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Education for All Children

Abstract

The UN Declaration of Human Rights, ratified in 1948, declared for the first time the right to education as a human right. Article 26 (1) states that “everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.” Since then, the right to education has been reaffirmed in subsequent treaties and global conferences. These treaties have also highlighted the need to provide education to all children without discrimination, and particularly to ensure equal access for girls. Historically, we have seen great gender disparities in the enrollment rates of primary schools, but through these treaties the international community has committed to overcoming such inequality.

Keywords

Human rights, China, Children's rights, Education

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Education For All Children

By Sharon Harrall

The UN Declaration of Human Rights, ratified in 1948, declared for the first time the right to education as a human right. Article 26 (1) states that “everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.” Since then, the right to education has been reaffirmed in subsequent treaties and global conferences. These treaties have also highlighted the need to provide education to all children without discrimination, and particularly to ensure equal access for girls. Historically, we have seen great gender disparities in the enrollment rates of primary schools, but through these treaties the international community has committed to overcoming such inequality.

China is a signatory to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Since the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, China has made remarkable achievements in improving primary school enrollment rates and in reducing the gender gap. In an effort to ensure free and compulsory education for all, the Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China came into effect on July 1, 1986. The law establishes a system of nine-year compulsory education for all children. However, many children, particularly girls, are still not receiving even the most basic level of education. Some of the major factors keeping children out of primary school include: the expense of school fees, the actual and opportunity cost of school, gender norms, consequences of the hukou system, and the one-child policy.

School Fees

Education was decentralized as part of China’s educational reforms that began in 1985. This meant that the responsibility of implementing the Compulsory Education Law was given to the authorities of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities. One of the challenges faced by local authorities is that of funding. Due to inadequate budgetary funding, local authorities charge school fees, despite explicit wording in Article 10 of the Compulsory Education Law declaring: “the state shall not charge tuition for students receiving compulsory education.” Although schools are not charging for tuition, they are still charging payment in the form of desk fees, exam-paper fees, and homework correction fees, among others. It is often the poorest regions of the country that suffer the greatest consequences from inadequate funding. Those with the greatest need for free education are being denied access due to financial constraints. Despite the PRC’s commitments to address the issue of school fees, it continues to regulate and approve the fees. The result is that China is failing in its commitment to provide free education.

The Actual and Opportunity Cost

Many families, particularly those in rural China, must consider the opportunity cost as well as the actual cost of sending their child to school. The opportunity cost of a child in school is one less pair of hands around the house or in the field. This investment may seem more feasible if the child is a boy. Boys are more likely to continue their education, to attain a job with greater earning potential, and to be able to take care of their parents in their old age. However, for girls the path is not so

clear. The decision to invest in a girl's education may not receive the same return on investment. In a patriarchal society such as China, a daughter will often move into the home of her husband's family upon marriage. Therefore, any long-term benefit from investing in her education will go to the husband's family despite the girl's family paying the upfront cost of school.

Gender Norms

When these financial considerations are coupled with a family that subscribes to traditional gender norms, a girl may have an even slimmer chance of receiving an education. While gender norms have changed substantially since 1949, many families still hold traditional Confucian beliefs, particularly in rural China. While Confucian thought greatly values education and intellectual development, this belief is not extended to women. Confucian tenets teach that an uneducated woman, inferior in both social status and knowledge, makes a much more desirable wife. Traditionally, in China, women have been viewed as subservient to men. These gender norms often lead to a family's reluctance to educate their daughter. Education is not valued as highly for girls and, in some areas of rural China, an educated girl means a higher dowry. The good news is that, in many parts of urban China, we are witnessing a shift in this gender norm.

The Effect of the Hykou System

The *hykou* system is a government policy that requires registration at birth in order to receive a local residence permit. This residence permit grants access to education and health services. There are many reasons that may prevent parents from registering their child at birth, including financial restrictions, bureaucratic difficulties, and the one-child policy. If a family is unable, or chooses not to register their child, the child is then unable to attend school. Consequently, children are being denied their right to an education as a result of their parents' failure to adhere to government policies. As part of its commitment to provide free and compulsory education for all children, the PRC must be willing to make adjustments to such policies that are preventing children from attending school.

Effects of the One-Child Policy

The one-child policy, implemented in China in 1979, is yet another policy that has consequences for girls' access to education. China now has a disproportionate number of male births due to sex-selective abortion and has seen an increase in female infant and child mortality rates. Of the girls who are carried to term and survive, many of them are simply not registered due to a preference for boys. As reported by Wang Feng in his article, "Can China Afford to Continue its One-Child Policy," the 2000 census showed more surviving individuals aged 10-14 than individuals who were reported between the ages 0-4 in the 1990 census. Families will hide their girls from authorities, with the hope that their second child will be a boy. The unregistered girls never have the opportunity to receive an education.

Children of Migrant Workers

Aside from the existing gender disparities in China, there is also another group of children who are getting left out of China's educational system—the children of migrant workers. According to a "Human Rights In China" report, approximately 1.8 million children are not attending school because they are not officially registered in their new cities, and are therefore denied access to

primary schools. When migrant families move into new towns and cities, they are faced with costly procedures to register in their new place of residence. Schools have been known to request up to five different forms of documentation from migrant families before accepting their children. When schools do accept these children, they will often charge their families higher fees. Local authorities have also been accused of unjustly closing down private schools that are set up specifically for children of migrant workers. While the authorities claim that closures are due to substandard or unregistered schools, school operators disagree and say it is purely a result of discrimination.

Conclusion

While the PRC has made great improvements to the accessibility of education, including reducing the gender gap, since 1949, there is still a long way to go. Legislating free and compulsory education has increased primary school enrollment rates, but greater attention and transparency need to be given to the implementation of these laws. The PRC needs to ensure that all children have access to free education, and that “free” really means free. Many have called for the eradication of school fees. China only spends 2.5% of its GDP on education, well below the recommended level. An increase in spending would allow schools to eradicate fees, breaking down this financial barrier to education. In addition, gender norms still play a role in the accessibility of education for girls. The PRC needs to be taking a proactive role in changing these gender norms to continue to reduce gender disparities.

The PRC also needs to reassess policies such as the hukou system and the one-child policy. Greater assistance must be provided for families facing difficulties attaining their residence permit. While the one-child policy and the hukou system are Chinese law, children should not be punished for their parents’ discrepancies. Children have a right to education, and this includes the marginalized and vulnerable children of China. The PRC must take greater steps to ensure that this right is extended to all children.

Annotated Bibliography

Bauer, John, Wang Feng, Nancy E. Riley, and Zhao Xiaohua. 1992. “Gender Inequality in Urban China: Education and Employment.” *Modern China* 18 (3): 333-370.

Annotation: In this article, the authors look at gender equality in China, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and occupational opportunities. They begin by acknowledging the improvements in literacy rates and school enrollment since 1949, but focus on examining possible reasons for the existing gender gap. They use data from the 1987 One Percent Population Survey for their analysis and try to find correlations between various socialization processes and gender inequality. They conclude that the educational level attained by parents as well as parents’ occupation have a substantial effect on the enrollment of children in education. This article gives a good overview of issues affecting women’s access to education and occupational opportunities, but uses data that is now outdated. Also note that the article focuses on urban China and does not include a detailed analysis of issues pertaining to rural China.

Buchmann, Claudia, and Emily Hannum. 2001. "Education and Stratification in Developing Countries: A Review of Theories and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 77-102.

Annotation: In this article, Buchmann and Hannum provide an overview of research and literature on education and stratification in developing countries. They focus on four areas of research: macro-structural forces, such as the state and international organizations; family influences, including socioeconomic status and family structure; school factors, such as classroom size and available supplies; and finally, the effect of education on economic outcomes and social mobility. This review gives the reader a solid understanding of the main issues that have been studied and their findings. The research reviewed covers social, economic, demographic, and educational disciplines.

Cavicchioni, Vittoria, and Albert Motivans. 2001. "Monitoring Educational Disparities in Less Developed Countries," in W. Hutmacher, D. Cochrane, and N. Bottani (eds.), In Pursuit of Equity in Education. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Annotation: The goal of this book is to look at issues of inequality in education. It starts by taking a theoretical approach and then focuses on equity indicators and their effect on educational policies. The book primarily looks at issues within Western developed countries, but in Chapter Eight, Cavucchioni and Motivans examine educational inequalities in less-developed countries. They discuss the relationship between education and development, particularly the intersection of human rights and development programs and policies. They provide evidence of existing inequalities and suggest some reasons this is occurring in these regions. They conclude by examining ways to improve the use of equity indicators in educational policies.

China Institute for Reform and Development. 2008. "China Human Development Report - Access for All: Basic Public Services for 1.3 Billion People." Beijing, China: United Nations Development Program.

Annotation: This report on China's progress in human development was published by a Chinese institution, the China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program. The authors provide a history of the country's human development over the past thirty years, as well as present the current challenges they face and their policy recommendations. They discuss the goal of providing equitable development, particularly in the public services of: compulsory education; public health and basic medical care; basic social services; and public employment services. The report provides a good overview of these public services and of China's attempts to face the challenges. However, the report does have the characteristic optimism of a piece written by a Chinese institute and contains little criticism of the government.

Feng, Wang. 2005. "Can China Afford to Continue Its One-Child Policy?" *Asia Pacific Issues* 77: 1-12.

Annotation: Feng begins by dispelling some of the myths about China's one-child policy and highlights some of the changes that have been made to the policy since its inception. Feng talks about the benefits to China as a result of the policy before explaining some of the social disadvantages: the growing population of the elderly; the disproportionate number of male births; and the impact the policy has had on the government's birth reporting system. Of particular interest was the number of "missing girls": girls who were not registered at birth but appear on censuses after the age of ten. Feng makes a case that the one-child policy needs to be amended if China is to avoid further damaging consequences.

Fordham, Paul. 1991. Education for All: An Expanded Vision. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annotation: The World Conference on Education for All was held in Thailand in 1990. This series of three books, or monographs, summarizes information that was presented and discussed at the conference. It focuses on issues that were discussed in various "roundtables." The conference was sponsored by the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Bank. During the conference, an "expanded vision" was proposed to combat some of the problems facing universal education. The second monograph of the Education for All series outlines the five components of the expanded vision: universalizing access and promoting equity; focusing on learning; broadening the means and scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and strengthening partnerships. Issues of equity, the learning environment, and educational effectiveness are all analyzed. The topics covered in this series are relevant and applicable to the issues we still face today in providing education for all.

Global Campaign for Education. 2005. "Girls Can't Wait: Why Girls' Education Matters and How to Make It Happen Now." *Reproductive Health Matters* 13 (25): 19-22.

Annotation: This briefing paper by the Global Campaign for Education highlights the fact that, as of 2005, many developing nations were still not ensuring equality for girls in education. Despite improvements in female enrollment rates, girls' enrollment still lags behind that of boys. The report reminds its readers of the potential benefits of providing equal access to girls, for example, having a positive effect on a country's economic growth and decreasing malnutrition rates. It highlights some of the reasons the goal of educational equality has not been reached and makes recommendations for governments and the international community. The report serves as a reminder of the distance still to be traveled and, though it addresses some of the issues and makes recommendations, it does so in a very broad and general manner.

Haggis, Shelia M. 1991. Education For All: Purpose and Context. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annotation: The World Conference on Education for All was held in Thailand in 1990. This series of three books, or monographs, summarizes information that was presented and discussed at the conference. It focuses on issues that were discussed in various “roundtables.” The conference was sponsored by the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Bank. This first monograph focuses on the purpose and context of the conference and looks at issues such as: the impact of culture on education; environmental and health education; adult literacy; and the relationship between economic and social development. Although this is a dated source, it discusses timeless issues that are still relevant today.

Hannum, Emily. 2002. “Educational Stratification by Ethnicity in China: Enrollment and Attainment in the Early Reform Years.” *Demography* 39 (1): 95-117.

Annotation: Hannum discusses and analyzes ethnic disparities in education using statistical evidence, including the 1992 National Sample Survey on the Situation of Chinese Children. She proposes three hypotheses: first, geographical differentiation and poverty play a crucial role in creating educational disparities by ethnicity; second, the gender gap is greater among minority groups, and this greater disparity is largely attributable to the poorer socioeconomic backgrounds of minorities; and finally, the onset of market reforms through the 1980s increased educational disparities by ethnicity.

———. 2005. “Market Transition, Educational Disparities, and Family Strategies in Rural China: New Evidence on Gender Stratification and Development.” *Demography* 42 (2): 275-299.

Annotation: In this article, we see a continuation of Hannum's research on gender stratification. She sets out to analyze the relevance and viability of two theoretical approaches to gender stratification and development: the modernization theory and the women in development perspective. The first approach theorizes that, with increased development, a country will experience a decrease in gender inequalities. The “women in development perspective” argues that, with increased development comes an initial widening of the gender gap. Hannum attempts to analyze these theories and investigates various issues, such as the impact of economic circumstances on gender bias in household educational choices, and the trend in gender disparities in the years of market reforms. This article is of particular use to those who are interested in the relationship between development and gender disparities in education.

Hawkins, John N. 2000. “Centralization, Decentralization, Recentralization: Educational Reform in China.” *Journal of Educational Administration* 38 (5): 442.

Annotation: Hawkins examines the development of China's educational reform since it began in 1985. He looks at the motivations of China's move towards decentralizing

education, as well as the relationship between educational reform on the one hand and the economic reforms and new economic opportunities that were occurring on the other hand. He examines the types of decentralization that China used and examines how much power was really delegated. Within the education reform, Hawkins takes a detailed look at fiscal and management reforms, as well as curriculum reforms. The article provides a good account of the strategy and possible motives of China's decentralization within the education sector.

Higgins, Louise T., Zheng Mo, Yali Liu, and Chun Hui Sun. 2002. "Attitudes to Marriage and Sexual Behaviors: A Survey of Gender and Culture Differences in China and United Kingdom." *Sex Roles* 46 (3/4): 75-89.

Annotation: The authors review the changing attitudes towards marriage and sexual behavior in China from the teaching of Confucianism to Neo-Confucianism, the reforms of the People's Republic of China, the Cultural Revolution, and finally, the Open Door Policy of the 1980s and the effect of modernization and "westernization." They claim that, despite efforts such as the Marriage Laws of 1981, thousands of years of traditional Confucianism still impact current-day attitudes. The study carried out was designed and administered by a joint team of Chinese and British psychologists. They surveyed university students studying in the UK and university students studying in China, questioning them on issues such as mate selection processes, attitudes towards premarital sexual relations, and homosexuality. They conclude that, while perceived gender differences still exist in both countries, they are more prominent in traditional societies like China. The study provides an interesting comparison; the authors acknowledge that Chinese university students do not provide a representative sample of today's China, but they hope the results of this study will provide baseline data for future comparison.

Human Rights in China. 2002. "Shutting Out the Poorest: Discrimination Against the Most Disadvantaged Migrant Children in City Schools." New York: Human Rights in China.

Annotation: This report by Human Rights in China provides an account of the true accessibility of education to children of migrant workers. Using official Chinese publications and interviews, it examines how official policies are causing discrimination to migrant families who cannot afford to register in their new cities. These policies then enable local governments to charge higher fees from migrant families, often deterring them from enrolling their children in school.

Human Rights Watch. 2006. "China: Beijing Closes Schools for Migrant Children in Pre-Olympic Clean Up." Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/09/25/china-beijing-closes-schools-migrant-children-pre-olympic-clean>.

Annotation: This article discusses the closing of private, self-run migrant schools in Beijing in the run-up to the Olympics. While Beijing authorities claimed the closures were due to schools being substandard or unregistered, school operators disagreed. Although the article lacks statistical data to support its claim, the authors raise awareness of a human rights abuse

that China is often accused of. Closing down migrant schools, this article claims, is another example of the Chinese government failing to provide education for all. Administrative and financial policies create great difficulty for migrant families to send their children to school. Now, the government is closing the very schools that have made education possible.

Lan, Ye. 2008. "Comprehensive School Improvement in the Context of Social Transformation in China: A Case of New Basic Education Project," in J. U. Landowe (ed.), Education in China. New York: Nova Scotia Publishers, Inc.

Annotation: While surveying education reform in China, the authors highlight the "New Basic Education Project," carried out by East China Normal University. This was one of many projects carried out by Chinese universities concerned with school-level improvements. The primary focus of the project was to research and make improvements to classroom teaching and class construction. Practical changes were made in four classroom areas: curriculum and instruction; class construction; school administration; and teacher development. It is instructive to see the research and recommendations of Chinese universities in a field where much of the research tends to come from outside the country.

Levine, Michael H. 2005. "Take a Giant Step: Investing in Preschool Education In Emerging Nations." *Phi Delta Kappan* 87 (3): 196-200.

Annotation: Michael Levine proposes that the international community and, in particular, emerging nations need to place greater emphasis on early childhood care and education. In development efforts, the focus has been on universal access to primary school education, but Levine claims this is insufficient. Many early childhood initiatives have focused around health promotion and disease prevention, but not on education and preparation for primary school. Levine looks at the psychological and emotional development of children in preschool years and makes the argument that investing in children at this age will assist countries in future economic and social development. This article aims to encourage the idea of investing in preschool education, but lacks strong empirical or theoretical support.

Lu, Jie, and Desheng Gao. 2004. "New Directions in the Moral Education Curriculum in Chinese Primary Schools." *Journal of Moral Education* 33 (4): 495-510.

Annotation: The authors examine the problems that have arisen in China's Moral Education courses in primary schools over the past 20 years. They argue that the courses have a strong emphasis on instilling the moral principles that the state wants children to learn. The textbooks have used examples that are far removed from the lives of these children. This top-down approach has not allowed children to relate the lessons they are learning to their everyday lives. The authors also criticize traditional methods of teaching, such as lectures and textbook memorization. The Ministry of Education is looking to reform these Moral Education courses, so Lu and Gao prepared and tested a new moral education curriculum. They have implemented a more bottom-up process that is centered on the lives of the

children and their everyday problems. This article looks at the innovations in their curriculum and at the lessons they are learning from testing the curriculum in primary schools around China.

United Nations. 1995. "Beijing Declaration." Fourth World Conference on Women. Beijing, China.

Annotation: The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995. The conference was sponsored by the United Nations and attended by 189 governments "determined to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity" (Article 3). The Beijing Declaration reaffirms commitments to the advancement and empowerment of women, including the provision of and equal access to basic education.

Padgett-Cross, Molly. 2000. "The Sky is Falling: Market Reforms and the Re-Emergence of Discrimination Against Women in China." New York, NY: Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, City University of New York.

Annotation: Padgett-Cross makes the case that, as a result of market reforms in 1978, the advancement of gender equality in China began to reverse. She argues that many of the steps the Mao regime took towards equality for women in education and the workplace were suddenly enforced through government policies, and therefore became dependent on the state. When the level of state interference decreased after 1978, more traditional beliefs and attitudes towards women returned. The author examines the levels of working women, attitudes within the workplace, as well as differences in urban and rural trends. She looks at the impact of an increased number of private schools on education, claiming that the cost of private and even public schools encourages discrimination, particularly in rural areas, where parents will often choose to educate a boy rather than a girl if forced to pick one child. Padgett-Cross concludes by looking at the role of non-governmental organizations in China, women's involvement within them, and the level of state control over their work.

People's Republic of China. 1995. "The Right of Citizens to Education." Government White Papers. Beijing, China.

Annotation: In this report, the Chinese government outlines the various ways in which it is supporting the principle of providing Chinese citizens "a steadily increased right to education." It highlights the Law on Compulsory Education that was passed in 1995, as well as the Regulations for the Work of Eliminating Illiteracy and the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Plan. This report also gives statistics from the State Education Commission on the effectiveness of these measures on enrollment rates, particularly looking at the differences in enrollment rates between girls and boys, urban and rural areas, and various ethnic minorities. While it must be considered that this is a government document when looking at the statistics, it is helpful to see the State's effort to be accountable for the commitment to the right to education.

Rao, Nirmala , Kai-Ming Cheng, and Kirti Narain. 2003. "Primary Schooling in China and India: Understanding How Socio-Contextual Factors Moderate the Role of State." *International Review of Education*, 49 (1/2): 153-176.

Annotation: This article compares the efficiency of primary school education in China and India since the political transitions in both countries in the late 1940s. The authors examine the efforts of the two states in improving primary education and the socio-contextual factors that have impacted them. The article provides an interesting comparison of two countries with comparable levels of primary school enrollment in the 1940s, and the direction they took with China becoming a socialist state and India a liberal democracy. Along with examining the role and nature of the state, the authors look at the impact of cultural beliefs on education, women and teaching, and the ideology behind the effort to improve primary education. The authors provide a good introduction to political and cultural factors that could underlie further research.

Selden, Mark. 1999. "Poverty Alleviation, Inequality and Welfare in Rural China." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34 (45): 3183-3190.

Annotation: This article looks at the plight of the rural poor in China in the post-Mao era. The author makes the argument that, despite Chinese developmental gains in both urban and rural areas, rural welfare has not received the attention that it needs. Selden claims that the relative neglect of rural social welfare will eventually threaten China's development. While not a great deal of attention is given to education specifically, it is mentioned in the context of increasing inequality and unaddressed forms of poverty.

Shu, Xiaoling. 2004. "Education and Gender Egalitarianism: The Case of China." *Sociology of Education* 77 (4): 311-336.

Annotation: In this article, Shu sets out to examine the relationship between education and gender attitudes in China. He begins by looking at historical evidence of the impact that education has had on gender egalitarianism. He talks of the changes in post-1949 China, when the government began using formal education as a vehicle for socialization. He argues that it is not education alone (whether at a micro or macro level) that changes attitudes, but rather the social environment of which education is indicative, that brings about changes in attitudes and values. The formal education system of China post-1949 has been used to promote the official culture supported by the government and the values of the influential state elite. Shu makes a number of hypotheses that he tests through a survey of 9,033 married couples living in both rural and urban regions of China. These hypotheses include: "the higher an individual's education, the more egalitarian the individual's gender attitudes," and "the larger the gender gap in education in a community, the more traditional women's

gender attitudes are.” He provides an in-depth analysis of the results of his study, concluding that egalitarian gender attitudes are unevenly distributed in the Chinese population.

Spring, Joel. 2000. The Universal Right to Education. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Annotation: Spring takes a unique approach to the topic of education for all and, specifically, the right to education. Whereas most books and articles on this topic begin with the assumption that readers acknowledge and understand the right to education, Spring starts by defining and justifying the right to education. He also discusses children's rights, touching on other issues that are affecting children worldwide, and links children's rights to the right to education. Spring spends a good deal of time looking at cultural differences and how they affect the perception of the right to education. He also focuses on globalization and the impact of the global economy on education. He provides a different approach to the topic that is a helpful addition to the available literature.

Subrahmanian, Ramya. 2007. Gender in Primary and Secondary Education. London, UK: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Annotation: The author looks at the continuing gender disparity that exists in education today. Writing to an audience of policymakers, particularly at the state level, she highlights the economic and social development problems the gender gap causes. She argues for the need to build on rising enrollment rates and to increase attention to secondary and higher education. Proposals include increasing investment in: health education (particularly reproductive health); public awareness within local communities about the importance of women's education; and early childhood education.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report Team. 2008. “Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008,” in *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annotation: In 2001, 164 governments participated in the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. They committed to a number of educational goals to achieve an expansion of educational opportunities. The six goals that countries agreed to focus on are: early childhood care and education; universal primary education; learning needs of young people and adults; adult literacy; gender; and quality of education. This report assesses to what extent these measures are being met. It analyzes the impact of specific policies and discusses major developments since 2001. The statistical reports and analysis are particularly helpful for the reader who is interested in the Education For All goals, but the report also provides a good overview of the issues affecting educational expansion around the world.

Tomasevski, Katarina. 2003. "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The Right to Education." New York, NY: United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Annotation: This report was submitted by special rapporteur, Katarina Tomasevski, after a "mission to china" to investigate China's implementation of the right to education. In the report, she highlights areas where China is failing to meet its international commitment. She looks at legislation and how China's policies are played out in various areas. She examines the issues that are preventing free and compulsory primary education, specifically: budgetary allocations; school fees; and discrimination against girls, children of migrant families, and the disabled. Throughout the report, she makes strong recommendations to the Chinese government in all of the above areas.

Tsui, Ming, and Lynne Rich. 2002. "The Only Child and Educational Opportunity for Girls in Urban China." *Gender and Society* 16 (1): 74-92.

Annotation: Tsui and Rich use data from a study they conducted from 1998-1999 to examine educational gender differences between single-boy and single-girl families in urban China. The study surveyed 1,040 eighth graders in Wuhan, China, and looked at parental expectations and investment in their child's education, as well as children's educational aspirations and achievements. The authors conclude that there is no educational gender inequality in single-child families in urban China. The article presents a positive, if unintended, consequence of the one-child policy. The authors' findings are interesting and relevant to studies of gender disparities in modern day China; however, the study uses a small sample. It would be interesting to see if the findings are repeated on a larger scale and to see the same study carried out in areas of rural China.

Turner, Yvonne. 2006. "Swinging Open or Slamming Shut? The Implications of China's Open-Door Policy for Women, Educational Choice and Work." *Journal of Education & Work* 19 (1): 47-65.

Annotation: Yvonne Turner looks at the relationship between tertiary education and attitudes about women and work in contemporary China. She provides a good cultural context, examining the accessibility of education to women since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, as well as the impact of the Cultural Revolution and the Market and Political Reforms of the 1980s. This article gives a helpful overview of some of the practical problems facing women seeking education at every level, including the beliefs of Confucianism and the consequences of a patriarchal mindset. Turner uses interview extracts from two longitudinal studies, in which participants who were studying for a UK Business Degree shared their views on gender relations in China; women in the study shared experiences they have had in the Chinese work environment. Participants of the first study were attending university in the UK, and participants of the second study were studying in China. The review of these small studies was not overly helpful, as the studies only

represented the attitudes of a small number of Chinese citizens. However, the article does provide a good overview of the issue of women's education and attitudes to women at work.

United Nations Children's Fund. 2007. *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

Annotation: The United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization use this book to delineate a very specific human rights approach to providing universal health care. They begin by laying out why education is a human right and the principles of a human rights-based approach. With that foundation, they propose a framework for program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Issues include: accessibility and equality of opportunity; the quality of education; rights within education; and poverty. While informative, this report is primarily a resource for government officials, civil society organizations, and those involved in developing educational policies and programs.

Windham, Douglas M. 1991. *Education For All: the Requirements*. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annotation: The World Conference on Education for All was held in Thailand in 1990. This series of three books, or monographs, summarizes much of the information that was presented and discussed at the conference. It focuses on issues that were discussed in various "roundtables." The conference was sponsored by the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank. This third monograph in the series is a more practical approach for policymakers, non-governmental organizations, and teachers. It takes various elements that were discussed at the conference and attempts to propose ways to turn the rhetoric into reality. Four themes are discussed: developing and supporting policy context; mobilizing resources; building national technical capacity; and strengthening international solidarity. It is a helpful resource for those actively involved in implementing universal education, or for those interested in the practical rather than theoretical side of the issue.

UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). 2009. "Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of States parties." Available online: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,CEDAW,STATEPARTIESREP,,4aba1e6c2,0.html>.

Annotation: This is the combined fifth and sixth periodic report submitted by the People's Republic of China. In accordance with Article 18, Paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, governments are required to

report on their progress of implementation of the Convention. Looking at the period of 1998 to 2002, the report provides an extremely positive view on the steps taken to implement this convention. China reaffirms its commitment to women's development and gender equality, and highlights different government policies and their effectiveness in eliminating discrimination against women. The authors have provided information on implementation of individual articles along with statistical data.