



Report Highlights how Privatization of Education Negatively Impacts Girls in Many Parts of the World

Thirteen organizations today highlighted the discriminatory impacts of privatizing education on women and girls. The organizations submitted a brief to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to inform its discussion on girls' and women's right to education. The organizations argue that privatization exacerbates gender discrimination and that States must ensure the full enjoyment of the right to education for all through a fully-accountable public education system.

Press release

Geneva, 7 July 2014

Today the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held its [General Discussion on the Right to Education for Girls and Women](#), the aim of which is to commence the Committee's process of elaborating a "General Recommendation on girls'/women's right to education." The purpose of the general recommendation is to provide authoritative guidance to States on the measures they should adopt in order to respect, protect and fulfill the right of women and girls to education.

Thirteen organizations from around the world presented a [written submission](#) to CEDAW on 'Privatization and its Impact on the Right to Education of Women and Girls,' highlighting evidence from a range of countries showing that more boys are enrolled in schools than girls, a problem that is exacerbated by the increasing privatization of education. Privatization in many cases deepens gender discrimination in education because already marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women and girls, are more disadvantaged by private provision and are the least able to pay for services.

Lucy McKernan, UN Liaison with the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, one of the 13 organizations which today delivered a [joint statement](#) to the Committee, told Committee members that *“for poor families, even low-fees charged by private schools are a massive disincentive to educating girls. This problem is also further compounded by problems such as lack of regulation and oversight of private educational institutions, which can result, in some cases, in a lack of accountability for sexual assault of girls by school teachers and administrators, promotion of gender stereotypes, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health education, which also have disproportionate impacts on girls.”*

The organizations also highlighted that to redress structural discrimination, States must provide quality, accessible, free public schooling so parents are not forced to choose between their daughters and sons, in line with their international human rights obligations

Privatization of education is on the rise globally, particularly within the context of economic crisis and the move by many States to implement austerity measures and make significant cuts to social services. It is this increasing trend that makes it an opportune moment for the CEDAW Committee to offer guidance around issues of privatization of education, and its potentially detrimental impacts for women and girls.

Research shows that this trend is putting at risk children’s right to education in many countries. Research projects such as the [Privatization in Education Research Initiative](#) have been documenting in the last years the risks posed by this privatization trend in terms of social justice, and this topic has been the subject of a [side-event](#) at the last session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva as well as of [growing scrutiny](#) from UN human rights bodies.

The organizations collaborating in this initiative are: [Ação Educativa](#); [ActionAid](#); [the Arab Campaign for Education for All \(ACEA\)](#); [the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education \(ASPBAE\)](#); the [Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education](#); [Education International](#); [the Equal Education Law Centre \(EELC\)](#); [the Global Campaign for Education \(GCE\)](#); [the Global Initiative for Economic Social and Cultural Rights \(GI-ESCR\)](#); [the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education \(Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación\)](#); [the Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations](#); [the Right to Education Project](#); and [SECTION27](#).

A copy of the report submitted to the CEDAW committee can be downloaded [here](#):

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