

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Role of Academia in Promoting Child Rights



Thessaloniki, Greece



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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



ACADEMIA
FOR CHILD RIGHTS

EVERY CHILD, EVERY RIGHT



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Scientific Committee

Angelopoulos Stamatios, Rector of the International Hellenic University

Fasoulis Vassilis, UNICEF Country Office Greece

Grammatikopoulos Vassilis, International Hellenic University

Karamane Effimia, International Hellenic University

Kassoti Olga, International Hellenic University

Khalil Ghassan, UNICEF Representative in Greece

Kossyvaki Lila, International Hellenic University

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Papadopoulou Smaragda, International Hellenic University

Petkou Dafne, International Hellenic University

Simopoulos Georgios, UNICEF Country Office Greece

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These Abstracts have been formally assessed and approved by the Conference Scientific Committee against the conference’s published acceptance criteria.

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KEYNOTE I

11:15 – 11:45 Thursday, 04 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Prof. Paroula Naskou-Perraki, University of Macedonia, Greece*

KEYNOTE II

19:30 – 20:15 Thursday, 04 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Dr Vassiliki Pliogou, University of Western Macedonia, Greece*

KEYNOTE III

10:00 – 11:00 Friday, 05 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Prof. Maria Tsitiridou – Evangelou, International Hellenic University, Greece*

KEYNOTE IV

17:30 – 18:15 Friday, 05 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Prof. Vasilios Ioakimidis, University of West Attica, Greece*

KEYNOTE V

10:00 – 11:00 Saturday, 06 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Dr. Sophie Kiladze, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child & Member, Council of Europe ECRI*

KEYNOTE VI

14:00 – 17:30 Saturday, 06 June 2026

Central Amphitheatre

Speaker: *Dr Dina Kapetangianni, University of North Texas, U.S.A.*

Session A

14:00 pm – 15:30 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | Faculty of Early Childhood and Education

Set A1 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Themi Campus

“Agency, voice, participation”

Giving Children A Voice to Assess the Quality of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Presenter

Tagne Nossi Alain, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon | Ministry of Basic Education, Cameroon

All authors

Tagne Nossi Alain, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon | Ministry of Basic Education, Cameroon

Bessala Ndzie Belinga Bruno Ludwig, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Evang Assembe Joseph, Ministry of Basic Education, Cameroon

Objective. This study examines the integration of children's perceptions in the evaluation of educational quality in sub-Saharan Africa, as an imperative arising from Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). The study aimed to establish that the exclusive reliance on adult intermediaries masks fundamental aspects of the school experience and violates children's participatory rights (Lundy, 2007). **Method.** The analysis is based on a critical review of the literature on educational assessment approaches in Sub-Saharan Africa, an examination of international normative frameworks, and examples of pilot initiatives that have incorporated students' voices. Particular attention was given to participatory methodologies adapted to low-resource settings and to the ethical considerations involved in collecting data from children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). **Results.** Current evaluation systems rely on indicators defined by adults that do not capture critical dimensions identified by children: classroom climate, pedagogical relevance, subtle discriminations, and psychosocial obstacles. Initiatives that have systematically consulted students have revealed dysfunctions invisible in conventional evaluations and have led to better-targeted interventions (Tangen, 2008). **Discussion.** Prioritizing children's perceptions is both a moral obligation and a practical requirement. This methodology necessitates structural modifications: education in participatory techniques, safeguarding measures, and protocols that guarantee children's contributions have a genuine impact. Opposition to this transition frequently embodies adultist notions that undervalue children's capabilities (James & Prout, 1997). Institutionalizing this approach could enhance educational quality and promote civic education by enabling youngsters to actively engage in their participatory rights. **Key words:** children's perceptions, quality of education, rights, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key words: children's perceptions, quality of education, rights, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Whose Knowledge Counts? Centering Children's Agency in Participatory oriented Research.

Presenter

Markowska-Manista Urszula, of Warsaw, Poland.

All authors

Markowska-Manista Urszula, of Warsaw, Poland.

The abstract should provide a clear picture of the article or presentation, putting emphasis on the main idea, possible methodological choices, description of the data, and conclusion. The length should be 250-300 words and the text justified. When we conduct research with children, especially children from migrant or marginalized communities in fragile contexts, we often ask the wrong questions. We ask “How do we protect children?” or “How do we get valid data?” rather than “How do we position children as experts in their own worlds?” This presentation reframes research with children as an epistemological justice issue. Through case studies from diverse research, the presentation demonstrates how institutional ethical approval fails to guarantee ethical practice, necessitating continuous researcher reflexivity regarding positionality. Using Korczak’s seven lifeworld-centered rights as a roadmap, I explore how researchers can shift from extractive to emancipatory approaches. I examine real dilemmas where rigorous methodology conflicts with children’s wellbeing, where adult timelines override children’s paces, and where “humanitarian aid” masks power asymmetry. Ultimately, I propose that ethical research with children is not primarily a technical problem (solved by ethics committees) but a structural one—requiring researchers to dismantle their own authority and genuinely serve children’s interests. The presentation includes fieldwork examples and practical reflection tools.

Keywords: Child-centered research, adultism, epistemological justice, participatory-oriented methodology, children's rights, Janusz Korczak.

Creative Approaches to Ethical Participatory Research with Children: Enabling Spaces of Meaningful and Agentic Dialogue.

Presenter

Papandreou Maria, Professor of the School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Papandreou Maria, Professor of the School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Konstantinidou Zoe, Kindergarten Teacher, Researcher at the University of Ioannina, Greece.

While children are recognized as a valuable population for research, their inherent vulnerability necessitates a careful ethical approach. Contemporary perspectives, rooted in the new sociology of childhood and sociocultural theory, frame children as active social agents and co-creators of reality with the right to be heard (Broström, 2012; Corsaro, 2000). This children's rights-based approach mandates that researchers treat children as competent "opinion-bearers" and active citizens (Perry & Dockett, 2011), ensuring they are fully informed to make autonomous decisions (Mayne, Howitt, & Rennie, 2017). Consequently, knowledge is viewed as a co-constructed product emerging from qualitative interactions and relationships of mutual respect (Graham et al., 2015). This presentation details the methodological tools and implementation phases designed to address critical ethical issues within a six-month study on constructive play with loose parts. The study involved 19 participants (10 boys and 7 girls) aged 4–6 from a semi-urban Greek public kindergarten. We specifically highlight the ethical dilemmas encountered during the initial informed consent process and emphasize the necessity of its continuous renegotiation in long-term engagement. Furthermore, we discuss methodological choices aimed at mitigating asymmetrical power relations between researchers, teachers, and children. By adopting these practices, the participating children moved beyond being passive subjects to becoming co-researchers, familiarizing themselves with the concepts of informed consent and autonomous choice. The findings suggest that the researcher-child relationship can evolve into a dynamic collaboration, provided it is sustained by constant researcher reflexivity and responsiveness.

Keywords: research ethics, participatory research, child rights, informed consent, power relations.

Children’s Rights Begin at Birth: A Contemporary Review of Achievements and Gaps in Newborn Health Rights

Presenter

Mpouroutzoglou Maria, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors

Mpouroutzoglou Maria, International Hellenic University, Greece

Antonakou Angeliki, International Hellenic University, Greece

From birth, newborns have rights that are often not adequately fulfilled both within and outside healthcare services, resulting in serious consequences for their immediate and long-term health and quality of life. This presentation aims to focus on the rights that newborns and infants should equally enjoy from birth and to propose recommendations for raising community awareness to advocate for and protect these rights. The vulnerability of the neonatal period is intensified by factors such as prematurity, hospitalization in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) away from parents, and limited access to holistic and family-centered care models. In addition, certain groups of parents and caregivers experience unequal access to counseling and healthcare services, while incidents of domestic violence affecting this age group reveal weaknesses in the system regarding early detection and the provision of a protective social safety net. Other issues, situated within broader and global contexts—such as the provision of safe nutrition—highlight the urgent need for immediate measures to protect newborns and infants, including those who, at first glance, appear to be born and raised in “safe environments.”

Keywords: newborns, infants, human rights, healthcare services, family-centered care, infant nutrition

Emotional Support in a University context and the Protection of Students' Rights: a Study Conducted at the University of Yaoundé I.

Presenter

Amana Evelyne, Lecturer-Researcher, Department of Educational Sciences, Higher Teacher's Training College, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

All authors

Amana Evelyne, Lecturer-Researcher, Department of Educational Sciences, Higher Teacher's Training College, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

University is an environment that welcomes a heterogeneous population, predominantly adolescents. They integrate into a new and unfamiliar setting, with activity rhythms different from those of secondary school. Furthermore, they experience profound biophysiological changes which induce emotional changes requiring support for the protection of their rights: education, affection, mental health, etc. Many of them do not benefit from any support in its various aspects: educational, cognitive and affective. This leads to learning, relational, and behavioral difficulties. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, has been ratified by 196 countries, including Cameroon, and UNICEF is working to promote these rights. The resulting research question is: How does emotional support in a university setting contribute to the protection of students' rights? The hypothesis is formulated as follows: By encouraging students, reducing frustration, and maintaining their engagement in their tasks, emotional support for students contributes to the protection of their rights in a university setting. The study aims to analyze the characteristics of emotional support that contribute to protecting students' rights. The research is mixed-methods, with a sample of 145 students, 10 teachers, and 5 heads of department from the University of Yaoundé I, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection techniques included individual and group interviews, as well as a digital questionnaire administered to the students. The results reveal that: encouragement comes primarily from family members; the reduction of frustrations is moderated by family members according to their status; and maintaining engagement in the task is moderated by the teaching staff. They reinforce the role of scaffolding in the learning process and its connection to children's rights, as well as the theories of social constructivism and attachment. These perspectives open up avenues for applied research: the design of multilingual digital tools on scaffolding and children's rights to support teacher and student training.

Keywords: scaffolding, rights, students, protection, university.

Student Support Centers in Ukraine as a Conceptual Mechanism for Promoting Child Rights within University Education.

Presenter

Tsybaliuk Svitlana, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

All authors

Tsybaliuk Svitlana, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

In the context of the profound transformation of Ukrainian higher education, driven by ongoing war, forced displacement, and widespread social, security, and psychological challenges, ensuring the rights of children and young people, particularly their access to quality education, has become a critical priority. These crises disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced students, those with disabilities, and low-income individuals, leading to unequal educational opportunities, diminished academic performance, compromised well-being, and barriers to social integration. This abstract proposes Student Support Centers as an innovative conceptual mechanism for implementing and safeguarding these rights within the university environment. By interpreting children's rights extended to young adults under frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28) to encompass equitable access to education, safety, psychological support, non-discrimination, and active participation, the centers address systemic gaps intensified by conflict. Grounded in international instruments (e.g., UNESCO recommendations and Council of Europe guidelines) and Ukraine's national framework, including the Ministry of Education and Science's February 20, 2024, order launching a 2024-2025 pilot project, the study synthesizes policy analysis to justify this approach. Student support centers, as dedicated university units, deliver comprehensive, individualized assistance across all educational stages from admission to examinations. Key functions include individual support for special needs, barrier-free environments, academic and psychological counseling, mental health promotion, and inclusive practices that prioritize access rights, thereby fostering equal opportunities for quality education and holistic development. The novelty of this study lies in integrating rights-based education with post-war recovery strategies, providing a replicable model aligned with Ukraine's EU integration that adapts global standards to wartime realities.

Keywords: student support centers, higher education, inclusive, university.

Set A2 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

"Special Topics in Child Rights and Academia"

How eye-tracking research can support the realization of children's right to accessible and equitable education: A conceptual and applied framework.

Presenter

Andreou Georgia, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece.

All authors

Andreou Georgia, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece.

Gkantaki Maria, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece.

The realization of children's right to accessible and equitable education requires educational systems capable of identifying learning barriers and responding to diverse cognitive needs. Eye-tracking technology has been widely used in academic research with adult populations to investigate reading processes, visual attention, and cognitive load, yet its contribution to learner-centered and rights-based educational approaches remains underexplored. This paper proposes a conceptual and applied framework illustrating how insights from eye-tracking research can inform practices that support children's educational rights. The framework draws on established research on Rapid Automatized Naming and reading development, which highlights the role of processing speed, visual attention, and automatization in literacy acquisition and reading difficulties (Norton & Wolf, 2012; Wolf et al., 2000; Wolf & Denckla, 2005). Adopting a translational perspective, the paper demonstrates how findings from eye-tracking studies conducted with adult learners can be meaningfully transferred to the context of children's learning, without presenting empirical data from child participants. Eye-tracking provides fine-grained evidence of real-time cognitive processing during reading tasks and can reveal hidden barriers to learning, such as inefficient visual scanning patterns or increased cognitive overload. Such insights may support the early recognition of learning difficulties and contribute to the design of more accessible instructional materials and learning environments. The proposed framework emphasizes the role of universities in translating research knowledge into educational practice, training future educators in technology-enhanced and child-sensitive methodologies, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between academia, schools, and child rights organizations. By linking cognitive research tools with core child rights principles, including non-discrimination, equal access to education, and individualized educational support, this paper argues that eye-tracking can serve as a bridge between academic research and rights-based educational innovation, highlighting how academia can actively contribute to the promotion of children's rights in education.

Keywords: eye-tracking, children's rights in education, learner-centered education, reading development, inclusive educational practices.

Socially Assistive Robots and Children's Rights: A Critical Narrative Review of Implications for Inclusion and Well-Being

Presenter

Foykas Evaggelos, University of Thessaly, Greece.

All authors

Foykas Evaggelos, University of Thessaly, Greece.

Beazidou Eleftheria, University of Thessaly, Greece.

The growing presence of digital and robotic technologies in child-centered environments has intensified scholarly and policy interest in their implications for children's rights and well-being. Socially Assistive Robots (SARs), including both physically embodied and virtual agents, have been increasingly implemented in educational, therapeutic, and psychosocial settings, particularly with children in vulnerable situations. This paper presents a critical narrative review of recent international literature examining the extent to which SAR-based interventions support or challenge a child rights-based approach. Guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the review synthesizes empirical studies published over the last decade, focusing on children's rights to inclusion, participation, protection, and holistic well-being. The analysis reveals key thematic findings, indicating that SAR-based interventions are frequently associated with enhanced social engagement, emotional regulation, motivation, and a sense of belonging, particularly among children with special educational needs or those at risk of social exclusion. Virtual forms of SARs emerge as particularly promising in terms of accessibility, continuity of support, and adaptability across diverse contexts, potentially reducing barriers related to cost, geography, and service availability. At the same time, the findings highlight the importance of recognizing the child as an active rights-bearer, whose participation, agency, and voice must guide the use of technological interventions, and the risk that such solutions may unintentionally undermine children's rights if ethical and rights-based considerations are not systematically embedded in their design and use. Overall, the review suggests that Socially Assistive Robots can contribute positively to children's well-being and inclusion when grounded in ethically informed, child-centered, and rights-based frameworks. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for continued critical reflection, interdisciplinary dialogue, and adherence to child rights principles to ensure that technological innovation aligns with the holistic protection and promotion of children's rights.

Keywords: children's rights, socially assistive robots (SARs), inclusion, well-being, educational interventions.

Beyond Consent: Challenges in Bioethics and Child Research

Presenter

Bozas Antonis, Institute of Applied Biosciences-CERTH, Greece | International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Bozas Antonis, Institute of Applied Biosciences-CERTH, Greece | International Hellenic University, Greece.

Research involving children has traditionally been governed by ethical frameworks that prioritize protection, parental consent, and minimizing harm. While these principles remain central, they are increasingly insufficient to address the evolving realities of academic research. Contemporary research practices now operate within complex institutional, digital, and regulatory environments that reshape how children participate in, and are affected by, research. As a result, bioethics in child research requires renewed policy attention that extends beyond individual consent procedures toward systemic governance and accountability. From a policy perspective, three interrelated ethical dimensions are particularly salient. First, the governance of assent and consent continues to be challenged by power asymmetries and institutional authority, raising concerns about whether children's participation is genuinely voluntary and informed. Second, the expanding datafication of childhood, driven by digital platforms, artificial intelligence, biobanks, and learning analytics, has transformed children into long-term data subjects. This development generates policy questions concerning data protection, secondary use, re-consent at adulthood, transparency, and long-term oversight. Third, the persistent tension between protection and inclusion remains unresolved. While safeguarding measures aim to reduce risk, overly restrictive approaches may result in the systematic exclusion of children from research, thereby contributing to evidence gaps that disproportionately affect already marginalised populations. Taken together, these challenges underscore the need for a child-rights-based policy framework that prioritizes proportional risk regulation, meaningful participation, institutional accountability, and sustainable data governance throughout the entire research lifecycle involving children.

Keywords: child research, bioethics, child rights, assent and consent, data governance.

Ethical dilemmas and risks to children's rights in the age of artificial intelligence.

Presenter

Tsironis Christos, School of Theology, Faculty of Theology, AUTh, Greece.

All authors

Tsironis Christos, School of Theology, Faculty of Theology, AUTh, Greece.

Kryonidis Diamantis, School of Theology, Faculty of Theology, AUTh, Greece.

The emergence of a plethora of artificial intelligence tools and applications (e.g., LLMs, digital assistants, AI companions etc.) and their rapid introduction into the world of children and young people bring new and complex ethical dilemmas to the foreground. The AI race among technology companies directly affects the social environment of new generations. In such a highly competitive field, any regulatory efforts by State or International organizations are essential in a “run-away world” of constant technological advancements and social transformation. In this framework, the European Regulation (EU AI Act, 2024) remains one of the most coherent legislative texts to date, despite its weaknesses and limitations. It was followed by the Council of Europe's "Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law" (2024), while the UNESCO recommendation or the landmark UN resolution in 2024 (A/78/L.49) remain important as they articulated guidelines and strong statements of political will. Due to the rapid development of AI applications, the fields of media and education have been under influential pressure especially on issues such as uncontrolled access, misinformation, deepfakes, plagiarism, etc. In this environment, children face emerging digital risks that jeopardise their rights. The ethical dilemmas are significant, as societies and legislative bodies aim to identify the real risks and respond in a timely manner with legislation and education. This analysis highlights the critical aspects of the current situation and the social and legal complications in light of the UNICEF/UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), as well as the ethical dilemmas and educational challenges in the age of AI.

Keywords: human rights, artificial intelligence, children's rights, education, regulation.

Policies for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Greece: Challenges and Prospects

Presenter

Fasoulis Vasilis, UNICEF Greece

All authors

Fasoulis Vasilis, UNICEF Greece

This study conducts a critical assessment of public policies regarding the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Greece, focusing on the gap between the existing regulatory framework and the actual formulation of child-centered policies. Methodologically, the research evaluates horizontal and sectoral National Action Plans and Strategies over the last decade, employing criteria such as policy coherence, systematicity, continuity, evidence-based policymaking, and the adaptability of these measures to the evolving situation of children. Furthermore, it examines the holistic consideration of the full spectrum of rights enshrined in the Convention.

The analysis incorporates elements of institutional and administrative organization, specifically scrutinizing the efficiency of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms. The findings demonstrate and document an inconsistent and fragmented policy-making approach in the Greek context. In response to these structural weaknesses, the study suggests a transition towards an integrated governance framework rooted in a rights-based approach. Key recommendations include the institutionalization of tools such as the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and the effective coordination for the implementation of children's rights at the central government level. Finally, the paper briefly explores contemporary challenges, underscoring that the sustainability of children's rights in Greece requires their re-definition as a cross-cutting national priority rather than a secondary field of policy-making focusing primarily on social welfare.

Keywords: convention on the rights of the child, public policy, policy fragmentation, institutional coherence, rights-based approach, Greece.

Strategic Partnerships as Catalysts for Advancing Child Rights

Presenter

Chatzigianni Efthalia (Elia), University of the Peloponnese, Greece

All authors

Chatzigianni Efthalia (Elia), University of the Peloponnese, Greece

Strategic partnerships have become central to advancing child rights within increasingly complex governance environments. While the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides a comprehensive normative framework, its effective implementation depends on coordinated action among diverse actors operating across local, national, and international levels. This paper presents an analysis of strategic partnerships as a core mechanism for strengthening child rights advocacy, policy implementation, and accountability.

The study examines how collaborative arrangements among governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, grassroots movements, and international agencies—such as UNICEF—enhance resource mobilization, policy coherence, and knowledge exchange. Particular attention is given to multi-sectoral and multi-level coalitions that integrate legal expertise, community engagement, and data-driven advocacy to address systemic barriers affecting marginalized children. The analysis identifies key characteristics of effective partnerships, including shared goals, clearly defined roles, trust-based governance, transparent communication, and sustainable financing mechanisms.

Drawing on comparative case insights, the paper explores both the opportunities and challenges inherent in partnership-based advocacy. While strategic alliances can amplify impact and legitimacy, they may also encounter power imbalances, competing institutional mandates, and accountability gaps. The paper argues that successful partnerships require deliberate design, inclusive participation, and mechanisms that center child rights principles—non-discrimination, best interests of the child, survival and development, and participation—throughout collaborative processes.

By conceptualizing strategic partnerships as dynamic governance tools rather than ad hoc collaborations, this paper contributes to ongoing debates on collective impact, accountability, and rights-based development. It concludes that durable, equity-focused partnerships are essential to translating global child rights commitments into sustained and measurable outcomes for children.

Keywords: strategic partnerships, child rights, advocacy,

The Role of Academia in Promoting Children's Rights through Educational Leadership

Presenter

Anastasiou Sofia, University of Ioannina, Greece

All authors

Anastasiou Sofia, University of Ioannina, Greece

Children's rights constitute a core principle of an equitable and inclusive education system. Their effective implementation is linked to legal, pedagogical, and social policy perspectives as well as with the multi-functional role and organizational quality of educational settings. Evidence from *rights-respecting* schools suggests that children's rights are most effectively promoted when they are embedded across school policies, practices, curricula, and organizational culture. From this perspective, children's rights should also be viewed from an organizational and leadership perspective, guiding everyday educational practice. A *rights-based* approach requires a child-centered, participatory, and inclusive educational environment. Educational leaders influence key dimensions of organizational environment such as organizational priorities, participation, inclusion, human resources' development and the educators' working environment. Educational leadership, therefore, plays an important role in connecting children's rights principles with the everyday operation and overall mission of educational settings. In this context, *academia* has a key multidimensional role. By integrating children's rights into university teaching, research and professional practice, academia can strengthen the capacity of future educators, educational leaders and settings so as to recognize and promote children's rights across diverse institutional and social environments. This role extends across educational levels and organizational settings, including early childhood and preschool contexts, in which leadership practices influence pedagogical quality, collaboration, and overall organizational effectiveness. In this sense, academia can strengthen educational leadership by advancing knowledge, supporting research and promoting a rights-based culture that supports inclusive, participatory, and high-quality everyday educational practice.

Keywords: children's rights, educational leadership, academia, rights-based education, inclusive education

Set A3 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Bullying prevention and school climate”

The Cultural Rights of the Child

Presenter

Trova Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors

Trova Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece

The presentation will focus on the mention of these rights as they arise from the international convention on the rights of the child but also other international conventions, the national constitution, and the legislation. Examples and best practices will be mentioned. One such right is the right to language and education, where special emphasis will be given.

Keywords: child rights, cultural rights, convention, legislation

Causes of School Bullying Based on Theoretical Approaches and Socio-Environmental Factors: A Detailed Analysis.

Presenter

Christou Melpomeni, Phd in Humanitas

All authors

Christou Melpomeni, Phd in Humanitas

Vlachos Apostolos, Lawer LLM In Law

School bullying is a complex and multifaceted behavior shaped by an interplay of individual psychological traits, biological predispositions, social learning processes, and broader environmental influences. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the root causes of school bullying through various theoretical lenses, including psychoanalytic, behavioral, neurological, social learning, social, and feminist perspectives. Additionally, the role of family, peers, school environment, and societal culture is explored to understand how these layers contribute to bullying behavior. This holistic approach is essential for designing effective prevention and intervention strategies. School bullying remains one of the most pressing challenges facing educational institutions worldwide. It is characterized by repeated aggressive behaviors intended to cause harm or discomfort to peers who are perceived as vulnerable or different. The consequences of bullying extend beyond immediate physical or emotional pain, often leading to long-term psychological trauma, decreased academic performance, social isolation, and even suicidal ideation for victims. Perpetrators of bullying are also at risk of adverse outcomes, such as engagement in antisocial behaviors and difficulties informing healthy relationships. Despite extensive research, the root causes of school bullying are complex and multifaceted, defying simple explanations. Bullying behavior emerges from a dynamic interplay between individual predispositions and external influences, encompassing biological, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions. Understanding these underlying causes requires a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates insights from various theoretical frameworks. Psychoanalytic theory, for example, explores the unconscious drives that may fuel aggressive behaviors, while behavioral and social learning theories emphasize the role of environmental modeling and reinforcement. Neurological and biological research offers perspectives on innate factors such as brain function and hormonal influences that can predispose children to aggression. Moreover, socio-environmental contexts — including family dynamics, peer relationships, school climate, and broader societal norms — play a critical role in shaping how bullying manifests and is maintained.

Keywords: school bullying, behavior, social learning.

Strategic partnerships and key stakeholders for the promotion of children's rights: Main awareness-raising actions and their impact based on the National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child (2021).

Presenter

Tsakni Georgia, Assistant Professor of Public Law, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

All authors

Tsakni Georgia, Assistant Professor of Public Law, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

In the field of promoting children's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is decisive, adopted by the UN General Assembly unanimously with Resolution 44/25 on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1992. This Convention protects not only the civil and political rights of the child, but also economic, social and cultural rights. Violation of the provisions of the Convention leads to the international responsibility of the state, which is consequently accountable to the monitoring body provided for by the Convention, namely the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Within the framework of this fundamental international legislative provision, Greece adopted the National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in 2021, which aims to implement the European Child Guarantee, aiming to protect and promote children's rights in areas such as health, education, social inclusion and the fight against child poverty. The proposed proposal aims to highlight two axes: on the one hand, the relevant national framework, which is coordinated by the National Center for Social Solidarity (EKKA) in collaboration with multiple Ministries, civil society organizations and Local Government, including specific axes of action with the ultimate goal of ensuring access to health, education, housing, adequate nutrition and protection from violence and, on the other hand, the identification of specific measures to address child poverty, the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the promotion of child participation.

Keywords: rights, child, rule of law, national action plan.

Designing and Assessing Child Rights- Based Bullying Prevention in Greek Schools.

Presenter

Karamperidou Despina, UNICEF, Greece.

All authors

Karamperidou Despina, UNICEF, Greece.

Simopoulos Giorgos, UNICEF, Greece.

Theodorou Nikoletta, UNICEF, Greece.

School bullying remains a significant violation of children’s rights to protection, participation, and well-being, calling for preventive approaches that are embedded in everyday educational practice. This paper presents the design logic and assessment framework of the *SafeSchools Alliance* programme in Greece that aims to strengthen educators’ capacity to prevent bullying and promote child rights-respecting school cultures. Educator toolkits were developed through a pilot-to-scale process and grounded in child rights education, social-emotional learning, and experiential learning theory. Moving beyond reactive, incident-driven responses, the toolkits adopt a whole-school and cross-curricular approach, integrating bullying prevention horizontally across classroom practice. Central to the design is a structured pedagogical sequence—conceptual framing, experiential activity, and guided reflection—which supports students’ empathy, emotional regulation, and active bystander behavior. The materials emphasize student participation and democratic classroom practices, positioning educators as facilitators of dialogue and reflection rather than solely as behavior managers. The programme incorporates a built-in impact assessment framework to operationalize social and behavioral change. Using a mixed-methods baseline-endline design, the assessment combines quantitative surveys with qualitative focus group discussions involving educators and students. The methodology captures changes in attitudes, perceived school climate, and self-reported competencies related to resilience and bullying prevention. The paper demonstrates how the systematic alignment of pedagogical design and assessment can contribute evidence-informed models for integrating child rights into educational practice through academia–practice partnerships.

Keywords: child rights education, bullying prevention, learning materials, experiential learning, impact assessment.

Promoting school safety for all children: Research and Interventions guided by the University of Thessaly.

Presenter

Andreou Eleni, Department of Primary Education, University of Thessaly, Greece.

All authors

Andreou Eleni, Department of Primary Education, University of Thessaly, Greece.

The right to school safety is a fundamental human right ensuring students and educators operate in environments free from physical, psychoemotional, and digital violence. It is essential for the realization of the right to education, requiring protection from bullying, abuse, and conflict, while fostering a supportive, inclusive, and secure climate. School safety encompasses comprehensive measures ensuring a secure, supportive, and respectful environment for students and staff, covering physical infrastructure, emotional well-being, and emergency preparedness. Key components include anti-bullying policies and mental health support. The present study describes research regarding school safety, conducted by the Laboratory of Developmental and Educational Psychology of the University of Thessaly in both primary and secondary schools in Greece. It also examines the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions carried out by our Laboratory in the last 20 years with the aim of increasing school safety and promoting well-being for all children. Over 3500 students from 7 to 17 years attending schools located at central Greece participated in our studies. According to the evidence, 10% of the students in both primary and secondary education samples reported that they were seriously bullied, while victimization was more sharply evident among boys and to a lesser extent among those students whose Greek was not their native language. Further, one in ten adolescents admitted not feeling safe at school, while a strong negative statistically significant association was identified between students' sense of safety at school and the reported incidence of victimization experiences. Our anti-bullying interventions in both primary and secondary schools enhanced the students' confidence in dealing with victimization. Moreover, for those who reported serious victimization, their exposure to victimization dropped significantly. The implications that arise from the evidence cited above in relation to university's role in promoting school safety will be discussed.

Keywords: bullying, school safety, primary education, secondary education, university.

The Child Rights Center of the University of Crete: Vision, Actions, and Prospects

Presenter

Kypriotaki Maria, University of Crete, Greece

All authors

Kypriotaki Maria, University of Crete, Greece

This presentation introduces the Child Rights Center of the University of Crete and, more specifically, the 31 actions that have already been implemented at the Center's initiative and in cooperation with UNICEF. More specifically, these actions included training for various target groups, research, and the development of an educational program for preschool children focused on child rights. The Center prioritized teacher training through a broad network of activities, and the training sessions took the form of conferences that included keynote speeches and experiential workshops (4–5 per prefecture) or training seminars for teachers (1,721 kindergarten teachers and 775 elementary school teachers). The presentation also focuses on the design and implementation of an educational program on Child Rights in Preschool Classroom in collaboration with the Primary Education Directorate of all prefectures in Crete, education quality supervisors and education advisors, as well as members of the Department of Preschool Education at the University of Crete and UNICEF, and is based on the four fundamental principles of the International Convention. As mentioned, the Center has expanded its actions to include key target groups in the field of child protection: specialized seminars were organized for police officers, pediatricians, psychologists, social workers, nurses, judicial officials, and lawyers regarding child rights, minor victims of neglect and abuse and their management, as well as the creation of a child-friendly system; also conferences and workshops were organized for students at the University of Crete (Medicine, School of Social Sciences, School of Education) as well as for Erasmus students, and activities for children attending daycare centers or preschool classroom. In addition, reference will be made to the awareness campaign organized to promote bone marrow donation in collaboration with the Horizon Association, and the importance of the introduction of a new course at the University of Crete on child rights within an interdisciplinary framework, as well as the preparation of master's theses and doctoral dissertations related to child rights. The presentation concludes with an overview of the Center's planned new actions, as well as an examination of the challenges and prospects for promoting child rights through the Center and in collaboration with organizations such as UNICEF.

Keywords: child rights, training, network activities, education

Set A4 | 17:30 – 19:15 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“SYMPOSIUM SESSION”

Chaired by Korina Hatzinikolaou

Parental Attitudes Toward Preschool Children's Right to Participate in Family Decision-Making.

Presenter

Kissoudi Sofia, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Kissoudi Sofia, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Hatzinikolaou Korina, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

When discussing children's participation in matters that concern them, we often refer to institutions such as schools (John-Akinola & Nic-Gabhainn, 2014), or other contexts where their participation is systematically encouraged, such as space design (Can & İnalhan, 2017), research processes (Powell & Smith, 2009), care programs (Skauge et al., 2021), purchasing decisions (Dikčius et al., 2020), or integration policies for children of migrant origin (Orellana et al., 2001), among others. However, the first social relationships are formed within the family, where the first systematic interactions with family members take place. It is within the family context that the child first learns the rules of participation in a group, in a community. Despite the importance of the family context for understanding the concept and practice of participation in groups, the way and degree to which preschool children participate in family decisions remains under-researched (e.g., Horgan et al., 2017). The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of parents of preschool children regarding their right to participate in decisions that concern them, such as leisure time and daily routines, within the family context. The research question was addressed by administering the Children Participation Questionnaire (CPQ) to 300 families with at least one preschool-aged child (4-5 years old) attending a Greek kindergarten. The results of the study are expected to reveal the attitudes of parents living in Greece toward their children's participation in decision-making regarding various areas of daily life that concern them. This study contributes to understanding the exercise of children's right to participate in decisions that concern them and can support the development and promotion of training programs and interventions that inform and promote children's participation, thereby supporting the formation of active citizens.

Keywords: parental attitudes, children's participation, family decision-making, preschool age, questionnaire.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Sexuality Education in Primary Education: Implications for Child Protection.

Presenter

Panagiotakopoulou Zoe, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Panagiotakopoulou Zoe, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Hatzinikolaou Korina, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

This study examines the views of parents of primary school children and primary school teachers regarding sexuality education for children. At the same time, it focuses on highlighting the perceptions of a group of health professionals, who are also part of the school environment, regarding sexuality education for children. Specifically, the study aims to investigate perceptions regarding their attitude towards sexuality education, the topics they believe this education should cover, and the factors that hinder its integration into the school environment. It also examines the participants' views on the suitability of those who will undertake to teach it and ways in which its effectiveness can be increased, while at the same time attempting to link the participants' personal experience with their current assessment of the subject. The survey was carried out on a sample of 228 parents of primary school children and 176 primary school teachers employed in Greece, while 3 school psychologists and 1 social worker also participated. A mixed methodological approach was used to collect the data. Initially, the quantitative method was used, with a specially designed questionnaire for the purposes of the study being administered to all parents/guardians and teachers. Similarly, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data, with questions specifically designed to explore the views of the present study, which were carried out in collaboration with mental health specialists. The analysis of the findings showed that all participants had a positive attitude towards the concept of sex education, recognizing its importance and necessity in the education of children aged 4-12, despite the parameters that negatively affect it. In conclusion, this study makes it clear that sexuality education for children is an integral part of their development and can contribute significantly to their safety and protection if implemented in a timely manner, gradually and from reliable sources of information.

Keywords: sexuality education, primary education, child protection, parental attitudes, teacher perspectives.

Children's Linguistic Rights in the Greek Context: Family Languages and Education

Presenter

Gatsi Panagiota, School of Modern Greek Language, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Gatsi Panagiota, School of Modern Greek Language, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

The presentation focuses on children's right to use, maintain, and develop their family/mother tongues, as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 29-30) (UNICEF, 1989; UNESCO, 2003). It highlights the role of the family, education, and the university in the development of practices and policies that promote linguistic diversity, inclusion, and children's empowerment, with particular emphasis on less widely spoken languages in Greece (Cummins, 2000; García & Wei, 2014; Gatsi, Androulakis, Simopoulos, & Stergiou, 2023). The promotion of linguistic justice is directly linked to the safeguarding of linguistic rights for all people. The recognition, use, and protection of all languages in education and society contribute to children's empowerment and to the advancement of a more just and inclusive society (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tollefson, 2013; Phillipson, 1992). Within this framework, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data from migrant and refugee associations, as well as from children and teachers in formal education, sheds light on their lived experiences and the challenges they face. With due respect for ethical principles and the protection of children's rights, such data can contribute to the formulation of policies that strengthen children's rights and promote the inclusion of all languages in the social and educational linguistic landscape (Gatsi, Androulakis, Simopoulos, & Stergiou, 2023).

Keywords: linguistic rights, multilingualism, family languages, inclusive education, language policy.

From Research Evidence to Policy Action: Translating Academic Knowledge on Children's Rights into National Frameworks

Presenter

Hatzinikolaou Korina, Laboratory of Child Psychology and Education “Psique”, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Hatzinikolaou Korina, Laboratory of Child Psychology and Education “Psique”, School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Research on children's rights—whether focusing on participation, linguistic rights, or protection from harm—often remains confined within academic boundaries, rarely influencing policy development or professional practice. This presentation addresses a critical gap: how can academic research effectively inform and shape child rights policies at national and local levels? Drawing on the empirical findings presented in this symposium—parental attitudes toward young children's participation in family decision-making, linguistic rights of multilingual children, and stakeholder perspectives on sexuality education for child protection—this paper proposes a translational framework for bridging research and policy. The framework identifies three interconnected pathways: (a) strategic engagement with policymakers through accessible evidence synthesis; (b) participatory approaches that include children, families, and educators as co-designers of policy recommendations; and (c) alignment with international standards and monitoring mechanisms, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee. The presentation draws on practical experience from developing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) quality frameworks and parenting support mapping across European countries, as well as extensive involvement in child protection research and policy development, including work on violence prevention, child maltreatment, and trafficking. This dual experience illustrates how research evidence can be systematically integrated into governance structures, curriculum development, professional standards, and national child protection systems. Particular attention is given to the Greek context, where fragmented policy landscapes and limited research-policy dialogue pose significant challenges. The discussion concludes with actionable recommendations for researchers seeking to maximize the policy impact of their work, emphasizing the role of universities as knowledge brokers and advocates for evidence-informed child rights policies.

Keywords: child rights, research-policy translation, evidence-based policy, early childhood, child protection.

Set A5 | 17:30 – 19:15 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Child Rights in Education”

Deconstructing Misinterpretations of the UNCRC in Higher Education: Child Rights Centres as Catalysts for Conceptual and Institutional Change – Evidence from Cameroon

Presenter

Fosso Albert Legrand, UNICEF Cameroon

All authors

Fosso Albert Legrand, UNICEF Cameroon

Kirtskhalia Eteri, UNICEF Cameroon

Despite near-universal ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), its normative framework remains unevenly understood within higher education, limiting academia's contribution to the advancement of child rights. In 2024, UNICEF Cameroon initiated a systemic effort to institutionalize child rights education through the establishment of Child Rights Centres (CRCs) in partnership with public and private universities, drawing on prior experiences from Georgia and Greece. The initiative aimed not only to strengthen technical knowledge but to transform academic perceptions and professional engagement with child rights. The operationalization of CRCs in seven universities was accompanied by capacity-building workshops for lecturers and academic staff. A two-day interactive training programme became a catalytic moment, enabling lecturers to critically revisit assumptions, clarify normative misunderstandings, and recognize their role as duty bearers and knowledge multipliers. The activity demonstrated that mindset change among academics is a prerequisite for building a sustainable child rights culture. This process proved transformative: participants moved from viewing child rights as a specialized legal domain to recognizing them as an analytical lens applicable across disciplines. As a result, lecturers reported increased confidence in integrating child rights perspectives into teaching, research, and professional engagement. The impact became rapidly visible. Universities began integrating child rights perspectives into teaching, research, and community engagement. Academic ownership grew significantly, illustrated by the submission of more than 40 conference abstracts from participating institutions to the International Conference on the Role of Academia in Promoting and protecting Child Rights held in Yaounde, Cameroon on 19-20 November 2025. The Abstracts covered themes such as culturally grounded interpretations of child rights, digital innovation, governance and community partnerships, inclusive education, and rights-based curricula. The paper argues that Child Rights Centres can bridge the gap between international legal commitments and societal practice by reshaping academic understanding and professional identities, positioning universities as key drivers of sustainable child rights cultures.

Keywords: child rights, academia, sustainability, international conference

Experiences and strategies for teaching and integrating child rights into university and academic institutions' curricula.

Presenter

Kirtadze Shalva, Professor, Rector of Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia.

All authors

Kirtadze Shalva, Professor, Rector of Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia.

Buchukhishvili Mamuli, Head of the Child Rights Knowledge Center, The Pedagogics Faculty Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia.

Basiladze Imer, Professor, The Pedagogics Faculty, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia.

Tsagareisvili Nodar, Doctorant, The Pedagogics Faculty, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Kutaisi, Georgia.

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in advancing and institutionalizing child rights by shaping future professionals, educators, and policymakers. This paper explores effective strategies for integrating child rights into university curricula, focusing on the balance between theoretical grounding and practical application within academic settings. Drawing on international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the study examines how academia can move beyond normative instruction toward transformative, rights-based education. The paper analyses two main curriculum integration models: modular approaches, where child rights are taught as standalone courses, and cross-cutting approaches, where child rights principles are embedded across multiple disciplines, including education, law, social sciences, and digital studies. Through comparative analysis and selected case studies from teacher education and social science programs, the research highlights the pedagogical strengths and limitations of each model, emphasizing the added value of interdisciplinary and cross-curricular integration. Special attention is given to experiential and practice-based learning methodologies, such as service learning, simulations, project-based activities, and collaboration with child-focused institutions and civil society organizations. These approaches are shown to significantly enhance students' understanding of child rights, ethical responsibility, and professional accountability. The paper also addresses the critical role of capacity building and continuous professional development for university professors. Sustainable integration of child rights requires equipping academic staff with child-rights-based pedagogical competencies, interdisciplinary teaching skills, and the ability to align curricula with international child rights standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, the study argues that meaningful curriculum integration is most effective when

supported by institutional policies, quality assurance mechanisms, and strategic partnerships with organizations such as UNICEF. Embedding child rights into higher education contributes to the formation of rights-based professional identities and strengthens academia's role as a catalyst for social change and the protection of children's rights at national and international levels.

Keywords: child rights education, higher education, curriculum integration, experiential learning, academic capacity building.

Making Mathematics More Fun and Ensuring Students Learn Effectively.

Presenter

Sivanesan Sinthuja, PhD candidate, University of East London, U.K.

All authors

Sivanesan Sinthuja, PhD candidate, University of East London, U.K.

This study investigates methods to enhance the engagement and effectiveness of mathematics teaching for primary school learners, with a focus on those performing below age-level expectations. The research aims to identify factors that influence their academic progress and to determine strategies that can enhance both their mathematical learning outcomes and attitudes toward the subject. The study aims to give children a voice in their mathematical learning journeys. Below are the research questions:

- What factors affect those performing below age-level expectations?
- What engaging pedagogical strategies and methodologies may be employed to enhance the study of mathematics in primary education and at home with parental involvement, and how might these methodologies be implemented?
- How can we alter the mindsets of children, particularly those performing below age-appropriate expectations in mathematics, to guarantee that all learners engage with, appreciate, and understand the subject?

A mixed-methods approach and case study design are employed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Mixed-methods research integrates qualitative and quantitative data to improve validity and yield deeper insights than either method independently. The case study methodology facilitates an in-depth examination of the phenomenon within its real-world context by utilising multiple data sources, including interviews, surveys, and observations. This methodological combination enables a more holistic and nuanced analysis of the issues under investigation. Participants in this study will be a group of students performing below the expected level of the national curriculum. This will be based on the assessment data; termly, we assess the children and maintain a whole school assessment book. This shows the children who are working below the national curriculum expected level. I will create a profile of each student using different data collection tools. These data collection tools will be end-of-topic evaluations, end-of-the-term evaluations, support staff feedback, personal observations during learning, interviews with the students, and feedback from the parents. This will help me to have a holistic picture of the impact of my intervention. I am hoping to identify the key factors that contribute to students performing below age-level expectations in mathematics and discover effective and innovative teaching strategies (both in school and at home) that can make mathematics more

enjoyable and accessible and understand how children's mindsets toward mathematics can be positively shifted so they engage more confidently and successfully with the subject.

Keywords: below age-level expectations, innovative teaching strategies, inclusive education, pedagogical strategies, mathematics teaching.

Justice In Education as a child rights paradigm: Trends in EU secondary school systems

Presenter

Dzhurylo Alina, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

All authors

Dzhurylo Alina, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

This paper examines contemporary trends in the development of the concept of justice in general secondary education systems of European Union member states through a child rights-based paradigm. Grounded in international legal instruments, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the study conceptualizes educational justice not merely as equality of access, but as a multidimensional construct encompassing equity, inclusion, participation, and respect for children's dignity and agency within educational systems. The research draws on a comparative analysis of policy documents, strategic frameworks, and academic literature from selected EU countries to identify dominant trends in how child rights are integrated into understandings of justice in secondary education. Particular attention is paid to issues of inclusive education, non-discrimination, support for vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the balance between standardization and contextual responsiveness. The findings reveal a gradual shift from predominantly distributive models of justice towards more holistic approaches that embed child rights principles into educational governance, curriculum design, and school practices. The paper also highlights the critical role of academia in advancing this paradigm shift. Universities contribute by generating research-based evidence on educational inequalities, developing theoretical frameworks that align justice with child rights, and preparing future educators and policymakers to adopt rights-based approaches in practice. In this context, higher education institutions serve as key actors in translating child rights norms into educational policy and practice across Europe. By framing educational justice as a child rights paradigm, the study contributes to ongoing theoretical and policy-oriented discussions on the role of academia in promoting child rights. The findings underscore the need for stronger integration of child rights education within academic curricula and research agendas, as well as closer collaboration between universities, policymakers, and civil society to foster more just and rights-respecting secondary education systems in the European Union.

Keywords: child rights, educational justice, secondary education, European Union, role of academia.

From theory to practice on issues of gender and early marriage: educational strategies for raising awareness of child rights among future teachers in Cameroon.

Presenter

Medouga Mbala Félicité Victorine, University of Ngaoundéré, Department of Fundamental Teaching in Education, Cameroon

All authors

Medouga Mbala Félicité Victorine, University of Ngaoundéré, Department of Fundamental Teaching in Education, Cameroon

Early marriage remains a major obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5). In sub-Saharan Africa and Cameroon, early marriage still affects 31% of young girls nationally. This practice is fueled by asymmetrical gender norms and sociocultural constraints. The university, as a training space for future education executives, constitutes a strategic lever, but the teaching of children's rights often remains too abstract and disconnected from realities on the ground. How can we transform the theoretical teaching of children's rights into an ethical and operational skill for future education professionals? This research questions the effectiveness of current educational systems and explores how the Theory of Joint Action in Didactics (TACD) can help future professionals negotiate the conflict between legal standards, customary practices, and teachers' didactic practices (TDP). The methodology is based on collaborative and mixed research carried out in two teachers' training colleges (ENS) in Cameroon. It combines questionnaires, observations, and the experimentation of an innovative awareness-raising tool: the Embodying Rights Dilemma (ERD) based on the (TACD). The results show that traditional transmissive methods fail to deconstruct gender stereotypes. Conversely, the use of TACD promotes a co-construction of knowledge where the student learns to adjust their professional posture in the face of community resistance. The discussion highlights that the integration of the gender dimension is the determining factor for the future teacher to move from the status of passive observer to that of a child protection agent. And in conclusion, presents the need for a reform of university curricula integrating simulations based on joint action. The prospects suggest an extension of this model to continuing training programs for actors in the educational chain in the CEMAC zone to harmonize the fight against early marriage.

Keywords: joint action (TACD), gender, children's rights, university, didactic practices (PDE).

Online Child Sexual Abuse In The Gambia: The Motivating Factors: Child Protection Officers' Perspective (Case Study: Serekunda Tourism Development Areas)
Presenter

Bah Yahya Muhammed, Department of Sociology and Social Work, School of Arts and Sciences, University of The Gambia, The Gambia, West Africa.

All authors

Bah Yahya Muhammed, Department of Sociology and Social Work, School of Arts and Sciences, University of The Gambia, The Gambia, West Africa.

Digital technology has positively transformed the lives and living conditions of many people around the globe. However, studies have revealed some negative socio-economic, political, cultural, and environmental impacts. This case study was conducted to interrogate online child sexual abuse and exploitation in The Gambia, focusing on the motivating factors, techniques, negative impacts, victims and perpetrators support services, preventive strategies, and institutional collaboration. As per the findings to effectively address online child sexual abuse and exploitation, it requires: regular public sensitization, consistent law enforcement, rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators, strengthening and tough laws enactment, stringent code of conducts implementation, strict monitoring of the TDA and environment, rapid prosecution of perpetrators, long term jailing and black listing of perpetrators, strong national and international partnership, capacity building of institutions, responsible parenting promotion and practice, access to quality and relevant education for all children, budget allocation increment, child abuse inclusion in schools curriculum, poverty eradication, government blocking websites, installation of monitoring applications; and limiting internet access.

Key words: online, child, abuse, strategies, elimination, exploitation, perpetrators, tourism.

Child Leadership in Academic Research on children's rights

Presenter

Muradyan Mariam, Yerevan State University

All authors

Muradyan Mariam, Yerevan State University

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that children, without any age limitation and provided they can form their own views, have the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them (Lundy, 2007). The realization of this right requires that children be given meaningful opportunities to be heard. Laura Lundy's model of participation, structured around four key components—Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence—offers an analytical framework for assessing the implementation of this right. Within this framework, academia can be understood as an important space where children's voices may reach relevant audiences and engage a range of stakeholders. Collaborative research in this context may encompass a broad spectrum of approaches, ranging from knowledge brokering to curiosity-driven and policy-oriented research (Petticrew, 2006). However, many theoretical models of participatory research continue to position children primarily as passive participants, limiting their engagement as respondents of qualitative or quantitative studies. In contrast, the Global Campus Child Leadership Team (CLT) model introduces a more child-led research approach by engaging children in research processes while simultaneously strengthening their research capacities by adults and safeguarding ethical codes. Through this model, children are supported in participating in fully academic research processes: they contribute to the formulation of research questions, apply established methodologies or develop new methodological approaches, and investigate children's rights issues that affect them directly or impact their peers.

Keywords: child participation, collaborative research, child-led research, children's rights

Set A6 | 17:30 – 19:15 pm, Thursday 4th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Conflict, war zones, and child rights”

Framing Childhood in Conflict: A Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Children as Victims, Vocal Agents, and Vectors in Media on Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis.

Presenter

Maiwong Eric Dzeaye, Department of English, E.N.S., P. O. Box 47, Yaounde, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon, Africa.

All authors

Maiwong Eric Dzeaye, Department of English, E.N.S., P. O. Box 47, Yaounde, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon, Africa.

This sociolinguistic study critically examines how digital news media linguistically construct the identities and agencies of children within Cameroon's protracted 'Anglophone Crisis.' It addresses a significant gap in child rights research by interrogating the narratives that shape global and local policy responses. Moving beyond content analysis, the research employs a robust mixed-methods framework, integrating corpus linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis to dissect the ideological underpinnings of media reporting. The methodology builds two specialised corpora comprising approximately 1,000 recent digital news articles from leading Cameroonian and international outlets. Quantitative keyness and collocation analyses, conducted using AntConc, identify statistically significant linguistic patterns. Subsequent qualitative CDA performs close readings of salient texts, analysing metaphor, transitivity, and social actor representation to deconstruct discursive mechanisms. The analysis interrogates three potential frames: the passive 'victim' of humanitarian tragedy; the instrumentalised 'vector' within political and security discourses; and, crucially, the rarely acknowledged 'vocal agent' whose perspectives and participation are discursively marginalised. By empirically tracing how agency is grammatically assigned or withheld, this research makes visible the linguistic strategies that either recognise or negate children's communicative capacity. The findings offer rigorous, evidence-based insights for UNICEF, policymakers, and advocates, providing concrete recommendations for reframing media discourse to uphold children's right to expression and protection. This research underscores academia's role in critiquing knowledge production and advocating for linguistically just narratives in conflict.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, media framing, child agency, anglophone crisis, sociolinguistics.

Legal Insecurity Surrounding Children’s Rights in Cameroon Resulting from the Inconsistency Between Modern Law and Traditional Norms: Reflections on an Academic Solution.

Presenter

Bela Nyebe Simon Pierre, Ph/D Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaoundé², member of the Children's Rights Centre.

All authors

Bela Nyebe Simon Pierre, Ph/D Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaoundé², member of the Children's Rights Centre.

Introduction

What is a child? Modern law and traditional norms do not always share the same definition. Yet, from this definition flow the rights recognized for this category of persons to guarantee their security and well-being. The inconsistency between modern law and traditional norms increases the vulnerability of children, who are consequently exposed to legal insecurity. In a context marked by the limited consideration of traditional cultures within modern law and by tensions between the two systems, an exploration of both modern legal frameworks and traditional cultures—while situating the university at the intersection of these spheres—makes it possible to question the role that the university should play in developing a more suitable approach. What role can Cameroonian universities play in addressing legal insecurity surrounding children’s rights?

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted combines legal and socio-anthropological approaches, navigating between traditional law and modern legal systems.

Expected Results

- A nuanced understanding and contextualized teaching of children’s rights
- A coherent and structured development of legal texts protecting children’s rights
- Context-sensitive promotion and protection of children’s rights
- Contextualized public policies relating to children

Lessons Learned

Cameroonian universities constitute a foundational pillar for a renewed approach to the promotion and protection of children’s rights. The necessity of an inclusive approach in the drafting of legal instruments relating to children’s rights.

Keywords: legal insecurity, children's rights, traditional norms, modern law, protection.

The Child Soldier in Cameroonian Law: Between Facts and Jurisprudence.

Presenter

Chegno Adeline Rosine, PhD, Lecturer, Member of the Center for Children's Rights of the University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon.

All authors

Chegno Adeline Rosine, PhD Lecturer, Member of the Center for Children's Rights of the University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon.

The phenomenon of child soldiers, although less institutionalized in Cameroon than in some neighboring countries, remains a worrying reality in areas affected by Boko Haram and the sociopolitical crises in the Anglophone regions. This study focuses on how Cameroonian law addresses this issue, articulating observed facts with national jurisprudence. The main objective is to analyze the consistency between Cameroon's international commitments (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol of 2000, Rome Statute) and their transposition into domestic law and judicial practice, in order to determine whether the child soldier is primarily recognized as a victim or as a perpetrator of offenses. The research is based on a documentary and legal analysis of Cameroonian legislative texts, judicial decisions involving minors associated with Boko Haram, and a comparison with international jurisprudence (Lubanga, Ntaganda). The works of Mbandji Mbéna (2017), Ledoux (2015), and reports from CHRDA (2020) constitute the main theoretical and empirical sources. The study is expected to highlight a persistent tension between the desire to punish terrorist acts and the obligation to protect the child as a vulnerable subject. It will also reveal gaps in Cameroonian law regarding prevention and reintegration, while emphasizing the growing influence of international jurisprudence on local practices. The findings will allow for proposals of legislative and judicial reforms, particularly the harmonization of domestic norms with international commitments, and the strengthening of reintegration mechanisms.

Keywords. child soldier-domestic law-jurisprudence-child protection-international law.

Digitalising The Right to an Identity: Assessing the Efficacy of Community-Based Tech-Intermediaries in Executing Civil Status Reforms for Child Protection in Cameroon's Conflict-Affected Regions.

Presenter

Nkafor Fusih Germaine, University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon.

All authors

Nkafor Fusih Germaine, University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon.

In the conflict-affected Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, the right to identity is increasingly compromised. The ongoing security crisis has decimated physical civil status registration centers, leaving thousands of children legally invisible and at heightened risk of exploitation, recruitment, and statelessness. In response, Cameroon's Law No 2024/016 of 23rd December 2024, to Organise the Civil Registration System, prioritized digitalisation to bridge the documentation gap. However, the success of this reform relies on community-based tech-intermediaries, local actors who leverage mobile technology to navigate the last mile of registration. Consequently, this study assesses community-led digital interventions in restoring legal identity within Cameroon's conflict-affected regions. It evaluates how tech-intermediaries mitigate risks inherent in paper-based systems, such as the destruction of registers, while facilitating broader child protection. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research analyses UNICEF-supported digital initiatives in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Through key informant interviews and 2024–2025 electronic declaration metrics, it determines the efficacy of mobile technology in securing the right to identity for vulnerable children. Thus, preliminary results show that community-based tech-intermediaries significantly boost birth registration by bypassing administrative bottlenecks and insecurity. While digitalisation enhances data resilience, "connectivity deserts," low digital literacy, and surveillance risks in conflict zones remain major hurdles. The study concludes that digitalization's efficacy for child protection depends on "human-in-the-loop" community actors. It recommends a decentralized framework prioritising data privacy and local agency, ensuring digital identity serves as a functional gateway to safety rather than just a record.

Keywords: digitalisation, child protection, right to identity, civil status registration, community-based tech-intermediaries.

Contribution of the Child Rights Center of the University of Ngaoundéré in the fight against home births and the promotion of children's rights in the community

Presenter

Hourenatou,

All authors

Hourenatou

In the Ngaoundéré 3rd District Municipality, home births and low attendance at maternal health services persist, despite the existence of free mechanisms such as health vouchers. In 2022, data collected at the Dang District Hospital indicated an attendance rate of 83.96% at health facilities (FOSA) by pregnant women, while several cases of acute malnutrition in children under five were recorded. These shortcomings expose mothers to complications that can lead to maternal mortality and children to multiple violations of their fundamental rights, including malnutrition, non-declaration of births, and the transmission of diseases from mother to child. Since 2023, community initiatives have been carried out by the Ngaoundéré 3rd municipality to reduce risky home births while protecting children's rights, including awareness-raising with the support of traditional chiefs and Community Health Agents (ASC), educational talks with pregnant women, the purchase of health vouchers for vulnerable pregnant women... However, additional efforts remain necessary. It is in this context that the Centre for Children's Rights positions itself as a strategic actor in the implementation of an integrated intervention aimed at promoting childbirth in medical settings and the effective protection of children's rights in the community.

This article aims to analyze the contribution of the Child Rights Center in reducing home births and promoting children's rights. More specifically, it will seek to contribute to improving access for pregnant women to prenatal care, preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, increasing the rate of birth registration, and combating child malnutrition, highlighting the structuring role of the CRC in achieving these objectives.

With the scientific and operational support of the CRC, a participatory community-based approach will be implemented. It will initially rely on a situational analysis intended to identify the explanatory factors for pregnant women's non-attendance at health facilities. Based on this, the CRC will develop an integrated intervention strategy focused on strengthening the capacities of peer educators and leaders Community workers and community health agents for local awareness-raising and psychosocial support for pregnant women and the promotion of children's rights mainly in the community. Complementary actions will focus on training women on proper nutrition, urban farming, and birth registration, prioritizing remote areas and vulnerable groups, including indigenous and refugee populations. The data produced by the CDE on obstacles to birth

registration will help inform local policies in order to strengthen civil registration actions in the establishment of children's birth certificates.

The collaboration between the town hall and the CDE is expected to result in a significant increase in attendance at health centers for prenatal consultations and assisted deliveries. Improving access for vulnerable pregnant women to obstetric care and maternity kits will contribute to reducing home births and preserving the health of both mother and child. Furthermore, strengthened collaboration between the CDE, the town hall, and social services will facilitate the free registration of births for a greater number of children. Finally, the training of community relays and social workers by the CDE will help clarify issues regarding the protection of children's rights within the community. Additionally, the CDE's support in training good nutrition ambassadors will allow for the early identification and management of cases of child malnutrition, thereby strengthening the protection of the child's right to health.

Keywords: children's rights center, home birth, pregnant women, malnutrition, birth registration

Session B

11:00 am – 20:00 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | Faculty of Early Childhood and Education

Set B1 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Themi Campus

“Monitoring, evidence, centres, and university-community cooperation”

Child Rights Center at the University of Ioannina: Exploratory Trends among Students Regarding Children’s Rights and Their Teaching at University

Presenter

Stergiou Lida, University of Ioannina, Greece.

All authors

Stergiou Lida, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Barka Eleni, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Education on children’s rights, as a field of rights education (Bajaj, 2017), aims to cultivate attitudes, values, and skills that empower children as rights holders and as future active citizens (Tibbitts, 2023). Within this framework, teachers play a crucial role in fostering a democratic and participatory school climate, integrating children’s rights across the curriculum, and implementing practices that prevent exclusion and bullying (Fassoulis, 2017). Consequently, education on children’s rights is understood as a pedagogical approach that permeates the entire school experience and contributes to the development of active, responsible, and socially sensitive citizens (Keen et al., 2023). In higher education, the inclusion of courses on children’s rights in teacher education programs is considered essential for the professional development of future teachers (Osler & Starkey, 2010), as it equips them with the competencies required to apply children’s rights principles in educational practice. In this context, and as part of an initiative of the Child Rights Center at the University of Ioannina to design such a course, a study was conducted among 248 university students who are prospective teachers. The study explored: (a) students’ knowledge and perceptions of children’s rights; (b) the role they attribute to education in general, and to teachers in particular, in promoting and teaching children’s rights; and (c) their views on the necessity, content, and methodology of a university-level course on children’s rights. Quantitative data from a questionnaire were analyzed statistically, while qualitative data were examined using content analysis. The findings indicate a strong student interest in issues related to children’s rights and clear support for the introduction of a dedicated university course, highlighting the importance of integrating children’s rights education into teacher training programs.

Keywords: children’s rights, higher education, teacher education, university students.

Bridging Justice Gaps through University-Led Restorative Programs: The Child Rights Centre and LaHeRS Lab Initiative at Hellenic Mediterranean University

Presenter

Vagionaki Kyriaki, Laboratory of Health and Road Safety, Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece.

All authors

Vagionaki Kyriaki, Laboratory of Health and Road Safety, Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece.

Pedioti Nektaria, Laboratory of Health and Road Safety, Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece.

Toraki Marina, Laboratory of Health and Road Safety, Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece.

Papadakaki Maria, Laboratory of Health and Road Safety, Department of Social Work, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece.

Background: Amid rising juvenile delinquency in Greece, with incidents surging 48% in early 2024 (vs. 2023), arrests up 46%, and sharp increases in youth violence, theft/robbery, drugs, and weapons among 13-17-year-olds, the justice system faces punitive overload and scarce rehabilitative services. A critical gap persists in restorative justice offerings, limiting rights-based alternatives aligned with UNCRC principles (participation, protection, best interests, non-discrimination). The Child Rights Centre of the Hellenic Mediterranean University established under MoU with UNICEF Greece, address this by institutionalizing child rights in living, education, and development. Their aims include promoting child-friendly justice, reducing delinquency risks, and fostering equitable interventions through innovative university-community partnerships. Objectives: This abstract outlines LaHeRS Lab's pilot restorative justice counseling program for juvenile offenders, developed in collaboration with the Prosecutor's Office for Minors, under the auspices of HMU Child Rights Centre, merging professional counseling with social work training to deliver restorative justice services for youth and families at risk. Methods: Expert therapists mentor trainees serving at-risk youth, emphasizing emotional regulation, risk awareness, and reintegration. Results: From 2023-2025, the program addressed diverse prevalent Greek juvenile offenses through tailored interventions, yielding improved empathy, coping skills, and family reconnection among participants. Trainees enhanced child-centered competencies, while stakeholders reported high satisfaction amid service voids. Bolstered by UNICEF's support for scaling rights-based models, the university-justice synergy ensures sustainability via curriculum embedding and policy advocacy. Conclusions: HMU's Child Rights Centre and LaHeRS Lab, empowered by UNICEF Greece, uniquely bridge academic expertise with prosecutorial needs, pioneering restorative justice to mitigate delinquency trends and justice gaps. This collaboration advances child rights, promotes

healthy development, and models scalable countermeasures—reducing recidivism risks through empathy-driven justice—urging national adoption for equitable youth outcomes.

Keywords: juvenile delinquency, counseling program, restorative justice.

Competences of Future Early Childhood Educators for Implementing Children's Rights in Educational Practice

Presenter

Stepić Gordana, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia.

All authors

Stepić Gordana, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia.

Milanović Nedeljko, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia.

Popović Daliborka, State University of Novi Pazar, Serbia.

Josijević Mitić Jelena, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia.

Children's rights are clearly defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and are integrated into normative and curricular documents of preschool education in the Republic of Serbia. Accordingly, preschool teachers are expected to respect children's rights not only through their knowledge, but also through understanding and applying rights-based approaches, while initial teacher education is expected to develop students' competences in this domain as part of their overall professional competences. In order to consider possible directions for improving education in this field, the aim of the study was to determine the extent to which students developed competences for realizing children's rights in educational practice during their initial education. The study involved 130 students -future preschool teachers in their second, third, and fourth years of study- enrolled at two different universities. Survey and scaling techniques were employed. The results indicate that students generally assess their competences for realizing children's rights as partially developed. Regarding the examined areas, they report well-developed competences in the domain of protection from violence, abuse, and neglect, as well as in participation and civic rights, while they assess their competences as only partially developed in the areas of applying rights-based approaches in the actual kindergarten curriculum, acting in the best interests of the child, and protection from discrimination. Statistically significant differences were found between students from different universities, as well as across years of study (with higher levels of study associated with higher self-assessments of competence) and levels of academic achievement (higher grade point averages corresponded to higher self-assessments). On the other hand, no statistically significant differences were identified in relation to place of residence or parents' educational level. The findings confirm the importance of initial preschool teacher education and of curriculum orientation toward developing competences for realizing children's rights in educational practice, as well as the need for their further enhancement, which may be regarded as an important pedagogical implication of the study.

Keywords: children's rights, early childhood education, future preschool teachers, initial teacher education, professional competences.

From Teaching Children's Rights to Recognising Students' Rights: Rethinking Autonomy in Higher Education

Presenter

Somolanji Tokić Ida, Faculty of Education, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.

All authors

Somolanji Tokić Ida, Faculty of Education, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.

Borovac Tijana, Faculty of Education, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.

Bučević Petra, Faculty of Education, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.

This paper explores a central paradox in children's rights education in higher education. While universities increasingly position children's rights as an ethical and curricular commitment, it questions whether the academic environments in which future early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals are educated also recognise them as autonomous subjects of rights. The study moves beyond questions of teaching methods toward an inquiry that emerged through the research process itself, examining how rights are understood, experienced, and enacted within the university. It examines how higher education promotes children's rights not only through what it teaches but through how educational relationships are structured and experienced. Its primary contribution is to foreground reflexive engagement with power as a necessary condition for democratic, humanistic, and rights-consistent higher education. Informed by Deleuze–Guattarian philosophy and post-qualitative inquiry, the paper engages an ongoing qualitative study with pre-service ECEC educators, adopting a rhizomatic methodological orientation to trace how meanings emerge through students' encounters with pedagogical materials. Initially conceptualised as an exploration of pedagogical materials and shifting perspectives in students' engagement with content, the research process unfolded rhizomatically, giving rise to an unanticipated critical event that redirected the analytical focus toward the relational dynamics of power embedded in academic teaching. The persistent presence of teacher authority during these encounters reframed guidance as a potential form of governance, prompting a critical question central to this paper: can higher education move from teaching rights to truly recognising ECEC students' rights if learning remains structured by assessment, control, and linear expectations? Rather than serving merely as instructional tools, course materials functioned as vessels through which questions of autonomy, authority, and participation were examined. From a critical pedagogy and rights-based perspective, the paper concludes that autonomy cannot be understood as the absence of structure, but as a relational and negotiated practice requiring explicit acknowledgement of power.

Keywords: autonomy, higher education, ECEC students, power, rhizomatic.

From Ratification to Institutionalization: Child Rights Education in Greek Higher Education

Presenter

Kostoglou Liara Eirini, International Hellenic University (IHU), Greece.

All authors

Kostoglou Liara Eirini, International Hellenic University (IHU), Greece.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989 and formally accepted by Greece in 1993 (Hellenic Republic, 2009), provides a binding international framework for the protection and promotion of children's rights. Despite this commitment, the extent to which child rights have been systematically incorporated into undergraduate programs in preschool and early childhood education varies across institutions. This paper examines the structural integration of child rights into teacher education curricula in Greece, analyzing the presence, organization, and emphasis of courses dedicated to child rights within higher education programs. Evidence from curriculum documents indicates that while some programs include dedicated courses, others embed related topics within broader subjects or provide only limited coverage, resulting in uneven preparation for future educators. This disparity highlights the partial institutionalization of child rights education, suggesting that formal acceptance of the CRC alone does not ensure comprehensive academic implementation. In light of these findings, the study discusses potential frameworks for more consistent integration, including a proposed structure for a standardized child rights course that could be adapted across institutions. Such a framework emphasizes a multi-disciplinary approach, combining legal, pedagogical, and social perspectives, and includes modules on core rights, participatory practices, and practical applications in educational settings. By reflecting on current curricular practices and suggesting constructive measures, this paper contributes to the discourse on enhancing the role of academia in fostering awareness and competence in child rights. Ultimately, advancing children's rights in professional practice requires not only formal legal commitment but also deliberate academic strategies that ensure these principles are systematically embedded in teacher education.

Keywords: child rights, higher education, institutionalization, curriculum, Greece.

Set B2 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Health and child rights perspectives”

Physical Activity, Self-Esteem, and Quality of Life in Children with Thyroid Disorders: Clinical and Child Rights Perspectives

Presenter

Gavriilidou Maria, PhD Candidate, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Greece.

All authors

Gavriilidou Maria, PhD Candidate, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Greece.

Chorti Angeliki, General Surgeon, PhD, School of Medicine, AUTH, Postdoctoral Researcher, 1st Propaedeutic Surgical Clinic, AHEPA University Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Papaioannou Maria, Professor, Department of Biochemistry-Molecular Biology, Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany, Post-doc and research experience in Human Genetics and Medical Biology Institutes in Germany, NASA fellowship, visiting scientist at Jena University Hospital, Germany.

Koidou Irimi, Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Serres, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Papavramidis Theodosios, Professor of Surgery, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, AHEPA University Hospital and Euromedica, Greece.

This presentation examines the relationship between physical activity, self-esteem, and quality of life in children, with a focus on those with thyroid and metabolic disorders. Adopting a clinical and child rights-based approach, it emphasizes the importance of safe, inclusive, and evidence-based physical activity, as well as the role of higher education institutions in research, professional training, and public health policy development. The study employs a mixed-methods approach combining secondary quantitative data analysis with a targeted review of international literature. Quantitative data derive from Gavriilidou (2012), including 519 primary and secondary school students. Physical activity levels were assessed using the Godin and Shepherd questionnaire, self-esteem with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and quality of life using Raphael et al.'s instrument. A literature review examined international evidence and clinical guidelines on exercise management in children with thyroid disorders. Results indicate a positive correlation between regular physical activity, higher self-esteem, and improved quality of life. However, children with inadequately controlled thyroid conditions require individualized exercise prescriptions and ongoing clinical monitoring. Furthermore, combining tailored exercise with nutritional support appears to reduce fatigue, anxiety, and psychosocial burden. In conclusion, tailored physical activity represents a key pillar of holistic care for children with thyroid disorders, enhancing psychosocial development, quality of life, and the realization of child rights in health and

participation. Higher education institutions play a central role in knowledge production, training specialized professionals, and supporting evidence-based health policies.

Keywords: pediatric thyroid disorders, physical activity, self-esteem, quality of life, child rights.

Embedding Children’s Rights in Pediatric Nursing Education: From Hospital- Based Research to Curriculum Innovation in Greece

Presenter

Manomenidis Georgios, Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

All authors

Manomenidis Georgios, Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Georgousopoulou Vasiliki, Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Higher education institutions play a critical role in promoting, institutionalizing, and sustaining child rights within health systems. Building on hospital-based research on the respect and implementation of children’s rights in pediatric settings in Greece, this presentation describes how empirical findings were translated into concrete changes in undergraduate and postgraduate pediatric nursing education. First, key gaps identified in previous studies such as limited awareness of children’s rights frameworks, inconsistent participation of children in decisions, and variability in pain management and communication were mapped onto the existing pediatric nursing curriculum. A curriculum-mapping exercise, followed by faculty workshops, led to the integration of child rights content across lectures, skills labs and clinical placements. Second, innovative teaching strategies were developed, including simulation scenarios focused on informed assent, communication with children of different ages, parental presence, and advocacy in ethically challenging situations. These were aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EACH Charter and embedded in assessment rubrics. Preliminary evaluation using student reflections and short questionnaires suggests improved awareness of children’s rights, greater confidence in involving children in decisions, and a more explicit advocacy role assumed by nursing students in clinical practice. This case study highlights how academia can leverage research on children’s experiences in hospitals to redesign nursing education, moving from fragmented references to child rights towards a coherent, rights-based, and compassion-oriented pediatric nursing curriculum. Implications for interprofessional education and hospital university partnerships are discussed.

Keywords: children’s rights, pediatric nursing, curriculum, simulation, advocacy.

Greek Midwives' Knowledge of Child Maltreatment and the Impact of an Educational Intervention

Presenter

Theodoridou Eleni, PhD, School of Health Sciences, Midwifery Department, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece

All authors

Theodoridou Eleni, PhD, School of Health Sciences, Midwifery Department, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece

Sachlas Athanasios, Assistant Professor, School of Science, Department of Computer Science and Biomedical Informatics, University of Thessaly, Lamia, Greece.

Soldatou Alexandra, Professor, Medical School, National and Kapodistrian University, Athens, Greece.

Vivilaki Victoria, Professor, School of Health Care Sciences, Midwifery Department, West Attica University, Athens, Greece.

Antonakou Angeliki, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, Midwifery Department, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Background: Child maltreatment constitutes a major public health concern worldwide, with profound consequences for children's physical, psychological, and social well-being. It is estimated that nearly 400 million children globally are affected by some form of abuse or neglect (WHO, 2024). Midwives occupy a strategic position within maternal and child health services and are therefore well placed to contribute to the early identification and prevention of child maltreatment (NMC, 2019, RCN, 2019, HM Government, 2023). However, existing evidence suggests that midwives often demonstrate insufficient knowledge and confidence in recognizing indicators and risk factors of child abuse, which may hinder effective safeguarding practices. **Aim:** The present study sought to assess the level of knowledge among Greek midwives regarding child abuse and neglect (CAN) and to examine the effectiveness of a structured educational intervention aimed at enhancing their ability to identify signs, symptoms, and associated risks of child maltreatment. **Methods:** The study included 493 registered midwives practicing in Greece. Participants provided sociodemographic information and completed the Scale for the Identification of Symptoms and Risks of Child Abuse and Neglect (SISRCAN), which evaluates knowledge and awareness related to CAN (Theodoridou et al., 2025). A subgroup of 96 midwives subsequently participated in a three-hour educational program focused on child abuse and neglect. Data were collected at three time points: before the intervention, immediately following completion, and six months post-intervention. **Results:** Mean SISRCAN scores demonstrated a statistically significant increase from baseline (242.80 ± 26.65) to immediately after the educational session (291.23 ± 23.26 ; $p < 0.001$). Although a

reduction was observed at the six-month follow-up (277.79 ± 26.81), scores remained significantly higher than pre-intervention levels ($p < 0.001$). The significant difference between post-intervention and follow-up scores ($p < 0.001$) indicates a partial decline in retained knowledge over time. Conclusion: The findings indicate that targeted educational interventions can substantially improve Greek midwives' knowledge of child abuse and neglect. To ensure sustained competence and effective child protection, ongoing education in CAN should be incorporated into both undergraduate and postgraduate midwifery curricula. Additionally, health policy initiatives should support continuous professional development in this critical area of practice.

Keywords: child maltreatment, knowledge, midwives, educational intervention, SISRCAN.

Beyond Discipline: Aligning School- Wide Positive Behavior Supports with the Fundamental Children Rights

Presenter

Markou Anastasios, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, 57400Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Markou Anastasios, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, 57400Thessaloniki, Greece.

Grammatikopoulos Vasilis, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, 57400Thessaloniki, Greece.

Evangelou-Tsitiridou Maria, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, 57400Thessaloniki, Greece.

Tsigilis Nikolaos, Department of Journalism and Mass Media Communication, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Panepistioumioupoli, 54124 Thessaloniki, Greece | College of Education, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain P.O. Box 15551, United Arab Emirates.

Vatou Anastasia, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, 57400Thessaloniki, Greece.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) framework aims to promote prevention, well-being, and inclusive educational environments (Glariana, 2022) by cultivating positive behaviors (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019) and investigating correlations between school climate and responsive disciplinary practices (Kincaid & Horner, 2017). Research demonstrates substantial evidence of its effectiveness in promoting prosocial behavior and emotional functioning (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Karlberg et al., 2024; McIntosh et al., 2011). Large-scale trials confirm that SWPBS yields meaningful improvements in social competencies (Borgen et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2025). As a multi-tiered framework designed to prevent behavioral problems (Corbin et al., 2022), it reduces exclusionary discipline practices disproportionately affecting marginalized children (Fleming et al., 2023). Given that early behavioral problems constitute significant risk factors (Scheithauer et al., 2022), the framework prioritizes social-emotional competence in early childhood (Blewitt et al., 2021; Rakap & Balkc, 2025) to mitigate educator stress (Obee et al., 2023). Utilizing longitudinal data from the ProW project across 33 ECEC settings in Thessaloniki, this study investigates the behavioral evolution of 1,231 children (aged 3–6) and 113 educators. Since individuals are nested within groups, multilevel data analysis was employed (Finch & Bolin, 2017) to rigorously examine the triadic interplay between school climate, educators, and children. Through repeated measures over two years, the research seeks to disentangle causal directionality between educator influence and climate formation. SWPBS is fundamentally aligned with the protection of children's rights by establishing predictable, supportive and rights-respecting school

systems. Current implementation reveals positive children outcomes (Vatou et al., 2025) and utilizes positive climate as a well-being mediator (Olivar et al., 2025). By replacing punitive discipline (Alasmari & Althaqafi, 2021) with restorative approaches (Han et al., 2024), SWPBS advances non-discrimination (Stark et al., 2021) and nurturing care (Garner & Yogman, 2021). Minimizing exclusion (Horner & Macaya, 2018), it strengthens protective factors (Duque et al., 2021) and promotes Social-Emotional Learning (Frazier & Fosco, 2024), fostering psychologically safe contexts (Mori et al., 2021; Pervez & Galea, 2024).

Keywords: school-wide positive behavioral supports (SWPBS), children's rights, mental health promotion, well-being, prosocial skills.

What do we know about Child Rights in Healthcare? A literature review.

Presenter

Papantoniou Grigorios, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Papantoniou Grigorios, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Panagopoulou Paraskevi, 4th Department of Paediatrics, Papageorgiou General Hospital, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Papadopoulou Despina, Department of Linguistics, School of Philology, Child Rights Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Tsimtsiou Zoi, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Child Rights Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Child rights should be respected in clinical practice, to provide equitable, safe, and child-centered healthcare. This literature review aimed to explore the child rights associated with healthcare provision, in order to identify needs for healthcare professionals' education. According to our findings, children have the right to access and receive health services without discrimination, with respect to confidentiality and privacy. They should receive relevant and age-appropriate information, express their views and participate in shared decision-making, which should primarily consider their needs and best interests. Parental presence should be secured at all times, unless otherwise indicated, and young patients should continue enjoying play and education when hospitalized, while protected from unnecessary admissions. Also, protocols for identification, reporting, referral, and treatment of child abuse, violence and neglect should be rigorously implemented. Healthcare professionals could play pivotal role in supporting child rights in health services. However, barriers to implementation can be identified in terms of lack of awareness and misconceptions about legislation, limited resources, excessive workload, and variability in their perceptions regarding children's ability to participate in decision-making. A variety of educational programs have been described in literature, focusing on healthcare professionals' competences, most of them researching specific aspects of child rights. In conclusion, children's best interests in healthcare need to be secured, and further development of comprehensive educational interventions aligned with the right-lens approach needs to be prioritized. Academia should focus on research on the development of comprehensive concepts of rights, on exploring relevant health professionals' learning needs, as well as on developing holistic, learner-centered training programs, ensuring that children receive the healthcare they deserve, adhered to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A PhD thesis has been initiated in

the School of Medicine of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, aiming to respond to these needs within the Greek context.

Keywords: child rights, healthcare services, continuing medical education, paediatrics.

Integrating Child Rights into Postgraduate Public Health Education: A Workshop-Based Approach

Presenter

Papantoniou Grigorios, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Papantoniou Grigorios, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Tsimtsiou Zoi, Department of Hygiene, Social-Preventive Medicine and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, Child Rights Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Papadopoulou Despina, Department of Linguistics, School of Philology, Child Rights Center, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Integrating the concept of “child rights” in postgraduate education is an important step towards expanding academia’s role in promoting child rights. We describe the delivery of the first workshop on “Child Rights and Public Health” at postgraduate level at the School of Medicine of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), within the curriculum of the Master program (MSc) “Social-Preventive Medicine and Quality in Health Care”. The workshop was developed and facilitated by the coordinator of the AUTH Child Rights Center, and a PhD candidate on child rights in healthcare. Its aim was to enhance students’ awareness of child rights and their relevance to healthcare services and public health. Ten postgraduate students from diverse educational and working backgrounds participated. The intervention began with an introduction to child rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), underscoring its four core principles. Participants were then divided into two multi-disciplinary groups and were provided with a copy of the UNCRC, and a clinical scenario depicting potential violations of children’s rights by healthcare professionals and/or parents/caregivers. Participants were invited to discuss the implications for children’s feelings, voice, health and well-being, as well as the role and responsibility of healthcare professionals, and were encouraged to identify the rights potentially violated, according to the UNCRC. Each group then presented their case analysis and in-group reflections. The workshop concluded with a brief presentation on the link between child rights and public health, focusing on the best interests of the child, respect for children’s views, access to healthcare, and family guidance and unity. Students’ feedback reflected the importance of the topic and the existence of misconceptions regarding child rights in healthcare, highlighting the need for integration of such initiatives in academic curricula.

Keywords: case study, child rights, curriculum, healthcare services, postgraduate education, public health, workshop.

Set B3 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Multilingual rights and language practices”

Between Corrections and Connections: Balancing Error-correction and Socio-Emotional Development for EAL learners in Mainstream Schools.

Presenter

Feisal Fauzia, University of East London, U.K.

All authors

Feisal Fauzia, University of East London, U.K.

Emotionally attuned error correction (EC) is widely recognised as pedagogically effective in mainstream classrooms; however, its consistent enactment is constrained by a structural paradox. Its success relies heavily on teachers' personal, unsupported emotional labour rather than systemic institutional support. This case study addresses this gap by examining how English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers balance EC with learners' socio-emotional needs in diverse classrooms. Framed by Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) and Compassion-Based Language Education (CBLE), the study triangulates survey data (N=37) and semi-structured interviews (N=14) to explore classroom practice. Findings reveal that teachers commonly employ recasting and explicit feedback (n=32 each), often complemented by multimodal and peer scaffolding, forming a Contextual Correction (CC) model. CC, a compassion-based approach, supports learners' progression from the Zone of Silence (ZfS) to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by prioritising emotional well-being (RQ1). Mediating factors, including teacher mindset, empathy, well-being, parental involvement, and learners' affective and linguistic states, critically shape EC effectiveness (RQ2). Structural antagonists (large class sizes, time pressure, and limited resources) intensify dependence on teachers' emotional labour, rendering compassionate practice unsustainable (RQ3). The study validates the CC model as a necessary pedagogical framework: a flexible, layered blend of strategies capable of addressing the complex cognitive and socio-emotional demands of EAL learners. The study rejects the universal one-strategy-fits-all paradigm, advocating for compassion-based, context-sensitive scaffolding as the only viable implementation route. These findings offer empirical and conceptual insights that can inform teacher practice and educational policy, providing a roadmap for embedding compassion-based EC sustainably within mainstream EAL education.

Keywords: EAL learners - EAL(s), error correction (EC), mainstream schools, socio-emotional development (SED), zone of proximal development (ZPD), zone of silence (ZfS).

Schooling, family language practices, and children's literacy rights in bi-/multilingual contexts.

Presenter

Kouki Eleni, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

All authors

Kouki Eleni, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Dosi Ifigeneia, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

This study aims to examine how different schooling types and levels of home language support shape children's right to quality, equitable, and linguistically responsive education, focusing on the literacy practices of bilingual and multilingual children in Greece who experience varied exposure to Greek, Turkish, and/or Pomak across school and family environments. Grounded in research on multilingual literacy development (Cummins, 2000; García & Wei, 2014) and children's linguistic rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and drawing on work that underscores the role of home language support (Kenner, 2004; Baker, 2011) and school structures in Thrace, the study explores how these contexts jointly influence opportunities for multilingual learning. To investigate these issues, we administered a child-friendly questionnaire to three groups of primary students (N = 60; aged 9–12): children in minority schools with relatively balanced exposure to Greek and Turkish, those in minority schools where daily linguistic experience is strongly dominated by Turkish, and children in intercultural schools where Greek is the sole language of instruction. The findings indicate that schooling patterns and family practices interact to generate distinct multilingual pathways in literacy development: Pomak-speaking children receive active family support in both Greek and Turkish, facilitating balanced bilingual development; Greek–Turkish bilingual children whose home practices are dominated by Turkish rely on schooling as the main source of Greek input and literacy, while Turkish is largely maintained orally. Across profiles, school and family shape access to linguistic input in different ways, highlighting the compensatory function of schools when the home language is not the language of wider society and raising questions about whether current educational environments uphold children's linguistic rights to participation, inclusion, and equal learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2017).

Keywords: child rights, literacy practices, minority education, bilingualism, language and education policy.

Exercising Multilingual Rights in Serbia: Primary Learners' Plurilingual Agency.

Presenter

Savić Vera, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, University of Kragujevac, Serbia.

All authors

Savić Vera, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, University of Kragujevac, Serbia.

Mihajlović Aleksandra, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, University of Kragujevac, Serbia.

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), current laws and bylaws in Serbia guarantee members of national minorities the right to education in their native language from preschool to secondary education, but also requires mandatory studying of the Serbian language as the official language of the country. The paper explores language use of upper primary multilingual learners in multiethnic classes in Serbia, with a special focus on how learners' plurilingual agency develops in and out of school. The participants were 69 learners, aged 11-15, drawn from three schools in multiethnic contexts, their native languages being Serbian (65%), Hungarian (23%) and Ruthenian (12%). The multilingual school context also involved learning two foreign languages. To investigate the dynamics of the participants' use of native, official (L2) and foreign languages, we administered an online survey with closed and open-ended questions. The results showed that the participants actively utilised up to six languages. They fully exercised their multilingual rights by freely using their diverse linguistic repertoires, meaningfully shaping their plurilingual agency by participating in a variety of activities and learning opportunities in the classroom and beyond (Mercer, 2011). These involved communication with peers and family, investigation on the internet, social media interactions, watching films, and reading books. Although the dominant language in the school context was Serbian, the participants also reported frequent purposeful utilisation of native and foreign languages (Piccardo, 2016). However, when exercising their plurilingual agency, they experienced affective barriers such as anger, sadness and anxiety caused by inability to understand their peers' messages in another language or to make themselves understood (Aubrey, 2022). In conclusion, by navigating their multilingual repertoires, the participants asserted their right to multilingualism but needed support to overcome the barriers to fully exercising their plurilingual agency. The key implication of these results is the need to raise teachers' awareness of their own role in promoting learners' more positive affective experiences in utilising their multilingual resources.

Keywords: child's right to multilingualism, plurilingual agency, native language, Serbian as L2, affective barriers.

Set B4 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Child rights literacy & teacher preparation”

Learning by Doing Children's Rights: Commons-Based and Freinet-Inspired Pedagogies in Teacher Education

Presenter

Pantazidis Stelios, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece.

All authors

Pantazidis Stelios, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece.

This paper explores how commons-based and Freinet-inspired pedagogical practices contribute to the enactment of children's rights by bolstering children's agency and participatory capacities in educational settings. Instead of treating children's rights as a fixed normative framework or a legal principle to be implemented, the presentation conceptualizes rights as lived and relational practices that are produced through everyday pedagogical interactions, shared responsibilities and collective decision-making. In this perspective, Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is approached as the right to participate meaningfully in shaping the social and pedagogical conditions of learning. At a theoretical level, commoning and Freinet-inspired pedagogies are discussed as complementary but distinct educational orientations. Commoning is conceptualized as a relational process through which educational life is organized around shared decision-making, collective responsibility, and practices of care, solidarity, and mutual recognition (Pechtelidis & Kioupkiolis, 2020). Within this framework, participation is understood as a collective and situated social practice rather than a formal or procedural right. Freinet pedagogy is approached as a child-centered, cooperative and experiential educational tradition that understands learning as emerging from meaningful work, lived experience, and collective inquiry. Many educators encounter this approach through concrete techniques and only later engage with its theoretical foundations, thus reversing the more common pedagogical trajectory from theory to practice (Pantazidis & Moisiadou, 2025). This practice-first orientation grounds theory in lived classroom realities and aligns pedagogical knowledge with processes of experimentation, reflection and collective sense-making. Drawing on a qualitative research design, the study examines how these pedagogical ideas are interpreted, embodied, and reworked within teacher education through focus groups with future teachers who engaged in experiential pedagogical practices. The empirical analysis explores how participants negotiate the implications of commons-based and Freinet-inspired pedagogies for their professional identities, and how they grapple with the tensions between participatory educational practices and deeply internalized schooling norms.

Keywords: commoning, freinet pedagogy, agency, article 12, professional learning.

Empowering Future Teachers: Assessing the Impact of Child Rights Literacy on First-Year Education Students

Presenter

Tzifopoulos Menelaos, University of Western Macedonia, Greece.

All authors

Tzifopoulos Menelaos, University of Western Macedonia, Greece.

Korosidou Eleni, University of Western Macedonia, Greece.

Evmorfia Kipouropoulou, University of Western Macedonia, Greece.

The integration of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into early teacher education is a fundamental prerequisite for a rights-based educational system (Vandenbroeck & Bie, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 2017). This international legal framework is guided by four pillar principles: Non-Discrimination (Art. 2), the Best Interests of the Child (Art. 3), the Right to Life, Survival, Development (Art. 6), and Respect for the Views of the Child (Art. 12) (Reyanert et al., 2009). Grounding its inquiry in these principles, this study examines the level of awareness and the transformative impact of a targeted educational intervention on 178 first-year students from the Departments of Early Childhood and Primary Education at the University of Western Macedonia in Greece. The research employed a mixed-methods pre-test/post-test design to investigate baseline knowledge and capture evolving perceptions of child rights. Key findings indicate that while first-year students possess a strong ethical foundation, they initially lack technical legal knowledge and frequently harbor misconceptions regarding the Convention's binding nature. Post-intervention data revealed a significant shift in pedagogical thinking, as students moved from viewing children as passive objects of protection to active subjects of rights. Furthermore, the study identifies a diverse range of student-proposed pedagogical innovations, including participatory workshops, creative arts-based sensitization, and the use of ICT for rights advocacy. The results underscore the necessity of placing child rights on the academic agenda at the onset of university studies. By bridging the gap between ethical intent and practical literacy, academia can empower future teachers to serve as primary human rights defenders. These findings strongly advocate for the mandatory inclusion of child rights modules in university curricula to ensure the effective implementation of the UNCRC in national educational settings (Vilca & Yucra, 2025).

Keywords: first-year students, UNCRC, child rights literacy, pedagogical strategies, University of Western Macedonia-Greece.

Discussing about the child rights in West Africa with Greek prospective teachers

Presenter

Magos Kostas, University of Thessaly, Greece.

All authors

Magos Kostas, University of Thessaly, Greece.

Having recently returned from an educational journey to Ghana, I had the opportunity to see, discuss and learn about the lives and rights of children in this country and in West Africa in general. Given the country's poor economic situation, the ever-increasing inflation, the great social inequalities, the significant influx of immigrants from neighboring countries and other issues, the human rights issues, and much more the provision of a humane life for all citizens of the country, do not seem to be a priority. Children, who are a large part of the country's population, as the average number of children per family is four, constitute one of the most vulnerable population groups. Child labor is commonplace for the majority of children, while a significant number of them, especially in large cities, live under extremely problematic conditions. In the context of an academic course at the Department of Early Childhood Education of the University of Thessaly, I discussed the experiences, thoughts, images and emotions from my journey to Ghana with students-teacher candidates. The main aim of this discussion was to explore their perceptions on that specific topic and to mobilize intercultural awareness and empathy. A finding of the discussion was that the relevant perceptions of the majority of students fall into the well-known 'intercultural' traps of both exoticism and pity. Accordingly, stereotypical perceptions of Africans were frequently expressed, attributing responsibility for their situation to themselves, while students' knowledge on issues about colonialism was particularly limited. As a result of the above discussion, it is proposed to enrich the curriculum of the Departments of Education with subjects that concern the past, present and future of the African continent, the relationship of its cultures with those of other regions of the world, the daily life and rights of African children and other related issues. Another reason for the introduction of the above courses, seminars etc., is that the number of immigrant African students in Greek schools is not small, while the knowledge of teachers about the place of origin of these students is significantly limited.

Keywords: child rights, West Africa, prospective teachers.

Children’s Rights Attitudes in Preservice Teachers: Democratic Beliefs and Human Rights Education Exposure

Presenter

Lipourli Eleni, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

All authors

Lipourli Eleni, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Papanastasiou Emmy, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Maass Anne, New York University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The present cross-sectional, multi-country study examines the relationship between prospective teachers’ democratic beliefs about classroom life (principles of equality, freedom, and justice) and their attitudes toward children’s rights. This relationship is important because such beliefs can shape everyday classroom decisions that either support or undermine students’ participation, dignity, and non-discrimination. Potential moderators of this relationship will be also tested, culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and exposure to human rights education training. Data will be collected in 3 countries from preservice teachers enrolled in teacher education programs, recruited through universities and student networks (target $N \geq 200$ per country) via an anonymous online questionnaire. Democratic beliefs will be measured with the Democratic Teacher Belief Scale (DTBS; Equality, Freedom, Justice. Schechtman, 2002). Attitudes toward children’s rights will be assessed with a validated children’s rights attitude scale (Covel & Howe 2001). Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy will be measured with the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scale (CRTSE, Siwatu, 2007), and HRE training exposure will be operationalized as a brief index capturing coursework participation, hours, recency, and coverage of key rights-based pedagogical content. All measures will be translated using forward–back translation. Main hypotheses will be tested using regression controlling for key demographics and program characteristics. It is expected that stronger democratic beliefs will relate to more favorable attitudes toward children’s rights, and that this association will be stronger among preservice teachers with higher culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and greater HRE training exposure.

Keywords: democratic beliefs, children’s rights, self-efficacy, human rights education

Child rights: Professors' capacity building and professional development

Presenter

Tavdgiridze Lela, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

All authors

Tavdgiridze Lela, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

Sherozia Nato, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

Doborjginidze Dali, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia.

The protection and promotion of child rights is one of the priorities of the modern educational landscape, and academics play an important role as they shape the value systems of future generations. This paper addresses the issue of empowering and strengthening the capacity of academics to teach child rights in line with established standards and good practices, with the support of UNICEF. It discusses the challenges academics face; the role and the impact of the professional development programmes on the quality, and the role of the University in creating a child-oriented environment. A special attention is paid to the initiatives of UNICEF supporting Batumi State University to strengthen the effectiveness of teaching child rights. The research covered academics from four Georgian higher education institutions and employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was conducted in three stages: an online survey, focus group interviews, and thematic and statistical analysis of the collected data. The research revealed that the teaching of child rights is not only an academic necessity but also a social obligation. The majority of professors acknowledge the importance of teaching child rights; however, they also highlight a lack of methodological resources, especially in the Georgian language. Various trainings, workshops, and working meetings on topics such as child rights, inclusion, and equality, supported by UNICEF Georgia and the Council of Europe, put on the agenda the integration of the course "child rights" not only into the curricula of the legal studies but into humanities and social science as well. It has also significantly raised the readiness of the academics to explore further child rights related issues. Based on the findings and outcomes of the research, the authors have developed recommendations that include the introduction of long-term modules for the professional development of academics in line with UNICEF standards, the creation of a pool of real-life cases and relevant methodological literature in Georgian, and strengthened cooperation between academia and international organizations aimed at developing new educational programmes and facilitating experience sharing. Professional development of the academics in the area of child rights is a key guarantee to create a child oriented and safe environment.

Keywords: child rights, professional development, academics, higher education.

Children's Rights at the Center of the Teaching Practicum of Students of the Department of Preschool Education, University of Crete

Presenter

Vretudaki Hellen, University of Crete, Greece

All authors

Vretudaki Hellen, University of Crete, Greece

In a global context characterized by persistent violations of human rights, children's rights are frequently marginalized within educational and social discourse. Education, however, plays a crucial role in promoting and safeguarding these rights by fostering awareness, critical thinking, reflection, and active student participation within the broader framework of active citizenship. This study presents an educational initiative implemented at the University of Crete as part of the teaching practicum of students enrolled in the Department of Preschool Education. The initiative aimed to sensitize students to children's rights through the pedagogical use of illustrated children's literature. The design and implementation of the initiative were structured around six key methodological components: (a) systematic engagement of university students with selected illustrated children's books; (b) conceptual alignment of the values and thematic content of each literary work with fundamental children's rights; (c) direct interaction between students and the authors of the selected books; (d) collective critical reflection involving authors and students, leading to the development of pedagogical interpretations and proposals based on the semiotic resources of both the textual and visual elements of the books; (e) the design of classroom activities emphasizing children's cognitive, verbal, and physical engagement; and (f) the implementation of these activities, followed by reflective evaluation of the anticipated learning outcomes for children. The findings highlight the potential of children's literature as a powerful pedagogical tool for integrating children's rights education into early childhood teacher education and practice.

Keywords: children's rights, preschool, children literature, teaching practicum.

Set B5 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Themi Campus

“Democratic schooling, reflective practice, and teacher support”

The Democratic School Project: How To Support Teachers In Enacting Children’s Rights

Presenter

Avgitidou Sofia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Avgitidou Sofia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

This presentation aims to describe both a methodology and the results of a teacher support project to enact Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This project titled “Democratic School: meanings and strategies of action” was based on a collaboration among a university research unit, thus the Center for Research and Support of Schools in Management and Training (KERYSDE) and a group of secondary teachers with a common aim to enhance democratic education in their schools. The methodology for enacting Article 12 was based on three basic pillars: the support of teachers as researchers and reflective practitioners (Avgitidou, 2014), the support of children’s expression of their views and a subsequent dialogue among teachers’ and children’s perspectives of their school experience and an evidence-based design and evaluation of practice. Specifically, teachers were encouraged firstly to explore their beliefs about what a democratic school is and reflect upon them based on the whole school approach of the Reference Framework of competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018) as well as on discussions with their colleagues. Secondly, teachers were introduced to various research tools to explore their pupils’ beliefs about the school function as well as their proposals for improving it. Based on these research tools, pupils had the opportunity to participate in answering anonymously to open-ended questions about what they liked and disliked in their schools, how democratic they thought the school function was and what they proposed to improve it. Teachers were supported to analyse their pupils’ responses and discuss with them their proposals for action. Last, teachers designed an intervention based on the analysis of pupils’ perspectives and evaluated its outcomes. This methodology assisted teachers to rethink the purpose and value of inquiring into children’s perspectives and utilize children’s beliefs and proposals to purposefully design improvements in their learning and school experience.

Keywords: article 12 of the convention on children's rights, university-school partnership, democratic schools, teachers as researchers and reflective practitioners.

Children’s Voices and Teacher Well- Being in Primary Education: Lessons from Thriving Schools

Presenter

Laskaraki Eleni, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Laskaraki Eleni, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Goutas Theodore, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Kossyvaki Lila, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Vatou Anastasia, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Zachopoulou Evidiki, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece. Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tsitiridou Evangelou Maria, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Grammatikopoulos Vasilis, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

The “Thriving Schools” project aims to strengthen mental health and well-being literacy, foster positive school climate, and empower educators through innovative practices and evidence-based resources. Implemented through a transnational collaboration among universities, public education authorities, research centers, and non-governmental organizations in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and Romania, the project exemplifies how research can produce robust, policy-relevant knowledge grounded in children’s lived experiences. In Greece, the project aligns with ongoing efforts to integrate mental health promotion and socio-emotional learning (SEL) within primary education. As part of the study, 151 primary school teachers in the country provided detailed information on their demographic characteristics, professional backgrounds, and perceptions of mental health and well-being in school settings. Findings revealed a nuanced picture of teacher well-being, highlighting a moderate level of stress, high job satisfaction and overall positive well-being, with a prevalent feeling of competence in helping children learn and being respected at school. With regards to student mental health, teachers demonstrated a strong understanding, acknowledging its impact on learning and being

aware of relevant resources. They showed strong belief in their own and the school's responsibility in supporting student mental health. However, a significant relevant gap was identified in their formal education. Complementing the quantitative data, qualitative findings from student focus groups (n= 12, aged between 11 and 12 years old) offered rich insights into children's perspectives. Students emphasized the centrality of peer relationships for emotional security, expressed dissatisfaction with rote learning and high academic pressure, and identified creative, participatory teaching methods as key contributors to their motivation and well-being. Respectful, empathetic teacher–student relationships emerged as a decisive factor shaping children's school experience. Students also highlighted infrastructural deficiencies and articulated clear aspirations for more humane, flexible, and engaging school environments. Overall, “Thriving Schools” demonstrates that collaborative research can generate actionable evidence that advances children's rights, informs education policy, and supports sustainable, whole-school approaches to mental health and well-being.

Keywords: well-being, mental health, socio-emotional learning (SEL), teacher-student relationships.

Promoting Children's Rights through interdisciplinary approaches and inclusive practices in the Greek educational system

Presenter

Siaviki Athanasia, Primary School Teacher, PhD, Early Years Learning and Care Department, University of Ioannina, Greece.

All authors

Siaviki Athanasia, Primary School Teacher, PhD, Early Years Learning and Care Department, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Tympa Eleni, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

This presentation outlines a framework for promoting children's rights in Greek schools through interdisciplinary approaches and inclusive practices. With immigrant students making up approximately 9–11% of the total student population as of recent years, the focus is on fostering interculturalism through effective communication, the elimination of stereotypes, and the creation of an inclusive school environment. Effective teachers in multicultural settings practice and promote culturally responsive pedagogy. They act supportively and empathetically, prioritizing the understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds. Rather than viewing diversity as a barrier, they utilize students' experiences, unique abilities and native languages as "conduits" for learning. Such objectives can be accomplished through interdisciplinary didactic approaches and experiential learning such as: a. the creation of "classroom dictionaries" where students link images with words in both Greek and their native languages (visual vocabulary), b. the utilization of role-playing for daily scenarios (e.g., visiting a bakery or a doctor) and interactive mapping to trace students' journeys and experiences (functional language), c. the creation of the "suitcase of memories" to help students express their identity and share elements from their home and personal lives (identity building), d. "communication cards" for better expressing emotions or basic needs in order to ensure a sense of safety. Finally, a structured 5-day introductory lesson plan will be provided through the presentation focusing on promoting children's rights, fostering the connection of student-teacher and among students themselves as well as on ensuring the proper integration of all children in the educational frameworks.

Keywords: children's rights, inclusion, education, integration.

Teacher's perceptions of soft skills; Academia co-shaping educational policies within the accordance of UNCRC

Presenter

Bazanis Vasileios, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Bazanis Vasileios, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tympa Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece.

UNICEF's strategy is organised around five aligned Goal Areas under the UNCRC to advance children's rights across diverse contexts, including fragile and crisis settings. Goal Area 2 prioritizes universal access to quality education that equips children with skills for future life and work (UNICEF, 2025). Consistent with the principle of the child's best interests (Art. 3), education is framed as supporting the holistic development of children's abilities and fostering environmental respect, enabling the acquisition of future-ready competencies (Art. 29). With reference to Touloumakos (2020) despite their growing prominence in educational and policy discourse, soft skills constitute a broad and heterogeneous set of attributes, rendering their treatment as a single, unified construct analytically problematic. They are often conceptualised as generic personal characteristics that can be acquired independently of context and subsequently transferred across different settings. Such conceptualisations directly influence curriculum design and pedagogical practices. In contrast, a more inclusive, bottom-up, and context-embedded approach offers a more meaningful and operationally relevant framework for academic inquiry (Touloumakos, 2020). This perspective aligns with the contemporary role of the university, which is increasingly centered on the production and dissemination of knowledge (Πασιάς, 2010). As noted by Heckman and Kautz (2012), soft skills are strong predictors of life outcomes and play a decisive role in shaping individuals' educational, social, and professional trajectories. Consequently, they should constitute a central focus of programmes and interventions within coherent and well-designed public policies. Building on these theoretical foundations, the present study reports key quantitative findings on the perspectives of preschool educators and teachers in primary, and secondary education regarding the necessity of cultivating soft skills in children. The research was conducted in educational units within the municipality of Oichalias in southern Greece, between October 2025 and January 2026. The findings confirm both the need for and the feasibility of fostering soft skills across preschool and school education, as these competencies are closely associated with students' academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, social inclusion, future employability, and participation in an increasingly globalised society.

Keywords: children, soft skills, education, perceptions.

“Am I Visible to You?” – A Kindergarten and University with a Common Mission for Embedding Child Rights in Everyday Teaching

Presenter

Antonova Radostina, New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

All authors

Antonova Radostina, New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

Mateeva Antoaneta, New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

This paper presents the collaborative efforts of a kindergarten in Sofia and the Know-How Center for Alternative Care for Children as an interdepartmental research center of New Bulgarian University to transform the culture of relationships in the classroom.

The democratization of the education system in recent decades, mainly through the policy of inclusive education and support for children at risk through individualized general and additional support created conditions for equal access to education for all children, regardless of the presence of physical, emotional or social limitations and difficulties that they and their families experience. However, these changes are accompanied by a number of tensions and challenges in the management and practice of educational institutions and their teams.

Practitioners often lack skills for individualized work that combines academic development with support and involves parents in the process. They also receive limited professional support through supervision, assessment of challenges, and management of accumulated educational services. Broader social factors—poverty, illiteracy, low family social status, school dropouts, functional illiteracy, and waves of refugees from conflict zones—further complicate the situation. In this context, skills for addressing cultural differences and overcoming language barriers in Bulgarian become essential for ensuring equal access to education and child well-being.

The study aims to increase opportunities for an equal start in early childhood, supporting children’s successful development. The project introduces a culture of concern for the quality of early childhood education, grounded in the ethics of care (Held, 2007; Gilligan, 1982), emphasizing relationships over curriculum in institutional goal setting. Through this culture of care, the project seeks to embody and implement children’s rights in everyday early education practices. Using participatory action research principles, the study examines opportunities and barriers in transforming traditional group- and administration-focused pedagogy that neglects individual attention. The project focuses on a single kindergarten as a distinct system of rules, roles, structures, and relationships, aiming to study and change its practices to establish a sustainable culture of care that promotes both the well-being and rights of every child.

Keywords: preschool, child rights, participatory action research, well-being

Set B6 | 14:00 – 15:30 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Academia and Child Rights”

Promoting children's rights through the role of the Refugee Education Coordinator and intercultural education

Presenter

Kostoglidou Ntomna, Refugee Educational Coordinator, Greece.

All authors

Kostoglidou Ntomna, Refugee Educational Coordinator, Greece.

Since 2015, developments in the modern refugee phenomenon have shaped a new reality in Greece. Refugee students coexist with native students in schools across the country. The management of this phenomenon initially created intense disputes and rivalries within local communities, but over time the situation normalized. The focus quickly shifted to the implementation of the child's right to education as recognized by international conventions and numerous national provisions. The newly emerged linguistic, cultural and ethnic composition of the classroom creates new, unprecedented challenges for teachers and the school community as a whole. Schools embrace refugee children and strive to support and integrate them into their daily practices. Parent associations try to assist refugee families by collecting clothing, food, and school supplies. New challenges are emerging for educators, native students, and refugee students. The goal of these efforts is the integration of refugees, who often have little or inconsistent educational background, different cultural habits, and do not speak the language of the school. Most of the time, their parents are willing to contribute, but they need to be supported and to understand how they can assist in the learning process. In general, today's school environment requires interventions and improvements on many levels in order to respond effectively to the unprecedented needs that are arising. The role of the Refugee Education Coordinator is crucial in this context. Since 2016, they have been advocating for refugee children's access to education and their exposure to quality learning experiences.

Key words: refugee, challenges, intercultural, education.

Universities and Child Rights Education: A Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Framework for Teacher Preparation and Social Policy Alignment

Presenter

Papadopoulou Eleni, 12th Primary School, Alexandroupoli, Greece.

All authors

Papadopoulou Eleni, 12th Primary School, Alexandroupoli, Greece.

Gousios Fotis, 1st Experimental Primary School, Alexandroupoli, Greece.

The effective promotion of children's rights requires higher education institutions to adopt coherent theoretical frameworks that connect human rights principles with educational practice and social policy. This paper explores the conceptual role of academia in advancing child rights education, with a particular focus on teacher preparation for primary education. Grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the study examines contemporary theoretical shifts toward a child-rights-based and interdisciplinary paradigm that recognizes children as rights-holders, active participants, and social actors. Drawing on key contributions from human rights education, childhood studies, and social policy theory, the paper conceptualizes universities as strategic institutional spaces for embedding child rights across curricula, research agendas, and pedagogical practices. It argues that child rights education should be integrated transversally within teacher education programs, rather than treated as an isolated or optional component, enabling future educators to address issues of participation, inclusion, protection, and equity in school environments. The analysis is informed by practice-based insights from primary education and teacher professional development, highlighting how theoretical frameworks are translated into everyday educational practices and school culture. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of higher education in equipping teachers with conceptual tools that link child rights education to broader social policy goals, including democratic citizenship, social cohesion, and the reduction of educational inequalities. The paper proposes a conceptual model positioning academia as a mediating actor between international child rights standards and localized educational practice. By integrating theory, practice, and policy, this contribution underscores the responsibility of universities to institutionalize child rights education and to support sustainable social change through teacher preparation.

Keywords: child rights education, higher education, teacher preparation, social policy, interdisciplinary framework.

Empowering Future Educators as Advocates for Child Rights: A Play-Based Learning Project in Higher Education.

Presenter

Dragoidi Dimitra, Metropolitan College, Greece.

All authors

Dragoidi Dimitra, Metropolitan College, Greece.

Koukousa Olga, Metropolitan College, Greece.

Spyrou Fevronia, Metropolitan College, Greece.

Konstantinidou Marina, Metropolitan College, Greece.

This presentation showcases an innovative educational project developed by Early Childhood Studies students at Metropolitan College, in collaboration with the University of East London (UEL), within the framework of the "Human Rights" module. Recognizing the pivotal role of Higher Education in institutionalizing child rights, the project aims to bridge the gap between academic theory and pedagogical practice. The core of the initiative involved the design and development of original educational games specifically tailored for preschool children. These games serve as tools to translate complex legal and social concepts of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—such as non-discrimination, the right to participation, and protection—into age-appropriate, experiential learning activities. By engaging in this creative process, students not only deepen their own understanding of human rights but also assume the role of active "multipliers" of this knowledge in the classroom. This initiative aligns with the conference's theme regarding the integration of child rights into university curricula and demonstrates how academia can foster social impact by equipping future teachers with the practical tools to cultivate a rights-respecting culture from the very start of a child's education.

Keywords: child rights, higher education, play-based learning, early childhood education, teacher training.

The Role of Academia in Promoting Child Rights

Presenter

Tsamagkou Evangelia, Childhood Educator, Nursing Department, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

All authors

Tsamagkou Evangelia, Childhood Educator, Nursing Department, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

Mantzaris Dimitrios H., Laboratory Teaching Staff, Computational Intelligence and Health Informatics Lab, Nursing Department, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

The effective integration of child rights into university and academic institutions' curricula requires pedagogical approaches that extend beyond declarative knowledge and exclusively theoretical teaching. International research increasingly demonstrates that child rights education is most effective when it is practice-based and integrated into professional contexts, fosters empathy and critical reflection, enables experiential and embodied learning, and is implemented through cross-cutting and interdisciplinary curriculum design. Within this framework, sensory-informed and technology-enhanced pedagogies—such as experiential workshops, role-play, case simulations, immersive AR/VR scenarios, and adaptive learning environments—are increasingly used to mainstream child rights across academic disciplines. These approaches enable students to embody children's perspectives and critically examine how anxiety, sensory overload, or unsafe learning environments undermine participation, inclusion, and the right to education. At the curriculum level, sensory-based and digital approaches function as a shared pedagogical language that embeds core UNCRC principles—promoted and supported by UNICEF at global, regional, and national levels—including participation, protection, non-discrimination, and the best interests of the child. While modular courses establish theoretical foundations, cross-cutting integration ensures the continuous enactment of these principles across pedagogical, clinical, and professional contexts, with a hybrid model offering both conceptual clarity and transformative potential. The sustainability of such approaches depends critically on academic staff capacity building and ongoing professional development. Evidence shows that curricular reform is effective only when accompanied by meaningful changes in teaching practice. Sensory-informed and technology-enhanced professional development—through participatory, practice-based training, immersive simulations, and reflective teaching communities—can support academics in translating child rights from abstract norms into everyday educational practice, thereby positioning academic institutions as catalysts for rights-based professional cultures.

Key words: child rights, sensory-informed pedagogy, technology-enhanced learning, AR.

The Experience of teaching Children’s rights and the Role of Academic circles in the Promotion of Children’s Rights

Presenter

Pertia Rona, Shota meskhia Zugdidi State University, Georgia.

All authors

Pertia Rona, Shota meskhia Zugdidi State University, Georgia.

Berandze Dali, Shota meskhia Zugdidi State University, Georgia.

Gabelia Ana, Shota meskhia Zugdidi State University, Georgia.

The institutional strengthening of Children’s rights in Georgia has significantly intensified following the adoption of the code on the rights of the child. This code defined the state’s obligation toward developing child-oriented policies and professional standards. In this process, higher education institutions carry a significant responsibility regarding their integration into academic programs. In Georgia, in the state and non-state higher education institutions, children’s rights are primarily integrated into programs such as Public Governance, Business Administration and Education. Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University applies both cross-cutting and modular approaches; this involves discussing children’s rights within Human Rights courses, as well as offering specialized courses such as “Children’s Rights” and “Violence Against Children”. Among effective teaching practices, case-based learning is noteworthy, utilizing research conducted on Georgian data and comparisons with international research studies (from the state, UNICEF, Non-Governmental sector). Through the development of curricula, preparation of training modules, professional retraining and raising public awareness, the university provides theoretical knowledge aligned with the requirements of current national and international legislation. Such an interdisciplinary and human rights-based approach creates a foundation for sustainable education and the effective implementation of Children’s rights in Georgia.

Keywords: higher education, educational course/curriculum, children’s rights, study course/curriculum integration, interdisciplinary approach.

Set B7 | 15:45 – 17:15 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Themi Campus

“Play, outdoor play, wellbeing”

Parental Perspectives on Preschool Outdoor Play

Presenter

Zisopoulou Eleni, Laboratory Teaching Staff, Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Zisopoulou Eleni, Laboratory Teaching Staff, Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Play is a fundamental right of children and is crucial for their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development (Speldewinde & Campbell, 2022). Outdoor play, in particular, is recognized as an activity with high educational and developmental value (Brussoni et al., 2015). According to Prins et al. (2022), playing in nature offers a supportive environment for the development and imaginative use of skills, incorporating diverse natural elements that contribute to both play development and numerous benefits for children. This study employed a qualitative methodology, collecting data through online questionnaires administered to parents. The responses were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings reveal a positive attitude among parents towards outdoor play but also underscore concerns regarding safety, limited space and time, and the prevalence of a protective culture. Simultaneously, the study highlights the necessity of creating a supportive framework that will foster authentic play experiences in outdoor spaces such as yards, playgrounds, parks, and natural environments.

Keywords: play, outdoor play, parents' opinions, preschool children

Honoring Children’s Rights to Learn Through Parental Support

Presenter

Smaropoulou Aikaterini, Principal of Primary School, Greece.

All authors

Smaropoulou Aikaterini, Principal of Primary School, Greece.

Vasiou Aikaterini, University of Crete, Greece.

Gkontelos Angelos, University of Crete, Greece.

Vasilaki Eleni, University of Crete, Greece.

This paper examines children’s right to learn as it is enacted in everyday family practices through parental support of psychological needs and learning motivation (Soenens et al., 2017). Drawing on qualitative research conducted on the island of Gökçeada (Imvros), Turkey, the study focuses on children’s right to learn within a complex minority and bilingual educational context where parents play a crucial role in sustaining their children’s engagement with schooling. The study is based on semi-structured focus group discussions with parents of Greek minority students. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for an in-depth exploration of parental narratives concerning the values, practices, and strategies through which they support their children’s learning. The theoretical framework is grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), with particular emphasis on the satisfaction of children’s basic psychological needs satisfaction (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020) and the development of more internalized forms of learning motivation (Michou et al., 2023). Findings indicate that parents promote their children’s right to learn by creating motivational and emotional conditions that support school engagement. Children’s basic psychological needs satisfaction creates conditions of emotional security, trust, and stability that underpin learning. At the same time, parents foster motivation for learning by setting meaningful goals, establishing supportive routines, and providing encouraging feedback that facilitates more internalized and self-determined forms of motivation and persistence. In addition, practices of collaboration with schools and teachers function as a mechanism of institutional safeguarding, supporting educational continuity under conditions of bilingual instruction and heightened academic demands. Overall, parental support emerges as a central mechanism through which children’s right to learn is enacted in everyday life, translating formal educational rights into lived experiences of learning, psychological well-being, and sustained school engagement. The study offers important implications for educational policy, parental practices, and school–family partnerships in minority and bilingual educational contexts.

Keywords: parental support, basic psychological needs, children rights in learn, bilingual minority education, student motivation.

The Rights of the Child to wellbeing and play. From the perspectives of ECCE pre-service and in-service educators in Greece

Presenter

Sotiropoulou Eleni, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, University of Western Attica, Greece.

All authors

Sotiropoulou Eleni, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, University of Western Attica, Greece.

Stamatoglou Maria, Teacher in Secondment, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Konstantinidou Zoe, Kindergarten Teacher, Researcher at University of Ioannina, Greece.

This article examines how children's wellbeing and play, as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), are understood and enacted in the everyday practices of ECCE pre-service and in-service educators in Greece, highlighting the role of university-based educator preparation in shaping rights-oriented pedagogy. While children's rights are widely endorsed in policy and theory, research has identified a persistent gap between rights-based frameworks and daily pedagogical practice, particularly in early childhood contexts where adult authority and institutional routines often prevail (Sorells, 2024; Catalano et al., 2024). Drawing on a qualitative research design, this ongoing study explores how ECCE pre-service and in-service educators perceive children's rights to wellbeing, participation, and play, and how these perceptions shape everyday practice. Semi-structured interviews are analysed thematically to examine how such rights are interpreted and enacted within everyday pedagogical practice. The study highlights both enabling approaches and persistent institutional constraints, illustrating how adult-centred routines, regulatory demands, organisational expectations, and time pressures may shape or limit children's opportunities for agency and influence in daily life. Particular attention is given to the uneven realisation of participation rights across different care and educational contexts, as pre-service and in-service educators navigate competing priorities between relational responsiveness and predetermined objectives. Practices such as free play, dialogic interaction, and flexible planning are explored as potential pathways for strengthening children's voice, supporting emotional wellbeing, and fostering more rights-respecting pedagogical environments in Greek ECCE settings. The article argues that bridging the gap between children's rights theory and everyday practice requires sustained pedagogical reflexivity, professional development, and supportive institutional structures (Theobald, 2019), including stronger integration of children's rights perspectives within higher education curricula for ECCE educators. By highlighting both

enabling practices and persistent tensions, this study contributes to debates on rights-based pedagogy in early childhood education, offering implications for educators, early education programmes, university curricula, and policy development (Alme & Reime, 2021).

Keywords: children's rights, early childhood education and care, qualitative research, play, wellbeing.

Influence of Parents on Preschooler's Eating Habits: A child's Rights Approach

Presenter

Chitou Eirini, Department of Early Years Learning & Care, School of Social Sciences, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece.

All authors

Chitou Eirini, Department of Early Years Learning & Care, School of Social Sciences, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece.

Karavida Vasiliki, Department of Early Years Learning & Care, School of Social Sciences, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece.

Tympa Eleni, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, School of Social Sciences, International Hellenic University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Zachopoulou Evridiki, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, School of Social Sciences, International Hellenic University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece.

One of the fundamental child rights is the health-related safety and nutritious quality of the accessible food sources. Particularly, to ensure the avoidance of unhealthy food in order to support parents' and health-related professionals' efforts to encourage children's healthier meal choices and feeding habits. Children's rights place a duty on governments and businesses for consumption of nutrition-rich food products. Current feeding choices may infringe on children's rights. Academic institutions may provide guidelines for the protection and fulfillment of children's feeding rights and address the related problems. A children's rights approach may accelerate the process of detection of the existing problems, understanding the challenges related to nutritional food choices, uncover the interconnection between parents' and educators' roles while establishing priorities for tackling the related obstacles. Academic institutions have to reinforce research programs to strengthen children's access to nutritious food resources and to ensure parents' contribution on adoption of children's healthy lifestyle. Parents' feeding practices have an enormous impact on preschoolers' food choices. Our scientific research focuses on the implementation of a healthy lifestyle among 4-6 years old preschoolers and their parents and the uncovering of parents' obstacles to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle in urban areas in Greece (from regions in the Ionian Islands). A quantitative survey-based approach was adopted, utilizing an appropriate Likert scale questionnaire, which evaluates parents' obstacles to providing healthy eating habits to their preschool children. The key findings of the present survey confirm the correlation between parents' healthy eating behavior and their level of knowledge on related topics. Major obstacles in implementing healthy eating include time constraints, financial issues, proximity of parents' workplace, type of work schedule and parents' educational status. The results may reinforce the effort for the elimination of preschoolers' obesity epidemic and their adherence to unhealthy food choices.

Keywords: healthy lifestyle, parents, preschool children, socio-demographic factors, child's rights.

Teaching Children's "Right To The City" To University Students

Presenter

Katsavounidou Garyfallia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Katsavounidou Garyfallia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognizes children's "right to the city" in three distinct articles: the right of children to play (Article 31), the right to gather and organize their own activities (Article 15), and to participate in the decision-making processes (Article 12) in all matters affecting them. All these three provisions need to be materialized to create a truly child-friendly living environment. Nonetheless, contemporary urban realities around the world show that the quest for a "childhood city" (Karsten, 2002) is still quite elusive. Epistemologically, the importance of urban environments for children's wellbeing has been the focus of research within three main academic fields: environmental psychology, pedagogy, and children's geographies. In urban planning and design, however, the nexus between children and the city is much weaker (Katsavounidou, 2023). A consistent effort towards integrating child-centered urban design and policies needs to be undertaken if this situation is to change (Gill, 2021). In this paper, I present case studies of integrating children's "right to the city" in theoretical modules related to urban design and to social perspectives of Architecture to university students in the fields of Spatial Planning and of Architecture, respectively. Learner-centered methodologies, such as experiential learning and project-based learning, are used to facilitate students' emotional involvement in the topic (Katsavounidou, 2024). Results show that the use of such methodologies deeply affects students' active participation, while raising awareness and contributing to their developing competencies to put into practice the basic principles of child-friendly cities.

Keywords: child-friendly cities, children's right to the city, urban design, architecture, teaching methodologies.

Why slow is right. A literature review on Early Childhood Education and Care research since the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Presenter

Stamatoglou Maria, Teacher in Secondment, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors

Stamatoglou Maria, Teacher in Secondment, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Konstantinidou Zoe, Kindergarten Teacher, Researcher at University of Ioannina, Greece.

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and societal acceleration, the imposition of adult-oriented pacing upon early childhood environments threatens the fundamental right of babies and young children to experience development at their own natural pace (Catalano et al., 2023; Mousena & Raptis, 2024; McNair & Papaspyropoulou, 2025). Since the implementation of the UN Convention on Children's Rights (1989), European research has made efforts to progressively integrate children's involvement, autonomy, and welfare into educational methods and regulations (Ribeiro et al., 2025). However, over the last ten years, the idea of slow pedagogy (Clark, 2022) has arisen as a method of promoting thoughtful, child-focused practices that honor the pace of children's growth and encourage authentic engagement. Slow pedagogy seems to emerge as a critical theoretical framework that counters this acceleration by prioritizing a child-centered approach where time and space are afforded for children to frame their own views and develop a meaningful relationship with the world (Clark, 2022). Based on empirical research from Nordic and Western European as well as Greek settings for children 3 to 6 years old, this presentation illustrates how decelerating routines and embracing reflective pedagogy enhance children's rights to exploration, expression, and emotional safety. It also examines changes in policy aimed at inclusive, culturally aware practices and investigates how digital technologies can be carefully integrated to improve children's involvement. Drawing from recent research studies, the results emphasize the significance of professional growth and policy backing in integrating slow pedagogy to fully realize children's rights, promoting equitable, respectful, and participatory early childhood settings throughout Europe.

Keywords: slow pedagogy, children's rights, early childhood education & care, literature review

Set B8 | 15:45 – 17:15 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Child rights education via language/ autobiography/ story”

Citizenship in Pre-school Education: Teachers' Perceptions of Citizenship Education in Kindergarten.

Presenter

Triantafyllou Georgia, Preschool teacher at Paixnidagogeio, Greece.

All authors

Triantafyllou Georgia, Preschool teacher at Paixnidagogeio, Greece.

The education of young children plays a crucial role in cultivating respect for human rights, democratic participation, and active citizenship, which are foundational components of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2014; United Nations, 1989). Citizenship education in early childhood settings represents both a pedagogical practice and a lived experience of children's rights within everyday educational contexts (Quennerstedt, 2015; Ribeiro et al., 2025; Ryder & van Krieken Robson, 2023). This research, stemming from an undergraduate thesis at Metropolitan College of Athens, examines pre-school teachers' perceptions of citizenship education, investigating how educators understand, implement, and integrate citizenship-oriented practices in kindergarten. Using a quantitative methodology, data were collected via a questionnaire from eighty (80) active pre-school educators with diverse professional background. Findings reveal that while participants acknowledge the importance of citizenship education, many report limited formal training on the subject and emphasize the need for enhanced academic support and structured curricula. Teachers predominantly use role-playing, rights-focused activities, and empathy-building tasks to foster citizenship skills, yet encounter challenges such as conceptual abstraction for children, institutional constraints, and barriers to school-family engagement. The results underscore the significant developmental benefits of citizenship education in fostering empathy, respect for diversity, and social engagement among young learners. Aligned with the conference theme of integrating child rights into academic and educational practice, this study highlights the necessity of strengthening teacher education programs, developing evidence-based strategies, and promoting interdisciplinary approaches to embed citizenship and child rights principles throughout early childhood teacher preparation and educational frameworks.

Keywords: citizenship education, child rights, early childhood education, teacher perceptions, curriculum integration.

Cultural Connections Across Europe: A Collaborative eTwinning Project Promoting Children's Rights Through Multilingual Digital Storytelling

Presenter

Kotsanpapa Athanasia, Teacher in Primary School, Greece.

All authors

Kotsanpapa Athanasia, Teacher in Primary School, Greece.

Stoikou Aikaterini, Headmistress in Primary School, Greece.

This paper presents a collaborative educational initiative developed within the eTwinning project "Cultural Connections", involving 21 teachers and a large number of students from Italy, Turkey, Romania, Finland, and Greece. The project was designed to foster intercultural understanding, digital creativity, and active citizenship, with a particular focus on the promotion of children's rights. Inspired by the United Nations World Children's Day, participating students engaged in a series of activities aimed at exploring, interpreting, and communicating the fundamental rights of the child in ways that reflect their cultural and linguistic diversity. The central outcome of this collaboration is a multilingual digital book created entirely by the students. Each participating country contributed content in its own language, while English served as the common linguistic bridge that enabled communication and collective authorship. The digital book includes student-generated texts, illustrations, and reflections that highlight key rights such as education, protection, participation, equality, and freedom of expression. Through this process, students not only deepened their understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child but also developed essential 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, teamwork, creativity, and intercultural communication. The project demonstrates how international collaboration can empower young learners to engage meaningfully with global issues while strengthening their sense of identity and belonging within a diverse European community. It also showcases the pedagogical value of eTwinning as a platform that supports inclusive, student-centered learning experiences. By giving children, a voice and a creative medium to express their perspectives on their own rights, the project contributes to a broader dialogue on how schools can cultivate awareness, empathy, and democratic participation among students across different cultural contexts.

Keywords: children's rights, eTwinning, multilingual education, global citizenship education, 21st-century skills.

Supporting pre-service language educators to become child rights ambassadors with Language Autobiography

Presenter

Fotiadou Georgia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Fotiadou Georgia, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Balita Theofanoula, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Kalamakidou Ermofili, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Kimiskidou Vassiliki Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Konta Irini, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

“Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion—even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live” (UNICEF, 1989, Article 30). Moreover, education should be directed, among other aims, toward the development of respect for the child’s “cultural identity, language and values” (UNICEF, 1989, Article 29(c)). In this context, educators increasingly express the need for targeted training supported by examples of best practices (e.g., Maligkoudi et al., 2025). Language Autobiography (LA) is a first-person narrative that includes personal reflections on one’s language journey, enabling individuals to explore how their linguistic repertoire has shaped their identity (Perregaux, 2002). The implementation of LA in language classes constitutes an emancipatory experience that fosters inclusion, empathy, and acceptance of diversity (e.g., Balita et al., 2025). At the same time, pre- and in-service educators benefit from reflecting on their teaching practices and enhancing their professional skills within heterogeneous student communities (Balita et al., 2025; Moussouri et al., 2019). In this talk, we present a case study from a tertiary education setting in Greece, drawing on data from 80 pre-service language teachers. We describe the process of integrating LA creation into the curriculum of an Educational Linguistics module and discuss the outcomes of this implementation. Specifically, we present the key themes that emerged from students’ narratives—such as language environments and attitudes toward their linguistic capital—as well as their evaluations of the integration of this alternative pedagogical tool in language classes. The findings indicate that LAs can effectively promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in education, while foregrounding children’s rights and fostering language awareness. Language autobiography thus emerges as a transformative pedagogical tool that promotes inclusivity and supports pre-service language educators in becoming child rights ambassadors when integrated into teacher education programs.

Keywords: language autobiography (LA), plurilingual education, pluricultural education, pre-service language teachers, child rights.

Empowering Roma Adolescents through Digital Storytelling: An Educational Intervention on Children's Rights

Presenter

Paraskeva Anna, 3rd High School of Menemeni (Dendropotamos), Greece.

All authors

Paraskeva Anna, 3rd High School of Menemeni (Dendropotamos), Greece.

The educational inclusion of Roma children constitutes a significant challenge for modern school systems, often characterized by high dropout rates and social marginalization. This paper discusses a targeted educational intervention implemented at the 3rd Junior High School of Menemeni (Greece), involving a student cohort comprised exclusively of Roma adolescents. The study aimed to investigate the efficacy of Digital Storytelling as a pedagogical tool for raising awareness regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), with a specific focus on issues relevant to the Roma community. The methodology followed an action research framework. Initially, a pre-test questionnaire was administered to map the students' baseline knowledge and attitudes toward their fundamental rights. Subsequently, utilizing the school's computer lab and the animation software Animaker, students engaged in the creation of "social stories." By visualizing scenarios and creating characters, students were encouraged to represent situations involving the violation or protection of rights, effectively bridging abstract legal concepts with their daily lived experiences (Robin, 2008). Following the intervention, a post-assessment was conducted where students evaluated the extent to which the activity altered their perspectives and deepened their knowledge. The findings suggest that integrating ICT tools in vulnerable social groups serves as a powerful mechanism for empowerment. The transition from passive receivers of information to active creators of digital content appeared to enhance not only digital literacy but also the critical understanding of social justice. These results highlight the value of constructivist, experiential learning approaches in intercultural education and the promotion of social inclusion (Gray, 1998).

Keywords: Roma education, digital storytelling, children's rights, ICT in education, social inclusion, action research.

Set B9 | 15:45 – 17:15 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | Room, Floor, Faculty of Early Childhood and Education

“Disability and inclusive systems”

Emotional Intelligence as a Factor Shaping Attitudes in Favor of Children’s Rights

Presenter

Karamane Efi, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Karamane Efi, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, International Hellenic University, Greece.

The promotion of children's rights is a key pillar of international educational and social policy, with the academic community playing a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and values of future professionals. This study investigates the attitudes of university students towards children's rights and examines their relationship with emotional intelligence as a central socio-emotional skill, linked to empathy, social awareness and moral judgment. The study was based on the use of valid and reliable measurement scales, adopting a quantitative research design. Specifically, the participants' attitudes were explored on key dimensions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as the right to life and protection, the right to participation and expression of opinion, protection from abuse, neglect, war and exploitation, as well as the role of the state and the family in ensuring the well-being of the child. At the same time, the degree of the students' emotional intelligence was analyzed, based on four basic emotional abilities: understanding and awareness of personal emotions, recognition of others' emotions, use and regulation of emotions. In addition, the effect of emotional intelligence on the participants' attitudes towards children's rights was examined. The expected findings are expected to highlight a strong and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and positive attitudes towards children's rights, supporting the role of emotional skills in shaping values and attitudes in favor of children's rights. The results of the research may contribute to the scientific dialogue regarding the role of higher education in promoting a culture of respect and protection of children's rights.

Keywords: children’s rights, university students’ attitudes, emotional intelligence, empathy, higher education.

From Institutional Care to Community-Based Protection for Children with Disabilities in Albania

Presenter

Drenofci Blerta, LOGOS University College (LOGOS), Tirana, Albania.

All authors

Drenofci Blerta, LOGOS University College (LOGOS), Tirana, Albania.

Children with disabilities face high risks of poverty, social exclusion, limited access to education, and institutionalization, particularly in contexts where social protection and social care systems remain insufficiently inclusive. Promoting child rights in such settings requires both systemic reform and an evidence base that captures the perspectives of those directly affected. This paper examines recent developments in Albania's social protection and social care systems through a child rights lens, with a specific focus on children with disabilities. The study adopts a mixed qualitative policy-oriented methodology, combining a comprehensive review of national legislation, policy frameworks, strategic documents, and relevant studies with qualitative evidence gathered from service beneficiaries. Primary data were collected through 23 focus groups involving 145 participants, including persons with disabilities, parents, and family members receiving social protection and social care services. The analysis explores the transition from institutional and fragmented service provision toward community-based, decentralized, and integrated social care models. It examines how policy reforms align with child rights standards while also assessing how services are experienced in practice. Findings from focus groups provide critical insights into beneficiaries' perceptions of service accessibility, quality, relevance, and impact on children's well-being and family life. While participants report positive effects related to early intervention, family support, and social inclusion, they also identify persistent challenges such as territorial coverage, limited service intensity, accessibility barriers, and gaps in information and coordination. By integrating document-based policy analysis with the lived experiences of children with disabilities and their families, this paper demonstrates how participatory and evidence-informed approaches can strengthen strategies for the promotion of child rights.

Keywords: child rights, children with disabilities, social protection, community-based services, accessibility.

Education and social inclusion of Roma: voices of parents and children

Presenter

Rousoulioti Thomais, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Hellenic Open University, Greece.

All authors

Rousoulioti Thomais, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Hellenic Open University, Greece.

Kontogianni Elpida, Hellenic Open University, Greece.

Participation in education is one of the fundamental and undeniable rights, which must be provided equally to all social groups. Although Roma are often treated as a vulnerable or marginalized social group due to cultural and socioeconomic factors, they have historically been an integral part of the Greek population and, as Greek citizens, are entitled to the full enjoyment of the individual, social and political rights guaranteed by the Greek Constitution (European Commission, 2020). This paper focuses on investigating the experiences and expectations of both Roma children and parents regarding their right to education. The research uses a qualitative approach and is based on a semi-structured interview guide. The sample consists of ten individuals: five Roma children and five Roma parents. The questions focus on three main axes: the difficulties of daily life, the difficulties arising in the school context, and the expectations of the Roma parents themselves from education. Particular emphasis is given to the role of school practice, as school segregation practices and the indirect categorization of Roma students reinforce educational exclusion and reproduce social inequalities (Messing, 2017). The inclusion of the views of Roma parents in the educational process is considered particularly important, given that, according to Zachos (2019), in relevant research there is often an absence of the voice of the Roma themselves, despite the gradual strengthening of their positive attitudes towards education. The results are expected to highlight the need to combat discrimination and prejudice against this specific minority group, through the adoption of inclusive educational policies that will ensure equal access and participation of Roma students in education (Kende et al., 2024). Further research is in progress.

Keywords: educational rights, Roma communities, social exclusion, school segregation, inclusive education.

Challenges Faced by Ethnic Minority Children in the Educational Process in Georgia

Presenter

Nikoladze Marekhi, PhD Student, Department of pedagogics, Akaki Tsereteli State University.

All authors

Nikoladze Marekhi, PhD Student, Department of pedagogics, Akaki Tsereteli State University.

This article examines the challenges faced by ethnic minority students in Georgia within the general education system, focusing on the regions of Imereti, Adjara, Kakheti, and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The study investigates the extent to which high-quality education is accessible to non-Georgian-speaking students attending Georgian-language schools. Despite national and international legal frameworks that affirm the right to education for all, including in one's native language, ethnic minority students frequently encounter systemic barriers. These include insufficient Georgian language instruction, lack of adapted teaching materials, poorly translated textbooks, and inadequate training of educators. Findings indicate that language remains a major obstacle to academic achievement, particularly for students whose families have limited proficiency in Georgian. Many students rely on private tutors or additional classes, underscoring the education system's failure to provide sufficient language support. Furthermore, dropout rates are disproportionately high among minority students due to socioeconomic hardship, early marriage, and limited transport to schools. Teachers report difficulties in adapting curricula to meet the needs of non-Georgian-speaking students, while parents remain largely uninvolved due to a lack of information or resources. Although some positive examples of integration and peer support were identified, the study concludes that state educational reforms largely overlook non-Georgian sectors within Georgian-language schools. The current "New School" model, which fails to account for ethnolinguistic diversity, further marginalizes these students. The paper recommends the development of inclusive educational policies, reform of language instruction materials, and the establishment of support systems such as student-parent clubs and municipal assistance offices dedicated to ethnic minority students. Addressing these systemic inequities is essential for ensuring equal access to education and fostering social cohesion in Georgia's multiethnic society.

Keywords: challenges, ethnic minority, child rights, education system, integrity, inclusion, discrimination.

Set B10 | 18:30 – 20:00 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Child Rights and Community”

The Child as a Study Object in Political Science: Re-founding the Classical Concepts of Political Theory

Presenter

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

All authors

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

Njanjo Ekoungkang Aimée Laure, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

This theoretical study demonstrates that the systematic exclusion of childhood from the field of classical and contemporary political theory is not merely a blind spot but a foundational epistemological construction that structures the discipline’s central concepts as a whole (citizenship, sovereignty, social contract, justice, democracy). Taking into account the child as a legitimate political subject requires a radical re-founding of these analytical categories and opens up new theoretical perspectives for rethinking the normative foundations of the political community. From its Greek origins to contemporary developments, political theory has constructed the paradigmatic political actor as adult, male, propertied and rational, thereby structurally excluding children from the political sphere. This exclusion, taken as self-evident, runs throughout the disciplinary canon: the Aristotelian polis, the Lockean social contract, Rousseau’s general will, the republican citizen, the liberal subject, and the Habermasian deliberative actor all presuppose a political capacity from which children are deemed, by nature, to be excluded. This theoretical construction legitimises their exclusion from political rights and their total subordination to adult authority, while obscuring their effective agency and relations of intergenerational domination. The study undertakes an epistemological and genealogical analysis of modern and contemporary Western political theory, from the seventeenth century (Hobbes, Locke) to the twenty-first century (deliberative theories, capability approaches, theories of recognition), systematically examining how fundamental concepts presuppose and reproduce the exclusion of children, and

exploring the theoretical perspectives for their inclusive re-founding. The approach unfolds in three stages:

1. Deconstruction: Revealing how the exclusion of children structures classical concepts.
2. Reconstruction: Identifying theoretical resources for a non-reductive inclusion.
3. Experimentation: Developing inclusive reconceptualisations of citizenship, justice and democracy that substantively integrate childhood.

The findings establish that the exclusion of children rests on three contestable assumptions: rational autonomy as a condition of political subjectivity, identity stability as a prerequisite for citizenship, and the binary opposition between autonomy and dependence that obscures constitutive interdependence. The proposed theoretical re-founding mobilises the concepts of relational citizenship, evolving capacities, progressive recognition and intergenerational democracy.

Keywords: political theory, childhood, epistemological exclusion, citizenship, conceptual re-founding.

Child policy: The Contribution of Academia in policy design

Presenter

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

All authors

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

Aimée Njanjo Ekoungkang Laure, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

This study examines the role of the academic community in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies for children, demonstrating that independent academic expertise constitutes an essential lever for strengthening the effective realisation of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The research provides empirical evidence that countries in which universities make a substantial contribution to knowledge production, professional training, and policy advice exhibit child-related public policies that are significantly more aligned with international standards and more effective in reducing inequalities affecting children. Despite the near-universal ratification of the CRC (196 States Parties), significant gaps persist between formal legal commitments and children's lived realities. Public policies for children remain frequently fragmented, underfunded, poorly adapted to actual needs, and insufficiently evaluated. States often lack reliable data, specialised expertise, and institutional capacities to design and implement genuinely evidence-based policies that substantively respect children's rights. In this context, the potential role of universities as producers of rigorous knowledge, trainers of qualified professionals, and independent advisers to public authorities appears crucial, yet remains insufficiently recognised and mobilised. The study covers twelve countries representing different levels of economic development and legal-political traditions (four high-income countries in Western Europe and North America, four middle-income countries in Latin America and Asia, and four low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa) over the period 2010–2023, with a specific focus on policies in education, child protection, juvenile justice, and child health. The research aims to demonstrate empirically that multidimensional academic contributions (research, training, and expertise) substantially improve the quality, coherence, and effectiveness of public policies for children, and to identify the specific mechanisms through which this influence operates, as well as the institutional conditions that facilitate or hinder it. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis (multiple regression based on secondary data, including indicators of child well-being, public budgets, and academic output), qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), and in-depth case studies. The findings reveal that countries in which universities are strongly involved display policies that are significantly

more compliant with CRC standards. Academic contributions operate through five main mechanisms: the production of data that address information deficits; independent evaluation that exposes policy failures; the training of professionals with a strong rights-based orientation; technical expertise in legislative and policy design; and the scientific legitimization of civil society advocacy.

Keywords: public policies for children, children's rights, academic research, academic expertise, evidence-based policy.

Experiences And Strategies For Teaching And Integrating Child Rights Into University And Academic Institutions' Curricula

Presenter

Darbaidze Levan, Affiliated Professor, Caucasus University; Founder and Director of The Child Rights Center; Judge, Criminal Cases Panel, Gori District Court; Doctor of Law.

All authors

Darbaidze Levan, Affiliated Professor, Caucasus University; Founder and Director of The Child Rights Center; Judge, Criminal Cases Panel, Gori District Court; Doctor of Law.

Since 2016, the Juvenile Justice Code has been in effect in Georgia, representing a significant milestone in the protection and promotion of child rights. This reform highlighted the need to integrate child rights education into university curricula across criminal, civil, and administrative law disciplines. At the same time, the specialization of actors involved in juvenile justice has emerged as a critical area of focus. This study examines the development trends in these two closely interrelated domains. In 2023, the Child Rights Center was established at the School of Law, Caucasus University. Through the combined efforts of academic researchers and practicing professionals, the Center undertakes both educational and research activities. Its mission is to foster the creation and dissemination of knowledge on child rights in schools, universities, and other educational institutions. To achieve this, the Center prioritizes the development of a multidisciplinary package of child rights programs and the formulation of recommendations for the refinement and advancement of specialized modules on juvenile justice, grounded in empirical research findings. Offering courses on general child rights, as well as interdisciplinary modules covering child rights in civil and administrative proceedings, juvenile justice, and restorative justice, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, provides students with an effective pathway to acquire theoretical, practical, and empirical knowledge in this field. By studying diverse legal domains and related disciplines, students can develop a comprehensive understanding of the child as an independent actor in legal relationships, a member of society, and an individual with specific rights and needs. Equipped with this knowledge, future legal professionals are better prepared to enter the legal field with confidence. Upon entering the justice system, these specialized modules allow for the deepening of expertise and the acquisition of skills necessary to implement child-centered approaches—an essential prerequisite for creating environments that meet the best interests of the child. This presentation will explore the emerging trends in child rights education, the rationale for establishing a multidisciplinary package of programs in higher education institutions, and its interrelation with specialized modules on juvenile justice, addressing contemporary challenges and prospects for the field.

Keywords: child rights, juvenile justice, specialized actors in juvenile justice, teaching modules, syllabi.

Community-Based Approach and Access to Quality Inclusive Education among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Yaounde, Cameroon

Presenter

Mouchikpou Mouiche Loudi, PhD, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon.

All authors

Mouchikpou Mouiche Loudi, PhD, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon.

The protracted humanitarian crisis in Cameroon has resulted in a rapid rise in the internally displaced population, affecting access to quality inclusive education for thousands of children from the crisis-affected regions. It is observed that the conventional responses as outlined in the 1996 Constitution of the Republic and the Law of Orientation of Education of 1998 often fall short, necessitating context-based approaches. The present study investigates the impact of community-based initiatives on access to quality inclusive education among IDPs in the Center region (Yaoundé). The question of access to quality inclusive education among IDPs still remains problematic despite the implications of stakeholders. By employing a convergent parallel research design, a close-ended questionnaire will be administered to the IDPs, while in-depth interviews will be conducted with IDP's parents, community leaders, local educators, and civil organizations. The data collected will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the study anticipate that community engagement through local leadership, resource mobilization, volunteerism, and culturally responsive environments can be a determinant factor in ensuring quality inclusive education for all learners, especially IDPs. The study also identifies structural barriers such as resource limitations, coordination gaps, security issues, and capacity-building needs which impede community-led efforts. This study will provide policymakers, government officials, humanitarian leaders, and local authorities with valuable insights on culturally responsive educational interventions for IDPs across the national territory. The study will also enhance the quality of education by revealing how community-led initiatives can ensure the right to quality inclusive education for all children of school-going age.

Keywords: internally displaced persons; community-based approach; quality education; inclusive education; access.

Research and innovations for children's Rights: Strategies and experiences

Presenter

Bessala Ndzie Belinga Bruno Ludwig, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

All authors

Bessala Ndzie Belinga Bruno Ludwig, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

Tagne Nossi Alain, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon | Ministry of Basic Education.

Evang Assembe Joseph, Ministry of Basic Education.

Objective. This study aims to analyze how academic research could effectively contribute to the promotion of children's rights by examining innovative methodological strategies. In the Cameroonian context, this objective is inspired, on the one hand, by the provision of early childhood education in sub-Saharan African countries (Lukong, 2024) and, on the other hand, by approaches that bridge the gap between the formal recognition of children's rights (United Nations, 1989) and their effective realization (Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013). **Method.** The study is based on an integrative narrative literature review combining theoretical analysis and an examination of empirical case studies. A systematic documentary search was conducted using academic databases and reports from organizations such as UNICEF and other public policy documents (2005-2024). In total, 87 publications were selected. The analytical framework is based on Hart's typology (1992) and Mertens' transformative research model (2009). **Results.** Participatory research involving children as co-researchers produces richer knowledge and respects the right to participation; action research that integrates knowledge generation and practice transformation documents measurable changes in services and policies. The documented experiences, on the other hand, show the effectiveness of certain approaches: restructuring of social services in sub-Saharan Africa such as in Kenya (67% increase in utilization rate), 43% reduction in school violence in Uganda, and legislative reforms in the DRC. **Discussion.** The consideration of children's effective participation substantially improves the quality of the resulting knowledge. These implications include, among others, the institutional valorization of participatory approaches, the strengthening of research capacities in developing countries, and the integration of systematic knowledge translation mechanisms. Future programs should prioritize the institutionalization of participation, the development of methodologies to reach the most marginalized, investment in longitudinal research, and the strengthening of research-policy-practice.

Keywords: children's rights, research, innovation, Cameroon, child protection.

Set B11 | 18:30 – 20:00 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Trauma, silence, and childhood narratives”

Chaired by Maria Eleni Bourogianni, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Aesthetics of Silence and Narratives of Traumatized Childhood in Select Novels across Cultures

Presenter

Kumar Dinesh, Dyal Singh College, Karnal, Haryana, India.

All authors

Kumar Dinesh, Dyal Singh College, Karnal, Haryana, India.

The present paper attempts to explore the concept of aesthetics as a powerful narrative strategy to propound childhood trauma as a profound and complex experience shaping individuals' lives across select works from diverse cultures. As a valuable narrative, childhood trauma is rooted in violence, displacement, or abuse and resists direct articulation, resulting in silence as a potent expressive mode within literary narratives. Authors across cultures have conveyed the psychological impact of trauma on child protagonists through narrative gaps, fragmented memories, muted voices, and non-linear structures. How silence functions—not merely as an absence of speech, but also as a meaningful aesthetic and ethical device mirroring the unspeakable nature of traumatic experiences—is propounded through trauma theory, psycho-analytical criticism, and cross-cultural literary studies. The selected works in the present paper—Khaled Hosseini's "The Kite Runner", Ian McEwan's "Atonement", Bapsi Sidhwa's "Cracking India", Uzodinma Iweala's "Beasts of No Nation", and Toni Morrison's "God Help the Child"—reveal how silence operates at multiple levels: linguistic, structural, and symbolic. Reflecting both personal repression and socio-cultural constraints imposed on children, traumatic childhood is shaped by collective histories of war, colonialism, patriarchy, and social marginalization that complicate the narration. The present study also illustrates how silenced childhood voices challenge dominant historical and cultural narratives, compelling readers to engage emphatically with what remains unspoken. Silence becomes a site of resistance and survival that allows traumatized children to negotiate identity and agency within repressive environments. By adopting a comparative, cross-cultural approach, the study manifests that while trauma differs across cultural contexts, the aesthetics of silence remains a universal narrative of children's sufferings. On the whole, silence in traumatized childhood narratives deepens literary representation by foregrounding the barriers of language and the ethical responsibility of listening to the unvoiced.

Keywords: silence, trauma, victims, culture, discrimination.

A Privy Perusal of Children trauma in Indian fiction

Presenter

Nandakumar Vasanthi, Assistant Professor in English, SGK Government Degree College, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Vinukonda, Palnadu District, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.

All authors

Nandakumar Vasanthi, Assistant Professor in English, SGK Government Degree College, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Vinukonda, Palnadu District, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA.

Children are the budding citizens of a country. Without them, the country cannot maintain the perenniality in its development. A nation's growth and reputation is dependent on the efforts and endeavours of its citizens. As everything is ephemeral, it is the duty of the elder people to guide their budding ones with their empiricism. It is the rudimentary responsibility of the people to train, guide and mentor the upcoming citizens of the country. All the empirical knowledge they've learnt that have contributed to the development of their country must be imparted to the budding citizens, thereby promoting everlasting development of their nation. But, ironically, the lives of the children are ignored; instead of providing proper guidance and support, they are humiliated and chagrined, leading them to trauma and ending them in nowhere. Their blushes are rubbed, wings are broken, and blossoming dreams are shattered, making their lives sublime and void. The traumatic childhood prevailing in all countries across the globe, and their different faces, are showcased by their respective literature. One can understand their trauma from the literature of their age. As literature is the mirror of society, the conditions of children are upheld to the world to make a call for their rights and reforms. This paper tries to present how Indian literature, both fiction and non-fiction, has projected children's traumatic conditions in the pre- and post-independence era. It also cites some literary works which paved the way for their rights and reforms, thereby sensitising the world on the knowledge and advocacy of child rights with regard to the Indian context. Incidentally, this paper also recommends some initiatives for the promotion of child rights and holistic development from the side of academia.

Keywords: indian literature, children, trauma, fiction, non-fiction, reforms, child rights.

Curricular Innovation and Social Responsibility: Decolonizing Migrant Children's Rights Education in Cameroon through Narrative Arts

Presenter

Donfack Sounna Anicet Christian, University of Alcalá, Madrid, Cameroon

All authors

Donfack Sounna Anicet Christian, University of Alcalá, Madrid, Cameroon

Cameroon's university system is undergoing a shift toward University Social Responsibility (USR), guided by the 2023 Higher Education Law and the 2026 Yaoundé Declaration. This paper argues that integrating migrant children's rights into academic curricula is hindered by a "coloniality of knowledge" that favors abstract, exogenous legal frameworks over the lived realities of "children on the move" displaced by regional crises. The study posits that higher education must reclaim intellectual sovereignty by adopting a crosscutting pedagogical approach rather than a modular one, leveraging narrative arts to achieve social visibility and epistemic decolonization. Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative and decolonial interdisciplinary framework to analyze the impact of endogenous cultural creations as tools for conscientization. The analyzed data consists of a balanced corpus:

- Films: The anthropological documentary "A Peaceful Place" and "Beasts of No Nation" by Cary Joji Fukunaga.
- Literature: Two contemporary novels, including the exile narrative "The Lights of Oujda."

Utilizing the CINÉDUC method, the research examines how these narrative resources serve as pedagogical levers to deconstruct prejudice and address structural barriers, such as statelessness and trauma. Findings demonstrate that narrative pedagogy transforms abstract law into "enacted knowledge," increasing learners' conviction regarding the inherent nature of human rights from 60% to 90%. The study concludes that institutionalizing Child Rights Centers (CRC) and prioritizing faculty professional development are essential strategies. These actions transform academia into an active social observatory capable of influencing public policies for child protection, aligned with African cultural heritage and regional humanitarian needs.

Keywords: coloniality of knowledge, curricular innovation, narrative arts, migrant child, Cameroon.

Strategic Facilitation of Socio-Cultural, Artistic, Physical and Sporting Activities (SCAPSA): A Replicable and Adaptive Model for the Safeguarding of Children’s Rights

Presenter

Nyetam Nyetam Hermann, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

All authors

Nyetam Nyetam Hermann, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

Houehounha Dodé, UNESCO Regional Office for Central Africa, Cameroon.

Gustave Agne, UNESCO Regional Office for Central Africa, Cameroon.

In the Cameroonian context, marked by humanitarian crises and internal displacement, the implementation of integrated and innovative approaches has become a priority in addressing violations of children’s fundamental rights. This article, titled “Strategic Facilitation of Socio-Cultural, Artistic, Physical and Sporting Activities (SCAPSA): A Replicable and Adaptive Model for the Safeguarding of Children’s Rights,” analyses experiences and strategies aimed at promoting and realizing children’s rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the normative frameworks of UNICEF and UNESCO. Drawing on field-based experiences in multisectoral intervention covering many municipalities, across 400 educational and supervisory structures, the article demonstrates that Socio-Cultural, Artistic, Physical and Sporting Activities (SCAPSA) play a central role in promoting and realizing children’s rights to education, culture, leisure, participation, and psychosocial well-being, especially for vulnerable children. Its effectiveness relies on three interdependent strategic pillars:

1. Strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement;
2. Context-sensitive, flexible, and adaptive SCAPSA interventions;
3. A SMART-based approach.

Qualitative and quantitative data generated through these strategies clearly indicate that such activities foster safe spaces that promote self-expression, creativity, resilience, and the holistic development of the child. The findings further emphasize that facilitation strategies are inclusive, grounded in active stakeholder participation (including children), and contribute to intercultural dialogue, cultural valorization, social cohesion, and peacebuilding. Despite ongoing challenges related to resource mobilization and intersectoral coordination, integrating SCAPSA facilitation into public policies offers a replicable and adaptable lever for the sustainable promotion and protection of children’s rights.

Keywords: children’s rights, safeguarding, strategy, partnership, facilitation.

Advocating for a Reconsideration of Girls' Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Presenter

Kingne Ngneguié Mireille Léa, Ph.D University of Dschang Cameroon.

All authors

Kingne Ngneguié Mireille Léa, Ph.D University of Dschang Cameroon.

While some regions in Sub-Saharan Africa are striving for equitable education for girls, others are still struggling to break free from gender-based prejudices. More than ten years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 193 UN member states, girls' education in Sub-Saharan Africa is still slow to take off in certain areas, even as we approach the 2030 deadline for final assessments. Regarding SDG 4, which focuses on quality education and access to learning, numerous projects have been implemented; however, girls' education remains hampered by the weight of tradition in some regions. This raises a critical question: how can we reconsider girls' education in Sub-Saharan Africa so that it can meet the UN's 2030 targets? This study employs several methods, including the sociology of behavior change and African relational ethics, specifically UBUNTU, which transforms societal expectations through inclusive dialogue rather than coercion alone. The DIALECTO method is also used to ensure that norms are co-constructed. Additionally, we will analyze various UNICEF reports on the subject to assess the current state of affairs and identify awareness-raising strategies. This advocacy relies on the active participation of girls and women in the co-construction of norms, thereby facilitating their empowerment and fulfillment in order to meet the requirements of SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The role of African universities will be to codify community decisions in order to develop dissemination strategies for various stakeholders (the State, the community, and girls), ensuring that everyone becomes aware of their role to act and bring about change to reverse current trends. Actions that demean women remain widespread in our societies. The participation of women alongside the guardians of tradition and society as a whole would serve as a guarantee for restructuring and reconsidering girls' education.

Keywords: education, young girls, Sub-Saharan Africa, cultural constraints, SDGs.

Highlighting The Central Role of Academics In promoting Children's Rights and how to integrate them into the academic agenda at the International and National Levels

Presenter

Ngono Manga Jacqueline, student in Social and Biological Sciences and Applied Behavioral Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Yaoundé I Yaoundé/Cameroon.

All authors

Ngono Manga Jacqueline, student in Social and Biological Sciences and Applied Behavioral Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Yaoundé I Yaoundé/Cameroon.

Before the 1989 circular, children's participation in decision-making was limited worldwide. Article 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stipulates that "States Parties shall make widely known the principles and provisions of the Convention," and that the 196 States Parties must take all necessary measures to this end. However, despite sustained policy efforts, challenges persist today. Social and behavioral factors—awareness, cultural barriers, and resource deficiencies—that influence children's inclusion in decision-making must be addressed through ongoing social and behavioral change (SBC) strategies. The central role of universities in society is crucial; it is important to integrate children's rights into university curricula. The social sciences will contribute to resolving the behavioral problems that hinder children's inclusion in decision-making. Planned activities include:

- Workshops to determine and validate inclusion criteria.
- Formative supervision missions on inclusion.
- Missions to assess exclusivity and the promotion of inclusion.

Social and cultural development (SCD) methods such as data collection, gamification, community engagement, and positive deviance are essential. Furthermore, strategies such as individualized support for families, advocacy and lobbying, university-private-business partnerships, participatory approaches, research, and the use of technology are appropriate for this work. Additional elements—such as children's rights in the digital space, gender, disability, disasters, conflicts, and population displacement—must be considered to ensure effective respect for children's needs and perspectives. The exchanges in Greece will build various global universities, thus enabling the development of a unified global approach to respecting children's rights. This is the purpose of the conference from June 4-6, 2026, at the Thermi Campus of the International University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Keywords: academia, child rights, gamification, engagement, positive deviance

Integrating Children's Rights Into University Curricula: A Strategic Lever For Protection And Prevention

Presenter

Djarsoumna Linda, Doctor of International Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaounde | Member of the Children's Rights Center.

All authors

Djarsoumna Linda, Doctor of International Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaounde | Member of the Children's Rights Center.

At a time when children's rights are facing unprecedented challenges (armed conflicts, ICTs, etc.), it is becoming urgent to rethink the contribution of universities as essential spaces for education, research, and social transformation. Heirs to the tradition of the Greek agora, a historical place of exchange, public debate, and civic education, contemporary universities are called upon to make children's rights a central element of their curricula and teaching practices. While some African and European universities have followed suit since 2024 by establishing university centers dedicated to children's rights in partnership with UNICEF, such as the creation of the Interfaculty Center for Children's Rights at the University of Geneva, the effective integration of these rights into curricula is still far from being achieved. This research adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining: a conceptual analysis of the socio-political legacies of the agora, a literature review on the digitization of children's rights, including the booklet "Children's Rights in the Digital Space" published by UNICEF Switzerland and Liechtenstein (2025), and a case study analysis of university programs integrating modules on digital citizenship and rights protection. The expected results anticipate that universities can transform current protection paradigms by developing critical thinking skills in students, creating safe digital platforms, and generating informed public policies that safeguard rights in the digital space. The lessons learned highlight that the synthesis of humanist heritage and digital innovation, championed by universities, is essential to making the digital agora an inclusive space that protects, educates, and empowers children, in accordance with international standards of children's rights.

Keywords: integrating, children's rights, university curricula, strategic lever.

Set B12 | 18:30 – 20:00 pm, Friday 5th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“University frameworks for child rights education”

Belonging and Participation in a Multilingual Kindergarten: A Reflective Early Childhood Pedagogical Account.

Presenter

Agtzidou Anastasia, Preschool Teacher, Greece.

All authors

Agtzidou Anastasia, Preschool Teacher, Greece.

Vitsou Magda, Special Teaching Staff, Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly.

This paper presents a reflective pedagogical account, situated within the growing cultural and linguistic diversity of European early childhood education in recent years. Moving beyond access to schooling, the paper explores how children's rights to participation, emotional safety, non-discrimination and respect for cultural identity — as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child — can be enacted in everyday classroom practice. The reflection draws on everyday interactions in a multilingual classroom including children with migration backgrounds. Grounded in sociocultural perspectives on learning and the concept of funds of knowledge, children's home languages were approached not as deficits but as communicative, relational and identity-affirming resources. Pedagogical practices included visual routines, shared storytelling, collaborative play, peer mediation, cultural exchange activities and ongoing dialogue with families. Particular emphasis is placed on relational pedagogy and the role of the teacher in mediating participation, scaffolding peer relationships and fostering emotionally secure environments in which children can act as competent social actors. Moments of misunderstanding, negotiation and mutual learning are considered pedagogical opportunities through which belonging and expression are co-constructed. Everyday interactions — rather than formal interventions — become central sites for the lived implementation of children's rights. Rather than aiming at generalisable findings, the account offers a situated reflection demonstrating how inclusive and rights-based pedagogy emerges through responsiveness, dialogue and context-sensitive decision-making. By documenting practices, challenges and dilemmas encountered in daily teaching, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on participation, belonging and the practical enactment of children's rights in multilingual early childhood settings. The paper presents a reflective pedagogical account based on professional practice. No personal or identifiable data are included.

Keywords: child rights-based pedagogy, inclusive kindergarten practices, school belonging, family–school partnerships, refugee children in early childhood education.

SDG driven Primary School Learners' Meaning-Making of Child Rights and Active Citizenship

Presenter

Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts Kallia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete, Greece

All authors

Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts Kallia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete, Greece

Pratikaki Anastasia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete., Greece

This study explores how teachers interpret and enact child rights, student voice, and active citizenship through a classroom-based intervention grounded in reflective, participatory design. Drawing on semi-structured reflective interviews with teachers who observed and facilitated the intervention, the study examines how participatory learning practices inform pedagogical understandings of democratic schooling. Data were analysed through thematic analysis, attending to patterns in teachers' meaning-making. The analysis yielded two interconnected themes. First, teachers framed student voice as a pedagogical condition rather than as a discretionary opportunity, emphasising the importance of deliberately structured spaces in which children's perspectives are treated as legitimate contributions to classroom decision-making. Second, active citizenship was understood as situated and developmentally appropriate, with teachers noting that tools such as the Frayer Model and specific context-grounded Sustainable Development Goal cards, supported by guiding prompts, enabled students to articulate civic responsibility through familiar school and community experiences rather than through abstract civic ideals. By foregrounding teachers' interpretive responses to a rights-oriented intervention, the study offers evidence-informed insights into how universities and teacher education programmes can support the integration of child rights through pedagogical design that aligns with Sustainable goals and active citizenship.

Keywords: child rights in education, student voice, active citizenship, democratic schooling, teacher education, participatory pedagogy, thematic analysis.

University–NGO–State Partnership in Africa: A Strategic Lever For The Promotion Of Children’s Rights

Presenter

Nguefack Nkouebo Serge Jacques, Université de Yaoundé 2, Cameroon

All authors

Nguefack Nkouebo Nguefack Nkouebo Serge Jacques, Université de Yaoundé 2, Cameroon

Within the dynamic and evolving landscape of the promotion of children’s rights in Africa, inter-institutional approaches reflect the ongoing transformations shaping the practical implementation of commitments to childhood by contemporary thought leaders. Although universities are often perceived as aristocratic spaces impervious to the committed and partisan discourse of NGOs, there are still opportunities for dialogue, solidarity, and commitment to human rights between these two worlds that appear irreconcilable at first glance.

In this regard, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child represents a pivotal reference point for examining the triangular relationship between universities, NGOs, and the State. This heuristic endeavor draws on a mixed methodological approach: beyond a strictly normative perspective, sociological and historical frameworks are mobilized to capture, in depth, the lived experience of partnerships between academic institutions, civil society organizations, and the State in a field as sensitive as the promotion of children’s rights. In fact, since universities are, in many cases on the continent, an extension of the state's will, it goes without saying that the foundations of this relationship and their performance in the field of child rights advocacy deserve special attention. In addressing the need to assess the quality of this partnership, the analysis advances the argument that such cooperation constitutes an undeniably valuable instrument for advocacy in favor of children’s rights, even though experience shows that it is a partnership fraught with challenges that may undermine the quality of this institutional cooperation.

Keywords: partnership, university, promotion, vulnerability, fundamental rights, child.

Academic Research and Monitoring of the Implementation of the CRC: Addressing Data Gaps

Presenter

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

All authors

Nkulu Atangana Jean-Pierre Loïc, PhD in Political Science, Lecturer, University of Bertoua, Cameroon.

This study demonstrates how the academic production of rigorous empirical data addresses critical information gaps that hinder the effective monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly in countries where national statistical systems are weak or dysfunctional. It establishes the indispensable role of universities as producers of reliable knowledge in strengthening State party accountability and the effectiveness of United Nations monitoring mechanisms. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN body mandated to monitor implementation of the CRC, faces severe data deficits in many countries, including the absence of disaggregated statistics, under-reporting of violations, opacity within closed institutions, and incomplete or self-serving State reports. These shortcomings seriously undermine the Committee's ability to assess the real situation of children and to formulate relevant and evidence-based recommendations. The study focuses on child rights monitoring systems in low- and middle-income francophone African countries over the period 2000–2025, comparing contexts in which structured university-based research programmes on children's rights do or do not exist. It aims to demonstrate empirically that the academic production of data (surveys, cohort studies, impact evaluations and qualitative research) substantially improves the quality, reliability and completeness of information available for CRC monitoring, thereby compensating for failures in national statistical systems and governmental data collection mechanisms. The research draws on systematic documentary analysis (State reports, the Committee's concluding observations, and alternative reports), semi-structured interviews with Committee members, academic researchers and NGO representatives, and content analysis of academic databases to identify research cited in monitoring processes. The comparative approach examines correlations between the volume and quality of university-based child rights research and the completeness and reliability of data available for monitoring purposes. In-depth qualitative analysis of national case studies makes it possible to identify specific causal mechanisms. The findings reveal that countries with active university research programmes show significantly higher levels of availability of disaggregated data (by age, gender, origin and disability), better documentation of systemic violations in closed institutions, and substantially richer alternative reports. Academic research is shown to be particularly effective in addressing data gaps relating to marginalised populations that remain invisible in official statistics.

Keywords: convention on the rights of the child (CRC), monitoring, data gaps, academic research, committee on the rights of the child, statistical systems, state accountability, disaggregated data, marginalised populations, applied research.

The place of children's rights in the universities of French-speaking black African States

Presenter

Ntsegué Ananga Eric Paulin, Doctor of Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaoundé 2, CAMES Assistant professor in public law.

All authors

Ntsegué Ananga Eric Paulin, Doctor of Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaoundé 2, CAMES Assistant professor in public law.

Captivated by its essential mission of training and research, we cannot forget that the university institution is the base and foundation of human and social values. Its role in disseminating knowledge does not stray far from considerations linked to human rights. It remains essential to the extent that the States of French-speaking black Africa today face a recurrence of violations of children's rights through socio-political, security and financial crises despite their openness to democracy and the Rule of law. In this context, it is possible to discuss a reflection on "the place of children's rights in universities". Indeed, the university plays a crucial role in the intelligence society by promoting knowledge and know-how. It becomes an object of intellectual emulation for the rights of child. The present research is directed towards the characterization of this place. In response to this question, the hypothesis retained reveals an ambivalent character. This research is based on an interdisciplinary approach. It therefore relies primarily on the legal method. Subsequently the sociological and comparative method will be subsidiary. Through this research, the aim is first of all to take stock of the consideration of children's rights in the universities. Then to question its consideration mechanisms in order to detect obstacles to their implementation. Finally, to emphasize avenues for reform for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is about understanding that in universities, the rights of the child have a supposed place (I), that of belonging to university teaching. However, that this place can, in many respects, be improved today (II), given the different limits and alterations they face in the university environment.

Keywords: place, children's rights, universities, formation, protection.

From academic knowledge to public action: the role of universities in the effectiveness of children's rights

Presenter

Djarsoumna Linda, Doctor of International Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaounde | Member of the Children's Rights Center.

All authors

Djarsoumna Linda, Doctor of International Public Law, Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FSJP) of the University of Yaounde | Member of the Children's Rights Center.

Concerns regarding children's rights remain marked by a paradox: a dense international normative framework coexists with limited effectiveness. This research is based on the hypothesis that the university constitutes an underutilized structural lever in mechanisms for preventing violations of children's rights. Therefore, it examines the university's capacity to transform academic knowledge into public action, through training and knowledge production, and the effectiveness of the norms enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The methodology is based on a legal and analytical approach structured around three axes. First, a normative analysis of international and regional instruments relating to children's rights. Second, a doctrinal review of works on human rights education and transformative pedagogy. Finally, a comparative analysis of university experiences integrating children's rights in a cross-cutting approach, drawing on institutional reports and specialized literature. This research is expected to demonstrate that integrating children's rights into university curricula will move beyond a strictly normative approach to foster the practical and professional application of international standards. This integration will also contribute to the training of actors capable of influencing the development, interpretation, and implementation of public policies related to children (UNICEF, 2021)

Keywords: academic knowledge, public action, effectiveness, children's rights.

Session C

11:00 am – 17:15 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | Faculty of Early Childhood and Education

Set C1 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Themi Campus

“Rights conceptualisations: culture, environment, history”

Historical Consciousness and Ethical Responsibility: Reframing Child Rights in History Didactics

Presenter

Mavrommati Maria, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

All authors

Mavrommati Maria, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Children's rights, as well as the rights of minorities and groups that are historically found at the margins of public discussion, are often addressed in undergraduate courses through lenses such as intercultural education, sociology, or international politics. In the present presentation, I argue that history didactics, and more broadly history education, can and should approach issues of children's rights diachronically, reaching the present. History didactics today is based on two pillars that are of great interest to the field of children's rights: the concept of historical consciousness and the ethical dimension of historical learning. Historical consciousness is understood as the engagement with the past in a way that connects past, present, and future, within a continuum in which the past is recognized as a medium to explain the present and as an ethical compass for decisions concerning the future. The ethical dimension in history education encompasses, beyond the historian's moral judgments, the moral judgments of the present, which may undermine the interpretation of the past in its true dimensions, and, above all, the emergence of the ethical responsibility that arises from the recognition and evaluation of past wrongdoings. These two theoretical approaches converge on the issue of historical invisibility and the ethical responsibility that derives from it. The presentation argues that history didactics, when preparing future teachers as well as in the professional development of in-service teachers, ought to highlight cases of violations of children's rights, which remain under-studied or silenced in dominant historical narratives, and to equip teachers with epistemological and didactic frameworks that will contribute substantially to the articulation of an ethical stance and of historical responsibility towards the rights of marginalized groups, among which are children. By situating child rights education within the conceptual and ethical dimensions of history teaching, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on the theoretical frameworks that guide the role of higher education in promoting child rights.

Keywords: historical invisibility, ethical responsibility, history didactics, child rights.

Teachers' Conceptualisation of Reflective Participatory Classroom Practice of Sustainable Goals for Child Rights and Active Citizenship

Presenter

Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts Kallia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete, Greece

All authors

Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts Kallia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete, Greece

Pratikaki Anastasia, Teacher Education programme, School of Science & Technology, University of Crete, Greece

This study explores how teachers interpret and enact child rights, student voice, and active citizenship through a classroom-based intervention grounded in reflective, participatory design. Drawing on semi-structured reflective interviews with teachers who observed and facilitated the intervention, the study examines how participatory learning practices inform pedagogical understandings of democratic schooling. Data were analysed through thematic analysis, attending to patterns in teachers' meaning-making. The analysis yielded two interconnected themes. First, teachers framed student voice as a pedagogical condition rather than as a discretionary opportunity, emphasising the importance of deliberately structured spaces in which children's perspectives are treated as legitimate contributions to classroom decision-making. Second, active citizenship was understood as situated and developmentally appropriate, with teachers noting that tools such as the Frayer Model and specific context-grounded Sustainable Development Goal cards, supported by guiding prompts, enabled students to articulate civic responsibility through familiar school and community experiences rather than through abstract civic ideals. By foregrounding teachers' interpretive responses to a rights-oriented intervention, the study offers evidence-informed insights into how universities and teacher education programmes can support the integration of child rights through pedagogical design that aligns with Sustainable goals and active citizenship.

Keywords: child rights in education, student voice, active citizenship, democratic schooling, teacher education, participatory pedagogy, thematic analysis.

Environmental Education and Children’s Rights : The Transition from Individual Responsibility to Collective Action for a Sustainable Future

Presenter

Petkou Dafni, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Alexander Campus, 57400, Greece.

All authors

Petkou Dafni, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Alexander Campus, 57400, Greece.

Tsaridou Katerina, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Alexander Campus, 57400, Greece.

This paper examines the role of Environmental Education (EE) as a fundamental framework for fostering ecological awareness and promoting human rights, with particular emphasis on children’s rights. In the context of the climate crisis, education for sustainable development extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and aims to empower students to develop skills related to active citizenship and collective action. The theoretical foundation of the study links the right to a healthy environment with quality of life and the educational process, highlighting that environmental degradation constitutes a direct threat to the fundamental rights of present and future generations (Rees, 2021). At the same time, the pedagogical value of integrating nature into school education is documented, as it contributes to the improvement of children’s health, well-being, and learning experiences—conditions that are essential for the exercise of a broader range of human rights (Tuparevska, 2023). Through experiential teaching practices and school-based activities, the school is conceptualized as a “green community” that enhances student participation and connects individual responsibility with the collective advocacy of environmental rights (Makuch et al., 2020). In conclusion, the school is highlighted as a dynamic laboratory of sustainability that promotes environmental awareness, critical thinking, and collaboration, rendering children’s active participation both a pedagogical and ethical imperative for ensuring a sustainable and socially just future.

Keywords: environmental education, children’s rights, sustainable development, individual and collective action, ecological awareness

Article 13 of the CRC through an Anthropological view

Presenter

Ioannidou Elizabeth, Public Onassis F. Lyceum.

All authors

Ioannidou Elizabeth, Public Onassis F. Lyceum.

The thirteenth article of the CRC is a clear reference statement, unique among the 53 others: The child shall have the right to freedom of expression. It is unique because in all the other articles there is the implication that the child and his rights are subject to protection by others without his own autonomy (CRN). The subject (human/child) and his place in the world are examined by Anthropology physically, socially, linguistically and culturally through the observation and analysis of their development and application globally, because "Human rights is not a static concept" (AAA). The wording of Article 13 includes the scope of its elements in space, "regardless of frontiers" and in an a-temporal analytical category "through any other media of the child's choice". This is an absolutely holistic and qualitative approach to children's right to expression. Some forty years after this declaration, today, lived experience reveals that children literally "seek, receive and impart information and ideas...of the child's choice" in digital environments, where they freely exercise the right. Article 13 also mentions as potential limitations of the right only those arising from human law, while there is no verbal reference to the "States Parties", indicating its absolute and inherent character, unaffected by external factors. The development and formation of human culture and language can be reached more clearly in the behaviors of young people, as they are the agents of change in their own generation. With their free participation in the co-creation of global culture through Education and Digital literacy, the harsh discriminatory age limit of -18 fades away and equally, equitably and voluntarily, like all members of the global community, they contribute according to their abilities, which are accepted or not after passing the single criterion, which is the credibility of each work and speech in its context. In the same way, the generally accepted criterion for determining the H-C R, that of non-discrimination, will be logically integrated into the more absolute, just and genre, criterion of equality. In the "H.R.-C.R." Club, in which students of Public Onassis F. Lyceum are active, the socio-political perspective is shaped through the filter of Anthropology.

Keywords: child rights, 13th UNCHR article, equality, anthropology.

Teacher Wellbeing and Institutional Support in ESL Education: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.

Presenter

Riga Maria, Hellenic Open University, Greece.

All authors

Riga Maria, Hellenic Open University, Greece.

Zorbas Vassilios, University of Patras, Greece.

This paper explores the role of educational institutions and their support systems in shaping teacher wellbeing by comparing expatriate and local ESL teachers in South Korea and Greece. Despite cultural, economic, and institutional differences, findings reveal common challenges such as classroom management difficulties and insufficient support, which impact teacher mental health. An online survey of 80 participants — 42 expatriate teachers in South Korea and 38 local teachers in Greece — employs quantitative methods to assess burnout levels and identify stressors. The study draws on theoretical frameworks to analyze institutional factors influencing teacher wellbeing, including workload, staff support, and workplace pressures. It also discusses how institutional strategies can promote teacher resilience and mental health. This research contributes to understanding how educational institutions can develop targeted policies and practices to support teacher wellbeing, emphasizing the importance of cross-national insights for fostering healthier teaching environments. The findings highlight the significance of institutional support in promoting teacher mental health and inform strategies for integrating wellbeing initiatives into academic and educational settings.

Keywords: teacher wellbeing, institutional support, cross-cultural comparison, ESL education, teacher resilience.

The Right to Education in the Shadow of Marginalization: Structural and Pedagogical Challenges of Working with Roma Children in Early Childhood Education.
Presenter

Nešić Maja, Preschool Institution Bambi, Serbia.

All authors

Nešić Maja, Preschool Institution Bambi, Serbia.

The right to quality and equitable education is firmly embedded in international human rights frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite these normative commitments, substantial disparities persist for children from marginalized Roma communities. This paper is based on qualitative professional observations and reflective practice conducted within a preschool setting predominantly attended by Roma children in Serbia. The analysis explores structural, familial, and institutional factors that influence the realization of children's rights in early childhood education. Findings derived from long-term professional engagement indicate that many children experience educational disadvantage shaped by intergenerational poverty, low parental educational attainment, social exclusion, and, in some cases, exposure to neglect or alternative care arrangements. Limited parental pedagogical knowledge and fragile trust between families and educational institutions significantly affect children's adaptation, emotional stability, and access to developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. These conditions reveal a gap between formal rights and their practical implementation. The paper argues that safeguarding child rights in marginalized contexts requires a systemic and intersectoral approach that extends beyond the classroom. It advocates for structured parental empowerment initiatives, strengthened collaboration between early childhood institutions and social services, and sustained professional support for educators working in high-risk environments. By situating local practice within broader child rights discourses, the study contributes practice-based evidence to ongoing international discussions on equity, inclusion, and the role of educational institutions in advancing social justice.

Keywords: child rights, Roma inclusion, early childhood education, social equity, parental empowerment.

Set C2 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Early Childhood Dimensions of Child Rights”

"I am a child and I have rights": University and Community. Cooperation To Promote Children's Rights

Presenter

Nikiforidou Zoi, Associate Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece.

All authors

Nikiforidou Zoi, Associate Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Rentzou Konstantina, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece.

The aim of this study is to illustrate undergraduate students' expectations and experiences in participating in a two-day event in Ioannina, on children's rights. The project 'I am a child and I have rights' was inspired by the 35 years anniversary of the UNCRC and the 60 years of the establishment of the University of Ioannina. The researchers in collaboration with students, colleagues from other Institutions, colleagues at the daycare MERIMNA, families and children brought to fruition a two-day event, celebrating children's rights, including speeches, presentations, seminars, activities, games, artful creations, artefacts and puppetry. As part of this project, exploratory qualitative research was conducted to record the views of undergraduate students, who participated voluntarily, on their experience in engaging in activities that link their field of study to everyday practice, with a focus on children's rights. One online questionnaire with open-ended questions was distributed before the implementation of the project (N=24) and a second questionnaire, after the implementation of the project (N=13). Students were invited to review and evaluate their lived experience in regards to their initial expectations. Overall, the students chose to participate in the project in order to enhance their knowledge through collaboration with educators and to have the opportunity to put into practice what they had learned at a theoretical level in their course. They confirmed that their participation helped them develop, above all, self-confidence, creativity, and collaboration skills. Students really enjoyed being in contact with young children and families and deepened into matters regarding children's rights. Such initiatives are very rich, powerful, student-centered and experiential.

Keywords: children's rights, learning experiences in the community, third space, pre-service early childhood educators, university-community liaison.

“Play is fun and helps us make friends but at school we have to follow teachers' instructions”. Preschool-aged children's views and perceptions about their play.

Presenter

Rentzou Konstantina, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece.

All authors

Rentzou Konstantina, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece.

Play, as inherent in children’s daily life, has been explored from different perspectives and ideological structures. Yet, research has focused on exploring primarily adults’ perspectives while children’s perspectives have been given limited attention. The aim of the present study is to map the views and perceptions of preschool children about their play. More precisely, the research aims to explore whether children are agents of action regarding where, when, with whom and with what they play and if and how children’s views differ according to their age. Data was collected from 42 children, using tools of the mosaic approach. Results highlight that children’s views about play change as children grow older. Play, irrespective of children’s age, is a funny and creative activity, which make children feel secure. Children, across ages, have been found to not exert any agency in terms of where, when and how long they can play. Although friends are the favourite playmates of children across ages, children’s willingness to have their educators involved in their play changes according to their age. Results highlight the importance of understanding children’s views of play and negotiating children’s agency in terms of their play.

Keywords: children’s play, children’s views on play, early childhood education and care, primary education, Greece.

The Children's Right to Multilingualism: Educators' Perspectives on Multilingualism in Early Childhood.

Presenter

Chrysouli Chrysi, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

All authors

Chrysouli Chrysi, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Multilingualism is an increasingly visible reality in early childhood education settings, yet it is often addressed through limited or symbolic pedagogical practices rather than as a fundamental children's right. This study investigates how future early childhood educators conceptualize the integration of children's home languages into classroom activities and how these conceptualizations reflect underlying understandings of multilingualism, inclusion, and children's rights. Data were collected through open-ended written responses from female students enrolled in an early childhood education program, focusing on their proposed strategies for incorporating children's languages into everyday educational practices. A thematic discourse analysis enriched with elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed to examine both the content of the proposed practices and the discursive patterns shaping them. The findings indicate that participants generally express positive attitudes toward multilingualism and emphasize practices such as songs, games, storytelling, and visual materials to include children's languages. However, multilingualism is frequently framed as an optional or supplementary activity rather than as an inherent right of the child. Discursive patterns reveal the naturalization of early language learning, the positioning of the dominant language as the normative medium of instruction, and the conditional inclusion of children's home languages within educator-controlled boundaries. From a children's rights perspective, the study highlights a tension between recognition and regulation: while children's languages are valued symbolically, their use is often constrained by pedagogical control and concerns about order and comprehension. The findings underscore the need for teacher education programs to move beyond celebratory approaches to multilingualism and to foreground a rights-based understanding that positions children's languages as integral to participation, identity, and educational equity in early childhood settings.

Keywords: multilingualism, early childhood, education, educators, perspectives, rights.

Children's Rights Through Language: A Vocabulary Analysis of Children's Storybooks in Early Childhood Settings.

Presenter

Karvouniari Maria, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

All authors

Karvouniari Maria, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Children's literature plays a crucial role in young children's linguistic, social, and moral development, particularly within early childhood education settings. The language used in picture books and fairy tales is not neutral; rather, it reflects and constructs social values, power relations, and specific representations of childhood. The present study examines the types of vocabulary found in children's storybooks commonly used in early childhood settings, focusing on how this vocabulary aligns with principles of children's rights. Drawing on frameworks from Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and the Sociology of Childhood, the study conceptualizes vocabulary as a cultural and ideological indicator. The analysis focuses on six key lexical categories: vocabulary that reflects values, vocabulary that reveals power relations, vocabulary that grants or restricts children's agency, vocabulary that expresses children's rights, vocabulary that enables children's voice, and vocabulary that promotes children's participation. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on a corpus of children's books selected from early childhood institutions. Lexical items and phrases were identified and coded according to the above categories. The findings indicate that while many books include vocabulary that promotes values such as cooperation, kindness, and respect, a significant number also contain language that reinforces adult authority, obedience, and limited child agency. Conversely, books that employ rights-based, participatory, and voice-oriented vocabulary present children as active social subjects with opinions, emotions, and decision-making capacity. The study highlights the importance of critically examining the language of children's literature used in early childhood education, as vocabulary choices directly shape children's understanding of their rights, their sense of agency, and their role within social relationships. The findings suggest the need for greater awareness among educators and curriculum designers regarding the selection and pedagogical use of children's books that support a rights-based and child-centered approach to early education.

Keywords: child rights, voice, lexical choices, early childhood, education, literature.

**The Right to Write: Educators' Perspectives on Writing in Young Children.
Presenter**

Kepesidou Gabriella Grammata, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

All authors

Kepesidou Gabriella Grammata, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

This study investigates how future educators conceptualize the existence and nature of written language in early childhood, positioning early writing within a child rights framework that emphasizes children's right to expression, participation, and meaning-making. The research draws on short written texts produced by ECEC Educators in response to the prompt "Does writing exist in early childhood?" Adopting a qualitative research design, the study employs a combined methodological approach integrating Thematic Analysis with elements of Critical Discourse Analysis. This analytical combination enables an exploration not only of the thematic content of the perceptions but also of the discursive mechanisms through which children, literacy, and educational responsibility are constructed. A structured analytical framework was applied to identify recurrent thematic categories, linguistic choices, and representations of the child in relation to early writing practices. The findings reveal a tension between competing discourses. On the one hand, early writing is frequently conceptualized as a school-bound, correctness-oriented skill that emerges only through formal instruction. On the other hand, some participants recognize early writing as a legitimate form of pre-conventional expression, imitation, or social practice embedded in children's everyday experiences. Linguistic analysis highlights the use of modality, age-based assumptions, and appeals to institutional authority, which function to either restrict or legitimize children's engagement with written language. Consequently, children are discursively positioned either as passive recipients of instruction or as active agents participating in meaning-making processes. By framing early writing as a matter of child rights, the study underscores the pedagogical and ideological implications of educators' perceptions for the realization of children's literacy rights. The paper concludes by arguing for the critical examination of dominant literacy discourses within teacher education, advocating for more inclusive, rights-based approaches to early literacy pedagogy.

Keywords: child rights, voice, writing, ideas, early childhood, education.

The Right to Be Heard: A Speech Act Analysis of Children’s Voice in Preschool Media.

Presenter

Dalampira Dimitra, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

All authors

Dalampira Dimitra, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Children’s rights to participation, expression, and protection are increasingly mediated through everyday communicative practices, including children’s media. This study explores how speech acts function as pragmatic resources through which children’s rights are modeled, negotiated, and normalized in preschool television discourse. Drawing on Speech Act Theory, the research analyzes selected episodes of the animated series Peppa Pig, focusing on the distribution and functions of representative, directive, commissive, and expressive acts produced by both child and adult characters. Using qualitative micro-analysis, speech acts were coded in relation to speaker–listener roles, illocutionary force, politeness strategies, and power relations. The findings indicate that children’s voices are prominently represented through expressive and directive acts, enabling the articulation of preferences, emotions, and agency. At the same time, adult characters employ mitigated directives and commissives that frame guidance, care, and protection within supportive and dialogic interactions. Apologies, promises, and expressions of concern emerge as key pragmatic mechanisms through which moral responsibility, emotional security, and relational respect are communicated. The study argues that preschool media constitute influential pragmatic environments where children’s rights, particularly the right to be heard, the right to guidance and care, and the right to emotional well-being, are implicitly enacted through language use. By highlighting the role of everyday speech acts in children’s rights socialization, this research contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on child participation, media discourse, and rights-based early childhood education.

Keywords: child rights, voice, preschool media, speech acts, early childhood, education.

Set C3 | 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Academia as duty-bearer and the academic agenda”

Academia as Duty-Bearer: A Conceptual Framework for Child Rights Education Informed by Evidence from Early Childhood Education in Rwanda.

Presenter

Osae Christine, Unicaf University, Zambia.

All authors

Osae Christine, Unicaf University, Zambia.

Global commitments to the Convention on the Rights of the Child have generated extensive legal and policy architectures, yet persistent child rights violations in early childhood education (ECE) reveal a deeper structural problem: the insufficient institutionalization of child rights within academia itself. This paper advances a theoretical intervention that repositions universities not only as producers of child rights knowledge, but as institutional duty-bearers responsible for embedding, translating, and sustaining child rights norms across education systems. Using empirical evidence from Rwanda, where surveys and interviews across 16 ECE institutions reveal high levels of physical abuse (up to 47% in community-based centers) and emotional abuse, including yelling (40%) and inconsistent treatment (45%), the paper interrogates why such violations endure despite formal policy prohibitions. Rather than treating abuse as a failure of individual teachers or regulatory enforcement, the analysis conceptualizes these violations as outcomes of weak academic integration of child rights into teacher education, limited research-to-practice pathways, and fragmented institutional engagement by universities. Anchored in child rights education theory, rights-based pedagogy, and interdisciplinary approaches to child protection, the paper proposes a conceptual framework defining academia's role across three interdependent domains: (1) child rights as an epistemological foundation of teacher education curricula, (2) applied and context-responsive research with explicit translational mechanisms, and (3) sustained institutional partnerships linking universities, policymakers, and child-rights actors. Reframing safeguarding failures as deficits in academic responsibility rather than peripheral implementation gaps contributes to theoretical debates on the social responsibility of higher education and calls for a shift from episodic academic involvement to institutionalized child rights leadership within universities, with relevance for ECE systems globally.

Keywords: child rights education, academia, higher education responsibility, rights-based pedagogy, early childhood education, Rwanda.

Institutionalising the Sociology of Childhood and Children in African Universities: A Lever for The Effective Implementation of Children’s Rights.

Presenter

Keptchuime Konguep Léonel, University of Yaoundé, Cameroon

All authors

Keptchuime Konguep Léonel, University of Yaoundé, Cameroon

This paper advocates for the inclusion of the sociology of childhood and children in university curricula in Africa. It calls on the entire academic system, and sociologists in particular, to take a greater interest in the world of children as a source of meaning and power. Although this field of knowledge is well documented and theorised in Western universities, it must be acknowledged that in Africa in general, the dynamics of knowledge production in this area, even if it is underway in several respects, remain tentative and need to be developed and intensified. This is certainly due to the fact that, in the Cameroonian social imagination, children remain agents to be socialised, who must conform to the dictates of cultural ethos. However, when we look more closely at the daily lives of “little ones”, it becomes clear that there are a number of equally complex dynamics at play. In this vein, starting from an essentially theoretical approach, which draws on documentary analysis of issues in the sociology of childhood and the question of children’s rights, combined with direct observations, this communication first presents an overview of the work carried out on this issue; then, it aims to reveal some salient facts likely to awaken sociological intuition in this field of knowledge; and finally, to formulate research perspectives, in particular to improve the practice of children’s rights in Cameroon. There is an urgent need to integrate teaching units dedicated to the study of the sociology of childhood and children into academic training programmes, particularly in sociology. This will inevitably contribute to better implementation of children’s rights, because in order to understand these rights, one must first understand their social environment.

Keywords: advocacy, sociology of childhood and children, children’s rights, children, Africa.

Teaching children's rights and their role in the development of moral judgement among adolescent students at Garoua University.

Presenter

Makouegha Fotsing Louvrance Michèle, Teacher-Researcher, Faculty of education / University of Garoua.

All authors

Makouegha Fotsing Louvrance Michèle, Teacher-Researcher, Faculty of education / University of Garoua.

At the University of Garoua, most students are at a key stage in the consolidation of their identity and values. The teaching of children's rights, often perceived as knowledge intended for the youngest, seems to be poorly integrated into Cameroonian university curricula, even though it conveys fundamental principles of justice, empathy, and human dignity. There is a gap between the educational potential of human rights and their effective appropriation by young adults in the university context. It is unclear to what extent a structured knowledge of these rights can interact with and influence the development of mature moral judgement capable of reasoning about complex ethical dilemmas. What is the specific role of teaching children's rights in the development of moral judgement among adolescent students at the University of Garoua? We postulate that formal and systematic teaching of children's rights at university contributes significantly to enriching and refining students' moral judgement, promoting the transition to more advanced stages of reasoning characterised by fairness, the principle of universality, and consideration for others. The main objective of our research is to analyse the influence of academic knowledge of children's rights on the stages of moral reasoning processes among a student population transitioning to adulthood. Our study was conducted using a quantitative survey of a sample of 150 adolescent students at the University of Garoua. A structured questionnaire was used to measure both the level of knowledge of legal instruments relating to children's rights and the stage of moral judgement according to Kohlberg's scale. Statistical analyses, including correlation and regression tests, were applied to examine the relationships between the variables. The results show a strong correlation between the level of knowledge of children's rights and the stage of post-conventional moral judgement. In particular, they reveal that students who have taken a specific module on children's rights score significantly higher in ethical reasoning based on universal principles.

Keywords: children's rights, moral judgement, adolescent students, higher education, ethical development.

Highlighting The Central Role Of Academics In Promoting Children's Rights And How To Integrate Them Into The Academic Agenda At The International And National Levels

Presenter

Dieudonne Essomba Arnold, Student in Social and Biological Sciences and Applied Behavioral Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Yaoundé.

All authors

Dieudonne Essomba Arnold, Student in Social and Biological Sciences and Applied Behavioral Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Yaoundé.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) is a UN agency created in 1946, headquartered in New York, USA. It is responsible worldwide for defending children's rights, meeting their essential needs, and promoting their full development. In this context, community animation is a process of support and mobilization aimed at encouraging local groups to identify their needs, participate actively in social life, and act collectively to improve their quality of life. Children's rights are a set of fundamental rights guaranteed by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), recognizing the child as a subject of rights, not just a vulnerable being. These rights include survival, development, protection (against violence, exploitation, discrimination), and participation (expression, information), covering essential needs like health, education, family, name, and a sufficient standard of living, until the age of 18. Promotion refers to the nomination, accession of a person to a higher grade, position, or hierarchical position. Our reflection will focus on community animation as a tool for promoting children's rights, aiming to address issues such as low decision-making, exploitation, and lack of awareness among children in the community. The objective is to implement SBC tools, such as educational talks, positive deviance, gamification, image boxes, and nudging, as tools for positive social and behavioral change among children in the community. The exchanges in Greece will build various global universities, thus enabling the development of a unified global approach to respecting children's rights. This is the purpose of the conference from June 4–6, 2026, at the Themi Campus of the International University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Keywords: academia, child rights, UN agency, vulnerable beings

Integrating Child Rights Education into University Teacher-Training Curricula: The Role of Academia–Private Sector Partnerships in Transforming Teacher Professional Development

Presenter

Wirngo Tani Ernestine, Higher Teacher Training College (ENS), University of Yaoundé 1, Department of Sciences of Education (SCED), Coordinator, UNICEF Child Rights Centre, University of Yaoundé 1, Focal Point GPE KIX Afrique 21, Cameroon.

All authors

Wirngo Tani Ernestine, Higher Teacher Training College (ENS), University of Yaoundé 1, Department of Sciences of Education (SCED), Coordinator, UNICEF Child Rights Centre, University of Yaoundé 1, Focal Point GPE KIX Afrique 21, Cameroon.

Persistent learning inequalities in the Global South continue to undermine the realization of children’s rights to inclusive, equitable and quality education, despite significant gains in school enrolment. Prior to and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence from UNESCO and the World Bank has highlighted a widespread learning crisis, characterized by low proficiency in foundational skills and limited teacher preparedness. While international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasize the central role of teachers in safeguarding and promoting child rights, these principles remain insufficiently integrated into university-based teacher education and professional development programs. This paper examines how innovative teacher professional development (TPD) models can serve as effective mechanisms for embedding child rights education into university teacher-training curricula, with particular attention to the role of academia–private sector partnerships. Drawing on a qualitative synthesis of evidence from large-scale and context-responsive TPD initiatives supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the study analyses how active learning, pedagogical content knowledge, gender-responsive practices, and technology-enabled training contribute to child-centred and rights-based teaching. The paper highlights the strategic role of universities as curriculum developers, research hubs, and professional learning spaces capable of institutionalizing child rights education within pre-service and in-service teacher training. It further demonstrates how partnerships with private sector actors, particularly in educational technology and digital learning, enhance scalability, sustainability, and equity in teacher professional development. The findings suggest that integrating child rights education through practice-oriented, collaborative, and digitally supported TPD strengthens teachers’ professional competencies and their capacity to protect, promote, and advance children’s rights in diverse classroom contexts.

Keywords: GPE KIX, teacher professional development, curriculum, academia–private sector partnerships, global south, inclusive education.

Knowledge for Protection: How Academia Supports Child Rights

Presenter

Somorin Adejare Taofeek, International Initiative for Peace (IIP), Nigeria.

All authors

Somorin Adejare Taofeek, International Initiative for Peace (IIP), Nigeria.

Idowu Adeola Sahhed, CIVITAS Consulting, Nigeria.

This paper examines the critical role of academia in promoting and protecting child rights through research, advocacy, and community engagement. Despite global progress in recognizing child rights, millions of children worldwide face violations of their rights to education, protection, and participation. Academia, with its unique capacity to generate knowledge, analyze policies, and influence public discourse, is pivotal in addressing these challenges.

Main Idea:

The main idea of this article/presentation is to explore the role of academia in promoting and protecting child rights through research, advocacy, and community engagement. It highlights how academic institutions can leverage their resources and expertise to support child rights initiatives, inform policy, and improve outcomes for children, particularly in contexts like Nigeria.

Possible Methodological Choices:

The article/presentation could employ a mixed-methods approach, combining:

- Literature Review
- Case Studies
- Interviews/Surveys

Description of Data:

The data could include:

- Examples of academic research influencing child rights policies (e.g., studies on access to education, child protection laws).
- Case studies of universities partnering with communities or NGOs to support child rights
- Statistics on child rights challenges in Nigeria.

Conclusion:

The article/presentation would conclude that academia plays a vital role in advancing child rights by generating evidence, shaping policies, and building capacity.

Strengthening partnerships between academia, governments, and civil society is key to translating knowledge into protection and fulfillment of child rights.

Keywords: child rights, academia, research, advocacy, policy protection.

Set C4 | 15:45 – 17:15 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University,
Thermi Campus

“Child Rights and Parenting”

The Right of Children to Literacy: Redefining Early Literacy as a Human Right in the 21st Century.

Presenter

Bourogianni Maria Eleni, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

All authors

Bourogianni Maria Eleni, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Papadopoulos Isaak, Department of Early Childhood Education & Care, IHU, Greece.

Literacy is increasingly recognized not merely as a foundational academic skill, but as a fundamental human right, a social responsibility, and a lifelong cornerstone of individual and societal development. This paper reconceptualizes literacy in the 21st century by moving beyond traditional decoding skills to encompass oral language, print awareness, phonological skills, digital literacy, and critical thinking, competencies that begin developing long before formal schooling. Anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29), the presentation positions early and equitable access to literacy experiences as both a legal and moral imperative essential for equality, participation, and social justice. The paper highlights literacy as a powerful catalyst for human development, supporting cognitive and emotional growth, academic success across disciplines, and broader societal outcomes such as poverty reduction and democratic participation. Emphasis is placed on the shared responsibility of educators, families, communities, and policymakers. Educators are framed as advocates and architects of inclusive, play-based, multimodal, and culturally responsive learning environments, while the home is presented as the child's first classroom, where emotionally rich literacy practices foster engagement and meaning. Central to the discussion is the recognition of children as active participants with agency, the right to self-expression, choice, and individualized learning pathways. The paper also critically examines systemic barriers to literacy, including socioeconomic inequality, language barriers, limited access to resources, and institutional gaps, underscoring that these challenges reflect systemic failures rather than individual deficits. Concluding with a call to action, the presentation advocates for collaborative ecosystems, strengthened policy frameworks, investment in early intervention and teacher training, and universal access to literacy resources, reframing literacy from a privilege to a guaranteed right for every child.

Keywords: child rights, voice, literacy, agency, early childhood, education.

Parenting styles and children's rights: Aligning the authoritative model with the UNCRC.

Presenter

Nefeloudi Evmorfia, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors

Nefeloudi Evmorfia, International Hellenic University, Greece

Tympa Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece

Tsitiridou – Evangelou Maria, International Hellenic University, Greece

Gregoriadis Athanasios, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

The intersection of higher education and child rights advocacy finds a critical application in the study of early childhood development, where academic research informs the transition of international legal frameworks into domestic parenting practices (Zhussipbek & Nagayeva, 2022). This review paper explores how parenting styles serve as the primary mechanism for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007) during the preschool years, a vital developmental period where children shift from total dependence to emerging autonomy (Gheaus, Calder, & De Wispelaere, 2019). While the UNCRC provides a legally binding framework for child rights, its realization in daily life depends heavily on the "rights-based" approach of the primary caregiver. By mapping the traditional framework of demandingness versus responsiveness, the study provides a conceptual analysis of how the authoritative parenting style is identified as the essential "rights-based" approach that functions as a mentorship rather than a rulership (Zhussipbek & Nagayeva, 2022). Unlike authoritarian parenting style that prioritizes immediate obedience over developmental needs (Baumrind, 2005), the authoritative model aligns with Article 3 (Best Interests) by focusing on long-term growth and support, upholds Article 5 (Evolving Capacities) by encouraging age-appropriate independence, and validates Article 12 (Right to be Heard) by actively listening to and valuing the child's voice and perspective within the family context. By synthesizing these disciplines, the paper argues for a new academic paradigm in child rights education that views rights-based parenting as a prerequisite for fostering global citizens (Bennett, Aguayo, & Field, 2016) equipped with resilience, empathy, and critical thinking. Ultimately, this paper argues that the authoritative model provides the critical bridge between international legal mandates and educational practice, transforming the family into the primary site for cultivating the democratic values and self-regulation necessary for the internalization of a sustainable human rights culture.

Keywords: UNCRC, authoritative parenting, parenting styles, child's rights.

Emerging Literacy as a Child's Right: Linking Family and Academia.

Presenter

Kazantzoglou Rodi, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Kazantzoglou Rodi, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tsitiridou-Evangelou Maria, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tympa Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Gregoriadis Athanasios, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Emerging literacy is a fundamental right of the child and a critical foundation for cognitive, linguistic and social development. It is closely linked to key rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including the right to education, equal opportunities and participation in high-quality learning environments from early childhood (UNICEF, 1989). Contemporary approaches emphasize that access to literacy is largely shaped within the family and the home learning environment and depends on active engagement of both mothers and fathers in everyday interactions with their child (Krousorati, 2020; Gregoriadis et al., 2023; Liu & Chung, 2022). This paper examines emerging literacy as a child's right and highlights the role of parental support as a key mechanism for promoting educational equity. Selected international examples of interventions and parental empowerment programs are also presented, demonstrating positive effects on children's language development and early literacy skills, while considering socioeconomic factors (Turnbull et al., 2022). Particular emphasis is placed on the role of academia and universities in framing, producing and disseminating knowledge related to children's rights, as well as in developing models that bridge research, education and family practice. Integrating a rights-based perspective into emerging literacy and parental support can serve as a powerful tool for promoting social justice and ensuring equal learning opportunities for all children.

Keywords: emerging literacy, child rights, parental support, home learning environment, educational equity.

Promoting Children’s Rights through parental support

Presenter

Stefanidou Sofia, International Hellenic University, Greece.

All authors

Stefanidou Sofia, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tympa Eleni, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Tsitiridou-Evangelou Maria, International Hellenic University, Greece.

Zachopoulou Evidiki, International Hellenic University, Greece.

The vision of the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health (2016-2030) concerns a world in which every woman, child and adolescent has the right to health and wellbeing (WHO, 2018). It is widely recognized that the foundations of health and wellbeing are laid in the early years of children's lives and are considered as complementary concepts (Moore & Oberklaid, 2014). The mental and physical health and happiness of the child constitute its wellbeing (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014) and the evidence demonstrates that the five main factors that influence children’s wellbeing are adequate nutrition, physical activity, opportunities for early learning, responsive caregiving and safety and security (WHO 2018). The parents, as the first and most influential educators of their children ((Evangelou et al., 2005), play a significant role in enhancing the wellbeing of their children. Parent-child interaction and communication play a vital role in learning processes and moreover a stimulating family learning environment could be a determining factor for the child’s cognitive and social-emotional development. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), every child has the right to education that promotes the development to their full potential. In this context, it seems important to mention that intervention programmes aimed at parents can improve their knowledge of their child's development, enhance their parental skills and promote the overall development of their children. To conclude, supporting parents contributes directly to the safeguarding and promotion of children’s rights.

Keywords: children’s rights, wellbeing, children’s development, intervention programme, family environment.

Foreign language education of future preschool teachers: acquiring knowledge about children's rights.

Presenter

Kosharna Natalia, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

All authors

Kosharna Natalia, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

Patryk Lada, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine.

In a globalized and culturally diverse world, foreign language education plays not only a linguistic role for future preschool teachers, but also a crucial part in shaping their inclusive and rights-aware educational practices. This paper argues that foreign language education, integrated with child rights-based approach and pedagogical methodology, becomes a powerful tool that focuses on teaching future preschool teachers to promote respect, equity, communication, and agency among young children. The Foreign Languages and Methodology Department at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University is responsible for delivering a range of courses to students enrolled in Preschool Education and Early Childhood teacher training programmes. These include foundational language courses, such as Foreign Language with Teaching Methods and specialised training in Foreign Language Teaching Methods for Preschool Children. Through these courses, future educators not only develop foreign languages communicative competence, but also learn how to design and implement age-appropriate language learning activities tailored to young learners' developmental needs. Foreign language education of future preschool teachers embodies key child rights principles, such as non-discrimination, respect for diversity, participation, and communication rights. In the classroom, students engage in communicative tasks grounded in real-world scenarios that reflect children's rights, including inclusive play, cooperative learning, and respectful interactions. These pedagogical practices enable future teachers to understand children as active participants in their learning, fostering agency and voice from the earliest stages of education. The methodical courses emphasise child-centred approaches to language teaching, such as play-based learning, storytelling, songs, and experiential activities. These approaches facilitate not only linguistic development but also children's social and emotional well-being, aligning with the broader conceptualisation of child rights within educational contexts. By examining case studies and reflective teaching practices, students are encouraged to analyse the connections between "how" they teach and "what" they teach, as well how these practices uphold or challenge children's rights. Integrating child rights perspectives into foreign language courses also empowers future preschool educators to become advocates both inside and outside classroom settings. For example, through project-

based assignments, students explore themes such as access to quality education, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and the role of communication in supporting children's participation. These projects not only enhance language skills but also deepen students' understanding of how educational environments can either promote or impede children's rights.

Keywords: children`s rights, child rights-based approach, foreign language education, preschool teacher, teacher training.

Set C6 | 15:45 – 17:15 pm, Saturday 6th of June 2026 | International Hellenic University, Thermi Campus

“Norms, customary authority, and rights frameworks”

From Tradition to transformation: Customary and Religious Authorities as Norm Entrepreneurs in advancing Child Rights in Africa

Presenter

Balandi Kirakoya Fatimata, UNICEF Cameroon, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

All authors

Balandi Kirakoya Fatimata, UNICEF Cameroon, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Across African societies, customary and religious authorities continue to shape the moral landscapes within which childhood is defined, negotiated, and protected. Far from being static custodians of tradition, these leaders have emerged as “norm entrepreneurs,” capable of reframing collective expectations and catalysing significant shifts in social behaviour. Building on African legal scholarship—including Ndiaye’s (2021) analysis of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as an articulation of indigenous moral logics—this paper investigates how traditional governance structures can reinforce contemporary child-rights frameworks, and how academia contributes to theorising and strengthening these community-led transformations. Methodologically, the paper employs a qualitative approach combining (a) a review of interdisciplinary academic literature, (b) institutional documentation from Child Rights Centres, and (c) programme data generated through Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) analyses in Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal. These sources allow the paper to assess how academic–community collaborations shape understanding of norm change and support the engagement of traditional leaders in child-rights promotion. Empirical data indicate that customary and religious authorities play a decisive role in reshaping cultural obligations related to child marriage, violent discipline, and gender socialisation. Academic partnerships have facilitated participatory social norms diagnostics, analysis of community by-laws, and reinterpretation of religious and customary doctrines to align with rights-based standards (Bicchieri, 2016; Cislighi & Heise, 2020). Findings show that hybrid governance models—combining customary legitimacy with statutory child-rights law—are more effective and sustainable when informed by academic evidence documenting behavioural dynamics and community accountability mechanisms. The paper concludes by recommending the expansion of university-led research on plural legal systems, traditional authority engagement, and social norms mechanisms as pathways for strengthening child-rights implementation across African contexts.

Keywords: transformation, child rights, customary legitimacy, university research

Scientific Transversality as an African Matrix for Normative Production for Children's Rights.

Presenter

Djonga Pierre, Associate Professor Coordinator of the Children's Rights Centre The University of Bertoua (Cameroon).

All authors

Djonga Pierre, Associate Professor Coordinator of the Children's Rights Centre The University of Bertoua (Cameroon).

The promotion and protection of children's rights in Africa are marked by a persistent tension between the universality of international standards and the plurality of cultural, social and institutional contexts in which these rights must be applied. This tension reveals the limits of a strictly normative and disciplinary approach, often ill-suited to the complexity of African realities. Faced with this situation, this article proposes to rethink the role of the African university based on scientific transversality, seen not simply as a methodological tool, but as an endogenous matrix for normative production in the field of children's rights. Using a cross-disciplinary approach involving law, social sciences, anthropology, public health and education sciences, this study shows that normativity relating to children's rights is no longer constructed exclusively in traditional state arenas, but also within university research. It shows that scientific cross-disciplinarity makes it possible to develop a contextualized conception of the best interests of the child, based on an African reading of vulnerabilities, solidarities and protection mechanisms. In this sense, it contributes to reinforcing the social legitimacy and practical effectiveness of the standards produced, while encouraging their appropriation by local players. The University thus appears as a strategic place for the co-production of standards, capable of integrating endogenous knowledge, community practices and contemporary legal requirements. Ultimately, this paper argues that scientific transversality is an essential lever for the emergence of an African model of normative production in children's rights, in which the University plays a central role in mediating between the universality of rights and cultural particularities.

Key words: scientific transversality, african university, normative production, children's rights, endogenous normativity.

Child Rights, Human Capital And Economic Development: The Case Of African Countries

Presenter

Djoukouo Djoumessi Any Flore, University of Yaounde I | Child Rights Center, University of Yaounde II, Cameroon

All authors

Djoukouo Djoumessi Any Flore, University of Yaounde I | Child Rights Center, University of Yaounde II, Cameroon

Short context and objective: The defence of children's rights is still often perceived as a humanitarian cause aimed at promoting children's well-being and fully guaranteeing their rights. However, the issue of defending children's rights goes beyond this. Education and health policies, to name just a few, undertaken by states primarily aim to guarantee quality human capital, which is essential for the economic development of nations. Yet, the economic argument for defending children's rights is largely unexplored in the literature. However, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and OECD (2002) men with upper secondary education earn on average twice as much as their peers with primary school education and 36 percentage points more than those with lower secondary education. More recently, a study shows that adults who had benefited from childcare stayed in school on average 0.9 years longer and were more likely to hold higher-skilled jobs (Shafiq, Devercelli, and Valerio 2018, Opong-Nkrumah et al., 2019). The objective of this paper is to assess the impact of defending children's rights on the economic development of African states. Method: To perform our analysis, the data used are from 45 African countries. An annual database is needed and will cover the period from 1990 to 2020. The average working hours of children and the average of children going to school are used to capture the violence against children's rights. GDP per capita growth rate is used to approximate development. A cross-sectional design and a mediation test is used. Results: We expect a negative relationship between the average working hours of children and GDP per capita growth rate, and a positive relationship between the average of children going to school and GDP per capita growth rate.

Keywords: child rights, human capital, economic development, mediation test.

Research Outputs in Policy Development in Africa: lessons learn from evidence base informed health decision-making.

Presenter

Bonono-Momnougui Cécile Renée, University of Yaounde 2, Coordinator of the Children's Rights Centre, Cameroon

All authors

Bonono-Momnougui Cécile Renée, University of Yaounde 2, Coordinator of the Children's Rights Centre, Cameroon

It is widely accepted that research plays a significant role in promoting development. Nevertheless, establishing this non-automatic link frequently necessitates the use of knowledge translation mechanisms. In low- and middle-income countries, efforts to render research and evidence applicable to decision-making are intended to connect the disparity between existing knowledge and its implementation in practical situations, in addition to fulfilling particular knowledge requirements needed for informed decision-making. As a technical and iterative process, knowledge transfer (KT) includes the identification, access, synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethical application of knowledge. This process is executed by diverse local participants whose experiences can significantly enhance the Child Rights Center in promoting Children's Rights.

A review of the literature on informed decision-making and an analysis of the CDBPSH experience, which is a research unit established in 2008 to promote informed decision-making based on evidence.

Expected Results

- Synthesis of effective knowledge translation approaches.
- Synthesis of effective methods for transferring scientific knowledge to decision-makers.
- Understanding common mechanisms and the processes behind successful and failed knowledge and translation.
- Identification of challenges and strategies for implementing knowledge translation processes.

Learning from critical factors of success and/or failure in knowledge use for development in order to develop a model that promotes decision-making for promoting Children's Rights and foster the functioning of Children's Rights Center (CRC) in Africa.

Keywords: knowledge translation, promoting children's rights in low-and middle-income countries, children's rights center (CRC) in Africa, evidence informed decision.