in developing countries (Unicef). Unicef is an Inter-governmental organization (IGO) and is accountable to governments. At UNICEF, it is believed that education is critical to getting countries back on track after a crisis. In addition to being a basic human right, education is a fundamental tool for recovery and rebuilding. In times of disaster, UNICEF focus on quickly re-establishing spaces for learning and getting children into schools. At the same time, they work to rebuild educational systems and recruit qualified teachers and paraprofessionals (Basic Education and Gender Equality).

Unicef is a very successful organization. It relies on government assistance and private donors to keep its programs running. UNICEF works tirelessly to ensure that every child – regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background or circumstances – has access to a quality education (Basic Education and Gender Equality). For its work, UNICEF was awarded a Peace Prize in 1965.

In Afghanistan, UNICEF has been working since 1949. It is creating emergency relief efforts and long term rehabilitation for Afghan women and children. The best way to ensure a better future for the children is through an education, but many children are not receiving this education. “According to a 2000 survey by UNICEF, taken during the Taliban rule, eight out of every twenty boys and nineteen out of every twenty girls were unable to attend school” (UNICEF). One way UNICEF is helping, is through Edukits. These Edukits, or School-in-a-box, are filled with basic educational materials like pens, pencils, chalk, slates, scissors, exercise books and tape for up to 80 students. Four hundred of these kits have been given out to help children facing emergency situations receive an

education (“Basic Education and Gender Equality”).

At UNICEF, informal education is also valued. Through the Back to School Campaign and the Life Skills Basic Education Campaign, Children can receive a basic education:

The term ‘life skills’ refers to a broad group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help children make informed decisions, communicate effectively and navigate their surroundings. By weaving life skills into the fabric of our educational systems, we equip children with the necessary tools to cope with challenge and confidently make their way in the world. (Basic Education and Gender Education)

UNICEF has worked hard towards creating Child Friendly Schools. They understand that schools are not ‘one size fits all’ institutions. This means that children have diverse needs that need to be taken care of in different ways. Through Child Friendly Schools, a safe, healthy and protective school environment has been set up to meet the specific needs of children. As UNICEF states, “The CFS model promotes inclusiveness, gender-sensitivity, tolerance, dignity and personal empowerment” (“Basic Education and Gender Equality”).

7. Connection to Canada

Canada is a large country located in North America. It is fortunate to have many different nationalities making up its population. With approximately 33,487,208 people living in Canada, they experience a relatively high literacy rate. It is estimated that 99% of people over the age of 15 can read and write (“North America: Canada”)

In Canada, both formal and informal education are recognized. There is free education for all, and it is required that children attend school. Formal education in a school setting is valued to a great extent in Canada. Children attend a school setting where they are taught

according to a specific curriculum. More public funds are spent on education in Canada than any other country in the world (Wilsher). Informal education also takes place in Canada. It is important to understand that a combination of both formal and informal education is needed to prepare children for the world.

Canada is a bilingual country. That means that there are two official languages, English and French. The year of 1982 was the first year that French was recognized as an official language, and francophone families were given the right to educate their children in their own language (“Minority Francophone Education”). In Canada today, parents can choose to educate their children at an English speaking school, a French speaking school or their children can be part of a French immersion education system. New Brunswick is the only official bilingual province in Canada, and Quebec is unilingual, which means French is the official language (“Official Bilingualism”).

Canada has had a hard time educating children who immigrate to the country. If these children have little knowledge of either official language, English or French, it is difficult for them to understand their schooling. Many of these children will go into an English Second Language course, in order to learn the basics of English (McKenzie).

In Canada, depending on where you live, you receive education based on the needs of the area. In the Yukon, children have the option of being instructed in their native aboriginal language for the first six years of schooling (McKenzie). There is also education for specific populations, such as the deaf and the blind.

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility. This right was given when Canada’s Constitution Act was signed in 1867 (Education in Canada). In Canada, parents have an option

of schooling for their children. These choices are public schools, French immersion schools, French language schools and private schools. Parents may also choose to home school their children. There are two languages that these schools are taught in, English and French. This is because Canada is a bilingual country. In Ontario and New Brunswick, children must attend school until they reach the age of 18. In all other provinces, schooling is compulsory until the age of 16.

At one time, all provinces had an education system that was divided by religion. Most provinces are no longer funding schools based on religion. Ontario, Alberta, Northwest Territories and some parts of Saskatchewan still support separate school boards (usually Catholic but sometimes Protestant). While in these provinces, the government funds public and Catholic schools. It does not, however, fund other religious schools, including private Jewish, Muslim and Christian schools. In British Columbia, the government pays for 50% of the cost of religious schools, including Sikh, Hindu, Christian and Muslim schools. In Alberta, there are also schools called charter schools. These schools are fully funded schools within the public system, but they follow a different curriculum (“The Complete Canadian”).

In the province of Quebec, their education system was once divided between Catholics and Protestants. In 1998, this was changed and their education system is now divided between French and English. Children must attend a French school up until the end of high school, unless one of their parents are English, or went to an English school. This is the opposite of the rest of the country, where children must attend an English school, unless one of their parents are French, or went to a French school themselves (“The Complete Canadian”).

Education of Aboriginal children has always required special attention in Canada. In the 1920s to the 1980s, assimilation of Aboriginal people into Canadian society was encouraged, and for a while, forced. The force of assimilation came from Residential Schools. Residential schools were created to integrate the native people. Aboriginal children from across Canada were taken out of their homes, and placed in these schools. They were taught reading, writing, language and religion, all from the European philosophy of education. Many of these things have helped the Aboriginal people of Canada assimilate with the rest of the population. At the same time, this destroyed Aboriginal culture, language and identity. Even after these schools have been closed, there is not much of the Aboriginal's original content being taught today. If the non-Aboriginal children in Canada were taught the history of the Aboriginals and what their ancestors had to go through, their culture would be better understood and have the respect it deserves (Aboriginal Issues).

8. Possible Solutions

"Almost everywhere in the world, education is highly valued" (Duckworth 9). Although this is known to be true, there are still many children throughout the world who do not receive a quality education. By considering the information that has been presented, possible solutions to this global issue will be addressed.

In order for education to be valued, countries need to change the importance they place on education in their social structure. Parents all over the world need to view education and going to school as beneficial. This will help their child to see that getting an education is essential and will motivate them to attend school (Nguyen). If more people change their views towards education, this could go a long way to improving children's learning around the world.

A parent's level of education greatly affects the way they view learning. If the parent is educated, they are more inclined to want their child to be educated as well.

There are a lot of agencies who are working towards improving conditions for children to enable them to receive an education. Currently, UNICEF, Save the Children and Free the Children are all working with the same goal in mind. They are involved in providing education programs for children around the world. In many countries, these agencies are providing a solution to the issue of education. Schools are being built in many developing countries to help give opportunities to children. Mr. Kielburger's organization, Free The Children has built over 400 schools in 21 countries. These schools have been able to provide an education for over 50,000 children (Kielburger). If even more money was donated to this organization, many more schools could be built. It is important that funding is increased and good use of the funding is made ("Basic Education"). Wealthier countries should help out the poorer countries to ensure adequate education is provided for all children around the world.

In some countries, where people are poor and cannot afford to go to school, the main barrier is economics. If school was cheaper, or free, these children would be able to go to school. Another solution, for countries like Ethiopia, is to pay the children. In Ethiopia, children are unable to attend school, because they have to work to support their families (Armstrong). Receiving money for attending school would be beneficial. Recent studies in the United States have demonstrated that this may in fact be an effective strategy (Ripley 41). There are some countries, like Mexico, where cutting costs would not help school attendance. In Mexico, school costs were cut by more than half, and there was only a 10 percent increase in school attendance. "In countries like Mexico, where weak demand for education is not attributable to

cost, school attendance will not improve until cultural barriers and prejudices are overcome” (Hillman). Before trying to help a country, you need to know what the people value. With this information, it may become apparent that there are ways to help children receive the education they need.

Although many attempts have been made to provide education for children, there are many instances that these attempts have not been successful. In order to be most successful, the culture of a country needs to be respected. “To get a good education, children need to be taught by well-trained teachers who respect and value their students. All children should be given the chance to develop the skills and talents that will be useful to them in the future” (Duckworth 9). It is important to remember that we must not force children to learn what we want them to learn. It’s imperative that they learn skills to be successful in their environment. In Kashmir, young girls work on embroidering patterns to sell during the day, and after their work they learn basic skills like reading writing and math. This will help them to make sales and communicate with buyers. It will also ensure that they receive a fair price for their handmade goods, and that they are not cheated on the price. These girls are learning skills that will help them for the rest of their lives (Duckworth 15).

Many children get sick and cannot attend school. Every child should be educated about how to take care of themselves, in order to stay healthy. “Educating children about their health helps to prevent sickness and disease” (Duckworth 21). According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article number 24 states that every child has the right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable (Duckworth 7). Many children do not know that malaria is caused by mosquitoes that live in stagnant water. If children learn that this is the

cause, there is a good chance that they will work towards clearing stagnant water from their area. Instead of the millions of children around the world dying, being educated about this can help save their lives. Children should also be educated about sex education, and how to protect themselves. This will help stop the spread of HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Duckworth 25). It would also be important to teach parents first, so that they can pass their knowledge on to their children.

Many children are unable to attend school because of other commitments during the day. Often children must work to make money for their families, or stay home and care for their younger siblings. By providing flexible programming, this may enable more children to receive an education ("Basic Education"). In Ethiopia, Save The Children has started up schools that run later at night. This allows girls to attend schools around their household chores. In some countries, the government has revised its curriculum and made education more practical and relevant to children's lives (Nguyen). All of these measures are steps towards enabling children to receive the education they deserve.

Another solution to the global issue of children's right to an education is to simply do nothing. Even with our best efforts, sometimes change is slow and we need to be patient. In Afghanistan many people are trying to help the children, especially women. Since the Taliban had such strict rules against educating women, females have grown up thinking that knowledge is wrong. The only thing that females were allowed to read was the Qur'an. "The Qur'an is the Muslim's holy book, which they believe holds the exact words of God, whom Muslims call Allah" (Willis 96). Now that they have this in their mindset, it is hard to convince them to go to school. Since the Taliban is still around, they are destructive towards schools and many people

are afraid to send their children to school. Instead of organizations trying to force young girls to go to school in unsafe environments, perhaps they should wait for a few years. Hopefully, after this time, the Taliban's hold will not be as strong on the country. At this time, they may be able to proceed with the relief efforts. Right now, it would be a smarter choice to let people do what they feel is right for them. For this country, we may need to think of education in a different way. Education is not just acquired through schools and books, but through life and each other (Armstrong). For now, the people of Afghanistan are merely trying to survive.

There is a kind of tension that exists in education: the pull between the traditional ways of doing things versus the world that we live in today. However, this does not have to be a problem. As long as we show awareness, understanding and respect, it is possible to integrate both worlds. You can teach children the ways of their elders, culture and religion, as well as prepare them for the larger perspective of the global community. Combining both approaches enriches an individual, and also benefits the world by allowing us to learn from others and to celebrate diversity.

An education means different things for different children. It is important to determine what each child needs in terms of an education and provide for this. "Children have dreams that may never be fulfilled, potential that may never be realized. By ensuring that every child has access to quality learning, we lay the foundation for growth, transformation, innovation, opportunity and equality" (Basic Education and Gender Equality). Therefore, global education needs to meet the needs of the individual to make them contributing world citizens, healthy, happy and full of purpose.

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