



What is the Right to Education?

Education is a basic human right. Every individual, regardless of race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religious or political preference, age or disability, is entitled to a free and compulsory elementary education. Education provides children with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop critical thinking and confidence in community participation.

As well as being a right in itself, the right to education is also an enabling right. It creates the voice through which all other rights can be claimed and protected.

The right to education has been universally recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and has since been enshrined in many international treaties and national constitutions.

http://www.unicef.org/education/index_access.html

<http://www.right-to-education.org>

The Right to Education in International Declarations and Treaties:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948)

Article 26 – Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary grades. Elementary education shall be compulsory ... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (but not yet ratified by U.S.)

Article 28 – States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall: Make primary education compulsory and available free to all ... make higher education accessible to all. Give children dignity in discipline. Encourage international cooperation to eliminate illiteracy and provide access to scientific and technical knowledge.

Article 29 – States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; ... and the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Global Achievement Gap

- American 15-year-olds score 25 out of 30 developed countries in math, 24 in science.
- The United States ranks 21st in high school completion rates.
- The education gap between the U.S. and other countries has grown over time.

The Achievement Gap In the United States

- Black students are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school as white students. Hispanic students are three times as likely.
- The poorest students have a 16% dropout rate compared to 2% of the wealthiest students.
- While nearly 40% of white adults have completed college, only 19% of Blacks and 13% of Hispanics have college degrees.

Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap

- Over a person's lifetime the income differential for HS completers is \$630,000.
- The average dropout costs the economy \$240,000 over his lifetime (lower tax contributions, Medicaid, higher criminal activity, welfare).

What are barriers to the right to education? (*partial list*)

- Discrimination based on gender or gender identity
- Poverty
- Discrimination because of race, religion, caste, nationality, ethnicity
- Schools are often used as battlegrounds
- Impact of HIV/AIDS
- School Fees
- Children in Detention
- Child Labor
- Starvation
- Disability Discrimination
- What barriers can you add to this list?