



Rochelle Dean on Reaffirming the need for the protection of the rights of the child: Article 9

This morning I'm going to talk about article nine of the WDI declaration which is reaffirming the need for the protection of the Rights of the Child specifically on training and continuing professional development programs that align with the best interest of the child.

Socially, the focus has been on the diversification issue instead of preparing the citizenry on how they can influence this concept within the democratic process and so as we begin, we will speak to subtitle H, and subtitle I of article nine of the Declaration, which reads: "States should ensure inclusion in teacher training and continuing professional development programmes of accurate material about human biology and reproduction, and information about the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientations, which should include the challenging of sex stereotypes and of homophobia." and subtitle I: "States "agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, and equality of sexes." (This aligns with UNCRC, Article 29).

"This should include measures to ensure that organizations are not allocated state funding to promote sex stereotyping and the concept of 'gender identity' in educational institutions, as this constitutes the promotion of discrimination against women and girls."

In order for this to be achieved teachers should be trained and continuing development programs should exist, and this should include human rights of people of diverse sexual orientation, which should challenge sex-stereotypes and homophobia. This will allow for teachers to be able to provide accurate evolving material about human biology and reproduction, while also promoting human rights and preparing the child for socialization. The UN committee on the Rights of the Child of 2005 stated that, "the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005 highlights the importance of children's rights for young children, and argues that governments should adopt a positive agenda for early childhood education and shift away from traditional beliefs viewing early childhood as a time for socialization and urging recognition and respect for children as social actors."

Early conceptualization of children's rights tends to focus on welfare, but more recently, children's agency and participation rights have been emphasized. Participation articles, refer to children's civil and political rights to a name, and an identity, to be consulted on matters that affect them to have

access to information to express their views and take part in decisions. Training allows for teachers to make better decisions, and allow for this type of environment that is open, and respectful, while allowing children to be heard within the context that is applicable to their level of understanding and so I think it's very important that we recognize that children must be able to understand what it is that they are being taught and that comes with more training. I think it's also important that we recognize that this policy agenda by the United Nations committee should be taken with caution.

Young children may not be able to properly perceive the intricacies of matters pertaining to sexual orientation, and should not be introduced to such ideologies, until it is age appropriate in order for them to be able to conceptualize a positive body image, and duality.

The advocacy of puberty for children then becomes a pivotal part of young adulthood, for a child then develops curiosity in terms of their body changes, sexual orientation, and gender expression.

Governments have people spinning like a top, especially children, if we decide that we're going to have specific policies, be introduced to them at an early childhood level and so this is something that we really should take into consideration. Curricula should be consistent essentially with the development of the child, which is more important than the social aspects that are usually guided by parents.

I think this policy is specifically stating that children are now going to be able to be controlled by the government. That is 100% erroneous, and that is wrong. Parents are supposed to guide children, and not the government. And what this policy is doing, is stating that children then become subject to what the government wants them to do and this certainly does facilitate gender dysphoria, and so certainly there should be more training that applies to children in order to make sure that they are protected.

According to subtitle I, states agree, again, that education shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, and equality of the sexes. This includes denying funding to promote sex stereotyping and the concept of gender identity, as a training program should meet these specific targets that teachers can understand, relative to article nine, as well as prejudicial attitudes. Training and other professional development courses will assist teachers in their ability to understand such curricula.

Government should be cautious to consider age-appropriateness when considering culture shifts that are important to the social architecture that influences social behaviours, and is also the key determination of the specific policies that they will implement.

And if we look at article 29 of UNCRC it says that a child or young person's education should help their mind, body and talents, be the best they can.

It should also build their respect for other people, and the world around them. In particular, they should learn to respect their rights and the rights of others, their freedoms, and the freedoms of others, their parents, the identity, language and values of countries including their own, and education should prepare children and young people for a responsible life in a free society. It should teach them how to live in an understanding and tolerant way, that is non-violent, and that respects the environment.

In recognition of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2005 recommendation, the WDI declaration would allow teachers for to be able to facilitate respect of children for them for themselves, as well as others, tolerance, diversity, whilst also teaching respect of parents.

So, there are many interlinkages to article nine, as well as CRC, while article nine of the WDI declaration speaks to CRC article 29 specifically we can see the interlinkages of UNCRC Article 31 and Article 42.

- 1) "States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."
- 2) States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity which speaks to UN CRC Article 36.

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

This also aligns specifically with WDI article nine that addresses the need for training and other professional development courses that will assist teachers to be able to properly defend and even challenge policy decisions that directly impact the rights of the child and that may dismiss the rights of parents, and finally in doing so this aligns with UN CRC article 42 where State Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the convention widely known **by appropriate and active means** to adults and children alike.

I think it's very important that we recognize the word appropriate here. When there is a recommendation made, and that specific recommendation comes out of a specific convention we have to remember that we have to look at those specific subtitles and decide whether or not that

recommendation makes sense makes sense and is applicable to that specific convention and we see here where the UN committee, the CRC committee made a recommendation but they didn't specifically address age appropriateness and that's something that we have to take very seriously.

So, when we look at what's happening all over the world, if we don't properly train individuals and make sure that teachers do have access to information that continues to evolve then we can't really challenge some of the questions and some of the whys as they relate to some of these policies that are being made. A lot of them are erroneous and the end of the day it seems as though they are pushing a specific agenda and that is very important because, again, if teachers aren't prepared, aren't trained and we limit professional development programs then what will happen is, we continue to pass the buck and we continue to miss those signs and these policies will be passed into law, legislated, and at the end of the day, women, and children will be discriminated against.

And so, elements of the convention CRC and some recommendations are recognized and aligned with the WDI article nine and its pragmatic approach to training of teachers to achieve this goal while redirecting stereotyping and the concept of gender ideology in educational institutions, which promote an invisible bias that goes against conscious values, also the idea that respect for parents is the guidance tool that allows children to participate in a free society with respect for others and I think this is very important, as we go forward, we have to make sure that children are aware, but more so individuals have to be trained and that funding should be allocated to make sure that teachers are able to challenge and individuals are able to say, "Hey, this doesn't make any sense to me. Why would we do that?" It's very important that we do that, and that's something that the WDI declaration does and in signing it you're saying that you agree that individuals should also continue to have that training and continue to promote programs that do give them the information that they do need.

The Bahamas specifically recently has had one of our ministers who was a former attorney general and he spoke out in relation to training, as well as diversification and wanting to include diversity into our educational institutions, more so in the public schools, I think it's important that we remember that teachers have to be trained, because then they can challenge specific policies, and it's not so much about pushing a certain agenda, I think it's important that women are able to be able to say, "This doesn't make sense. Should we input age appropriateness into this? Why should a child have to know about sexual orientation at an early childhood to enforce the socialization? That's not socialization, that's kind of saying that a child then becomes subject to the government and the government sets the standard as to what is socially appropriate because they make the laws and so I think it's very important that we recognize that we should protect our children, as we go forward

and again, this is some of the interlinkages that the WDI declaration presents, and it definitely does align with UN CRC.