

Developing and sustaining the right of children to creative activity, sports, and cultural development

Forum: 1st Committee (Human Rights)

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Introduction

Ordinary children have a variety of potential abilities. The main goal of adults is to identify and develop them. To develop skills means to equip the children's way of activity, to give them the key, the principle of work, and to create such conditions that it would be possible to identify their talent. Abilities do not just exist, they are formed and mastered.

It is sometimes thought that only certain people are 'creative', and that to be creative one needs to have a specific talent. However, with proper treatment and education, it is possible to develop the qualities of each and every child.

Creativity, being understood as the ability to create new and original products of public importance, is one of the vital sources of human progress. The essence of creativity is the prediction of the result; correctly putting the experience, in the creation of a working hypothesis, which is close to reality. For that reason, developing a generation of creative children is vital for human progress.

Definition of key terms

Creativity - the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, find hidden patterns, make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking and producing.

Rest - the Right to Rest requires that children are afforded sufficient respite from work or education. This ensures children's health and well-being. It is paramount that children are provided with the necessary conditions for sleep as well. In fulfilling the right to both respite from activity and time available for sleep, attention should be paid to children's evolving capacities and their developmental needs.

Leisure - the time in which play or recreation takes place; free or unobligated time that does not involve formal education, work, home responsibilities, performance of other life-sustaining functions, or engagement in activity directed from other individual; largely discretionary time to be used as the child chooses.

Play - behavior, activity, or processes initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves taking place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which it takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and is undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end. It involves the exercise of autonomy, physical, mental, or emotional activity, and has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone.

Divergent thinking - a thought process or method used to generate creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions.

Free participation - the right of children to participate freely in cultural life and the arts requires that states parties respect this right and abstain from interference in choice of and engagement in such activities, subject to the obligation to ensure the protection of the child and the promotion of the child's best interests. Equally, they must ensure that others do not restrict that right. The decision by a child whether or not to exercise these rights is a choice and, as such, should be recognized, respected and protected.

Originality - the ability to have a new or novel idea using imagination and creativity.

Background information

As it is known, the first place where it was possible to get education were gymnasiums. The gymnasium in Ancient Greece functioned as a training facility for competitors in public games. It was also a place for socializing and engaging in intellectual pursuits. Gymnasia and palaestrae (wrestling schools) were believed to be under the protection and patronage of gods: Heracles, Hermes and, in Athens, Theseus. However, not everyone had the opportunity to attend gymnasium: it was limited only for the upper classes.

As for the Middle Ages, church education was the most common. Religious feudal lords dominated in the sphere of education - "princes of the church." The church system included:

- parochial schools (from 7 to 15 years, taught literacy, singing);
- monastic schools (students were being prepared to become monks);

- cathedrals (they gave higher church education, taught rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music)

In the 20th century, as the concern with children's education grew stronger, many children's organizations were established. For example, in the year 1907 Baden-Powell founded the Scouts movement in the UK. In 1907 the first camp was held on the island of Brownsie (Great Britain), and in 1908 the world-famous book "Scouting for boys" was published.

In the first years of the Soviet Union Nadezhda Krupskaya, Vladimir Lenin's wife and the People's Commissar of State for Education, was one of the main contributors to the creation of the Pioneer movement. In 1922, she wrote an essay called "Russian Union of the Communist Youth and Boy-Scoutism." Later, Nikolai Fatyanov introduced the name "pioneer" and convinced the Komsomol to take the American scout motto "Be prepared!" and adapt it to "Always prepared!" as the organization's slogan.

When discussing modern children's education, we should not forget about one of its recurrent tendencies – humanism. Humanization of education can be characterized as the construction of relations between students in the educational process on the basis of mutual respect to each other. Humanization determines the level of cooperation among the participants in the educational process, the teacher and the students. It implies the unity of general cultural, social, moral, and professional development of the individual.

Major organizations involved

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN

- a body of independent experts that monitors and reports on implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by governments that ratify the Convention. The Committee also monitors implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OP-AC) and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OP-SC).

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

- United Nations program that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

UNPD (United Nations Development Program)

- United Nations' global development network. UNDP advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build a better life. It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries. It promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations. The status of UNDP is that of an executive board within the United Nations General Assembly.

Children's Rights Council

- a global non-profit organization that focuses on children's advocacy, legislative reform, and access/visitation services. It was founded in 1985 by David L Levy, Esq. and several other individuals who collectively had more than 40 year experience in helping resolve custody disputes.

DCI (Distressed Children & Infants International)

- a US-based non-profit organization established at Yale University in 2003 and currently headquartered in Cheshire, Connecticut. DCI currently supports initiatives for children in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Nicaragua. It works to accomplish its mission through five core programs: "Sun Child Sponsorship" Program, Healthcare for the Underprivileged Program, Orphan Support Program, and Blindness Prevention Program.

Relevant treaties and UN resolutions

Declaration on Social Progress and Development, UN (11 December 1969) was discussed at the General Assembly to promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development of people, paying a special heed to the well-being of children.

“*A world fit for children*”, UN resolution (11 October 2002) was adopted by the General Assembly with hope that all children get the best possible start in life and have access to a quality basic education, including primary education that is compulsory and available free to all, and that all children have broad opportunities to develop their individual capacities in a safe and supportive environment.

International Decade for a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, UN resolution (10 November 1998)- on this special occasion, a global movement for a culture of peace was initiated by the United Nations to create a "grand alliance " of existing movements.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

As it was already mentioned, numerable children’s organizations were created in the 20th century. The innovation of scouting was that it united children and adults in one organization, in the process of joint activity, a general long game of scouts, in an effort to be useful to other people, nature, and the world as a whole. Baden-Powell thought that relations between adults and children were built as equal, where the adult and the child played each of their roles, the child voluntarily agreed with the position and role of the adult, as an older companion who is more knowledgeable and more skillful. Thus, the scout organization partly solved the problem of antagonism between adults and children. Baden-Powell understood the desire of children and adolescents to informal communication because of their desire to unite with each other to realize their interests and needs. This means that the scouting system helps children to develop by themselves self-development. In fact, scouting laid the foundations of pedagogy of a new type, which later in the USSR was called informal pedagogy as opposed to school education.

Also, the experience of the USSR and modern Russian Federation in creating and supporting special extra-curriculum educational centers should be taken into consideration. Such centers, established almost in all districts of numerous cities give children an opportunity to attend various free sections, starting from drawing or singing to computer modeling and robotics. Thus, each child is free to choose as a section that will fulfill his or her need and suit his or her interest and abilities.

Possible solutions

The issue of developing and sustaining the right of children to creative activity, sports, and cultural development may be considered and elaborated in the following aspects:

- 1) Organizing spaces for children's creativity (art clubs, art schools, sport clubs, etc.)
- 2) Providing the resources that children need for creative expression;
- 3) Allowing kids the freedom and autonomy to explore their ideas and do what they are expressing their wish to do;
- 4) Encouraging children to read for pleasure and participate in the arts;
- 5) Giving children the opportunity to express «divergent thought».

Reliable and Useful Sources

<http://www.iccp-play.org/documents/news/UNGC17.pdf>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S18..>

<https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights>

https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/index_62016.html

https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_101992.html

<http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9780333711484>