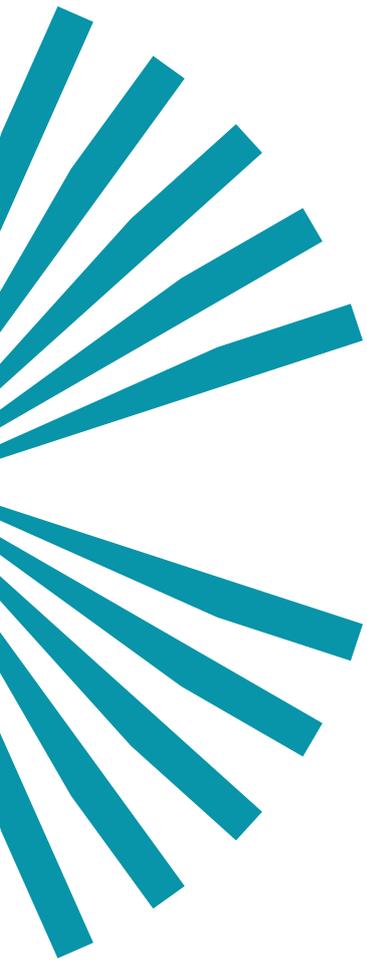




Right to Education

Early Childhood Care and
Education as a gateway
to inclusive education:
an analysis of UN Special
Rapporteurs' Reports





This Right to Education Initiative brief explores ECCE related content from the reports of UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education published between 1999 and 2021.

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The central principle of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, ‘*Leave no one behind*’, is a transformative promise that aims to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups in the development process. With a specific emphasis on [education](#), including early childhood care and education (ECCE), it endeavours to reduce inequalities and discrimination in education and to ‘reach the furthest behind first.’ Driven by this core principle, the [Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood](#) (GPS), launched in December 2021, seeks to ensure ‘inclusive, accessible, affordable, gender-responsive, equitable and developmentally appropriate’ ECCE services for all children¹.

The importance of inclusive education at all levels of education, including ECCE, has also been frequently featured throughout the reports of the successive [Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education](#). The [mandate](#)² of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education was first established in 1998 by the [UN Human Rights Council](#), to examine the crucial issue of the right of all persons to access quality education without discrimination and provide recommendations to Governments and other stakeholders³. Since then, the Special Rapporteurs carrying out this mandate have addressed ‘issues of availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of education’⁴. Their reports have covered pertinent issues relating to different levels of education, from ‘pre-primary to tertiary levels, including non-formal education systems’⁵ and have addressed the key challenges faced by disadvantaged communities in realising their right to education.

This brief reflects a detailed analysis of reports by Special Rapporteurs on the right to education between 1999 and 2021, with a focus on inclusion. We have investigated the different dimensions of ECCE referred to in both [thematic](#) and [country visit](#) reports published by the four successive [Special Rapporteurs](#), namely [Ms. Katarina Tomasevski](#) (Croatia 1998-2004), [Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos](#) (Costa Rica 2004-2010), [Mr. Kishore Singh](#) (India 2010-2016), and the present Special Rapporteur, [Ms. Koumbou Boly Barry](#) (Burkina Faso 2016 - present), from 1999 to 2021.

This document highlights the focus afforded by Special Rapporteurs on the exclusion of different disadvantaged groups from education at the early childhood stage, and its impact on their lifelong learning process. It continues by outlining in country situations and examples of best practice, before documenting the key policy recommendations of Special Rapporteurs, ranging from general recommendations on inclusive ECCE through

¹UNESCO (2021), Global Partnership Strategy for early childhood, 2021-2030. Available from: [Link](#) (accessed on 15 January 2022)

²The mandate of Special Rapporteur on right to education, was first adopted by Commission on Human Rights (which was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006), at its 54th session [with resolution 1998/33](#) of 17 April 1998. It was further extended every three years by the subsequent [resolutions adopted](#) by the Commission on Human Rights / Human Rights Council.

³Special Rapporteur on the right to education. Available from: [Link](#) (accessed on 08 February 2022)

⁴Ibid

⁵Ibid

legal frameworks, and specific recommendations considering ways in which ECCE can be effectively harnessed to tackle inequalities and discrimination in education.

EXCLUSION FROM THE VERY START OF EARLY EDUCATION

The observation and analysis of different education policies and practices by Special Rapporteurs revealed the existence of discrimination and inequalities in accessing education, including early childhood education. The Special Rapporteurs' country visit reports, and thematic reports which refer to the educational rights of marginalised communities like persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, indigenous people, minorities, rural communities, and persons in detentions, substantiate how exclusion at ECCE-level could lead to unequal opportunities and lifelong marginalisation.

For instance, in his [2010 report](#) on the right to education of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, former Special Rapporteur Mr. Vernor Muñoz expressed concern on the inconsistency of policy and provisions and lack of funding for quality and quantity early childhood education programmes in refugees camps and alerted that this '*inconsistency would contribute directly and indirectly to lifelong marginalisation*'⁶. The Palestinian refugee situation detailed by the Special Rapporteur Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry in her [2018 report](#) on the right to education of refugees, showed how **ECCE has been largely neglected in the crisis response strategies and policies**. She indicated that although education is provided by UNRWA⁷ for the five million refugees who live in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as Gaza and the West Bank, '*early childhood provisions are limited except at schools in Lebanon*'⁸.

Similarly, in his 2009 report on the right to education of persons in detention, Mr. Vernor Muñoz expressed concern about the children who are living with their mothers in prison. He observed,

*'In most countries, there is a legal mandate for the provision of preschool education for children living in prison, but in practice, there is no implementation owing to a shortage of economic and human resources'*⁹.

⁶UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education', (2010). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/14/25

⁷United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

⁸UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education' (2018). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/73/262⁴Ibid

⁹UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education' (2009). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/HRC/11/8

Further, the country visit reports presented by the Special Rapporteurs at different times provided concrete examples of how young children are excluded due to various reasons including:

- Lack of legal recognition of ECCE as an integral part of education
- Lack of inclusive approach to ECCE and inconsistent policies and provisions
- Lack of adequate public investment for ECCE
- Privatisation of pre-primary education
- Discriminatory practices in budget allocation and school facilities
- Lack of intercultural and inter-linguistic approach to ECCE.

During the period of our analysis, Special Rapporteurs visited 29 countries. ECCE was referred to in 90% (26) of the in-country reports written, with a focus primarily afforded to the difficulties faced by children from marginalised groups in gaining access to quality ECCE. Among the various reasons highlighted, the lack of public provision and privatisation of pre-primary education seems to be one of the main drivers of exclusion for children from disadvantaged communities. This is reflected in 17 (59%) of the country visit reports. Moreover, the former Special Rapporteur Mr. Kishore Singh reiterated this dimension in the [2014 report](#) on ‘Privatization and right to education’. He said:

‘Private providers find it lucrative to provide early childhood care and education, which has remained scantily covered by the public education system. In most developing countries, the public education system is rudimentary in this respect and private providers have an open market for catering to working families and the middle class’¹⁰.

The Special Rapporteurs also observed under-financing as one of the key reasons for not providing adequate public services and therefore repeatedly emphasised the need for adequate budget allocation for ECCE. In a few countries, even though the budget allocation to overall education is reasonable, the Special Rapporteurs observed a very low budget for pre-primary education in comparison to other levels of education. For example, in 2004 [Malaysia](#) invested 6.2 percent of GDP in education. However, of that amount only one per cent went to pre-primary education, 29 per cent to primary, 35 per cent to secondary and 35 per cent to tertiary education.

¹⁰UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2014). Available from: [Link](#).UN.Doc. A/69/402

¹¹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2009). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/HRC/11/8/Add.2

GROUPS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION

The Special Rapporteur Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry in her 2017 report on the ‘role of equity and inclusion in the right to education’ identified people and groups who are at risk of exclusion. They include: a) Women and Girls, b) Children with disabilities, c) Children who experience poverty, d) Cultural, ethnic and linguistic minority groups, e) Indigenous Communities, f) Rural Population, g) Refugees, h) Migrants and migrant workers, i) Internally displaced persons, j) Nomadic peoples, k) Roma, l) Stateless people and m) all those who cannot afford private education.

IN COUNTRY SITUATIONS DESCRIBED BY SPECIAL RAPPOORTEURS¹²

- The former Special Rapporteur Katarina Tomasevski noted the widening gap in education in [Colombia](#) (2004). She said the privatisation of education has widened the gap between the rich and poor, and as a result pre-school education became the ‘*privilege of those in the higher income bracket*’¹³.
- In the 2006 report on [Botswana](#), Mr. Vernor Muñoz noted, ‘*About 90 percent of eligible children do no access to preschool education, either because preschool facilities do not exist where they live or because their parents cannot afford the fees*’¹⁴.

¹²Kindly note, the examples provided here are taken from the past reports of Special Rapporteurs and therefore do not necessarily reflect the present scenario.

¹³UN ECOSOC, ‘The right to education: Report of the Special Rapporteur’ (2004). Available from: [Link](#). UN.Doc.E/CN.4/2004/45/Add.2

¹⁴UN ECOSOC, ‘The right to education: Report of the Special Rapporteur’ Mission to Botswana (2006). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.E/CN.4/2006/45/Add.1

- In the 2007 report on [Germany](#), Mr. Vernor Muñoz mentioned that although the Government has provided education to Roma children, he observed discrimination in budgetary allocation and school facilities for immigrant children. Further, he said that the language skill tested as an entry requirement for preschool education promotes exclusion¹⁵.
- Mr. Vernor Muñoz observed an alarming gap in the coverage of pre-school education in [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (2008). He said ‘only 6 percent of children are covered, while there are hardly any preschool intuitions in rural areas.’ Therefore, he recommended evolving a legal framework that establishes preschool education as an integral part of education¹⁶.
- Mr. Vernor Muñoz observed a very low budget allocation for ECCE in [Malaysia](#) (2009) in comparison to other levels of education, and unequal access for rural and indigenous children. He said:

‘Government needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that all children have access both to preschool education and to childcare centres, and should bear the cost of both services, in order to prevent certain children being excluded from pre-primary education as a result of economic and social inequalities’¹⁷.

- The former Special Rapporteur Mr. Kishore Singh observed that the shortage of public preschools in [Kazakhstan](#) (2012) led to exclusion as private pre-schools are unaffordable to low-income families. He further noted that children with disabilities did not attend preschool as public schools did not have the necessary conditions or trained staff to work with children with disabilities¹⁸.

¹⁵UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Germany (2007). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/HRC/4/29/Add.3

¹⁶UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008). Available from: [Link](#) UN.Doc.A/HRC/8/10/Add.4

¹⁷UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Malaysia (2009). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/HRC/11/8/Add.2

¹⁸UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, Mission to Kazakhstan (2012). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/20/21/Add.1

¹⁹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, Mission to Ecuador (2013). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/23/35/Add.2

- In the case of [Ecuador](#) (2013), Mr. Kishore Singh noted that even though the State has legal guarantees in line with international human rights standards, children with disabilities do not have access to ECCE due to the lack of human and technical capacity. He further warned that the failure to provide early childhood education could lead to unequal opportunities later in life and undermine progress to higher levels of education¹⁹.
- In the case of [Algeria](#) (2015), Mr. Kishore Singh indicated ‘access to *preschool education* for all Algerian children, particularly physical access for all children to preschool education facilities, is not yet fully available’²⁰.
- In the 2016 report on [Fiji](#), Mr. Kishore Singh observed that the disparities in access to education between rural/remote and urban areas as ‘*preschool is not yet covered as part of the fee-free education*’²¹.

¹⁹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, Mission to Ecuador (2013). Available from: [Link UN Doc.A/HRC/23/35/Add.2](#)

²⁰UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Algeria (2015). Available from: [Link UN Doc.A/HRC/29/30/Add.2](#)

²¹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education on his mission to Fiji’, Mission to Fiji (2016). Available from: [Link UN Doc.A/HRC/32/37/Add.1](#)

ECCE: A FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

ECCE has the capacity to [expand opportunities for disadvantaged children](#) and offer a potential to escape from poverty and other vulnerabilities including social alienation. [Various studies](#) conducted on the impact of ECCE demonstrate that it has long-term individual and social benefits for inclusion. Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education have reflected this emancipatory view of ECCE. For instance, in the [a report published in 2007](#) on the right to education of persons with disabilities, the former Special Rapporteur [Vernor Muñoz](#) recommended that states should invest in inclusive ECCE programmes, as it ‘*can lay the foundation for lifelong inclusion of children with disabilities in both education and society*’. Similarly, in his [2010 report](#), Vernor Muñoz highlighted that quality ECCE would play an ‘important role in offsetting social, economic, and language-based disadvantages’. He further recommended to collectively ‘*build and sustain cohesive and resilient communities able to adapt in response to change*’ which he asserted could be achieved only through quality ECCE that is culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Furthermore, in a [2011 report](#) entitled ‘Financing education and update on education in emergencies’, Mr. Kishore Singh established that learning in their mother tongue at the early stages and rethinking the teaching of history in religion in conflict-sensitive areas would promote a non-violent school environment.

In her [2017 report](#), Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry emphasised that bilingual education, especially mother-tongue instruction in early childhood, could improve school outcomes of children from indigenous communities.

In addition, in country visit reports the Special Rapporteurs have suggested ECCE as a solution to many issues relating to the social integration of the migrant children, for example through the introduction of intercultural education and by addressing the issue of school dropouts. The former Special Rapporteur Katarina Tomasevski noted in the [Turkey](#) visit report (2002) that inadequate knowledge of Turkish is an obstacle to children’s exercise of their right to education, and recommended ECCE as a solution.

‘Many of the children of migrants do not speak Turkish fluently, Turkish being their second language. Hence, these children are very likely to struggle to keep pace in reading and writing exercises and eventually to drag behind the class, falling out of favour with the teachers and finally dropping out of school... One solution to this problem is opening pre-school classes, especially in neighbourhoods where there are migrant households whose native language is not Turkish’²².

²²UN ECOSOC, ‘Report submitted by Katarina Tomaševski, Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, Mission to Turkey (2002). Available from: [Link](#)

Similarly, in 2015, the former Special Rapporteur Mr. Kishore Singh recommended that [Algeria](#) make universal access to pre-school education, as a solution to the problem of school dropouts²³.

Besides, ECCE was recommended as a necessary condition for children facing difficulties in adjusting to school life and for an improved quality of learning. For example, in a 2006 report on [Botswana](#) visit, Mr. Vernor Muñoz said:

“Preschool is especially necessary for children from disadvantaged communities such as the Basarwa, who face steeper hurdles in adjusting to school life. The authorities are aware of the importance of pre-school education as a condition of improved quality of learning.”²⁴

While the Special Rapporteurs have seen ECCE as a gateway for social integration and learning a new language in a new environment, they also insisted on the importance of inter-cultural education and mother-tongue instruction. In the case of [Botswana](#), the former Special Rapporteur Victor Muñoz mentioned that:

‘it would be counterproductive to teach preschool pupils to speak, read and write in a language other than their home language and not using their own cultural background and references’²⁵.

Therefore, he recommended intercultural education and suggested preschool education as an ‘excellent opportunity’ for it to be introduced. The importance of linguistically appropriate ECCE was further underlined in the [2011 report](#) on the promotion of equality of opportunity in education. In this report, Mr. Kishore Singh noted that governments of countries with many local languages or where the official language is not the one spoken at home should ensure that minorities have the opportunity to learn in their mother tongue in school²⁶.

²³UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Algeria (2015). Available from: [Link UN Doc.A/HRC/29/30/Add.2](#)

¹⁸UN ECOSOC, ‘The right to education: Report of the Special Rapporteur’, Mission to Botswana (2006). Available from: [Link UN Doc.E/CN.4/2006/45/Add.1](#)

²⁵Ibid

²⁶UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2011). Available from: [Link UN Doc. A/HRC/17/29](#)

A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE ECCE

Endorsing inclusive ECCE as a solution to address inequalities and discrimination in education, the Special Rapporteurs have at different times emphasised the need for a normative framework that guarantees inclusion. The call for an inclusive framework on ECCE began as early as [2002](#), in defining ECCE as an integral part of the right to education. The first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms. Katarina Tomasevski, emphasised that the right to education should not be ‘an age-specific right for children’ as it may exclude younger children and over-aged children from claiming their right to education²⁷. In a report published in [2010](#), Mr. Vernor Muñoz called for an inclusive legal framework for all levels of education including ECCE. He said,

“To ensure the elimination of discrimination, and the successful integration and social justice for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, the normative boundaries of the right to education have to be shifted towards the inclusion of all types and levels of education.”²⁸

This has been further reemphasised by Special Rapporteur Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry in her [2017 report](#) on the ‘role of equity and inclusion in the right to education’. She said,

“The right to education encompasses all aspects of education, from early childhood care and education to adult literacy programmes, and the right to lifelong learning. Equitable, inclusive approaches should be applied at all levels of education, not just the primary level.”²⁹

The Special Rapporteurs also acknowledged countries that have adapted inclusive ECCE laws and policies and highlighted them both in thematic and country visit reports.

²⁷UN ECOSOC, ‘The right to education: Report of the Special Rapporteur’. Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.E/CN.4/2002/60

²⁸UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2010). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/14/25

²⁹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2017). Available from: [Link](#), UN Doc. A/72/496

INCLUSIVE ECCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES: GLOBAL EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE³⁰

- Before migrant children join mainstream classes in Denmark (2010), they receive up to two years of classes in Danish as a second language in separate teams. This ‘compulsory language stimulation’ starts at age three. Afterward, bilingual and monolingual children learn together³¹.
- The Venezuelan (2010) Constitution guarantees that migrants have an unrestricted right to free education from ECCE to higher education. Additionally, Venezuelan schools are obligated to allow the registration of undocumented children³².
- In Seychelles (2014), tuition and school books are free for disadvantaged students for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education³³.
- In Panama (2017), family and community centres provide non-formal preschool education to children from socially vulnerable groups, such as those living in rural, indigenous, and marginal urban areas³⁴.
- Under Swedish (2017) law, children that are seeking asylum have an equal right to preschool education as residents, funded by the Swedish Migration Agency³⁵.
- Similarly, children without Serbian (2017) citizenship as well as Serbian children from vulnerable groups that do not have proof of residence have the right to enrol in preschools and preparatory preschool programmes in Serbia³⁶.

³⁰Kindly note, the examples provided here are taken from the past reports of Special Rapporteurs, and therefore do not necessarily reflect the present scenario.

³¹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2010). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/14/25

³²Ibid

³³UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Seychelles (2014), Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/26/27/Add.1

³⁴UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2017). Available from: [Link](#), UN Doc. A/72/496

³⁵Ibid

³⁶UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2017). Available from: [Link](#), UN Doc.A/72/496

- For the inclusion of Roma children in Czechia (2017), the Czech Ministry of Education has created special preparatory classes that prepare these children for basic education. The school curricula are modified to meet the needs of Roma children, the classes are smaller, financial support is provided and the position of Roma assistant is created³⁷.

Ivory Coast (2018) has made provisions for the inclusion of children with hearing and visual impairments in the formal system, from preschool through to secondary education³⁸.

Burkina Faso (2018) has taken steps to provide a quality education that is adjusted to the specific needs of Malian refugees. ECCE programmes are provided by the government, which are linked to income workshops for female refugees. Additionally, the curricula are altered and teachers familiar with the language and culture of Mali are hired³⁹.

- In Mongolia (2010), efforts are made to reach out to rural and nomadic communities through the establishment of ‘mobile ger kindergartens’. These kindergartens, along with mobile teachers, follow nomadic families throughout the warm season⁴⁰.

³⁷ibid

³⁸UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Ivory Coast, (2018). Available from: [Link](#) UN.Doc.A/HRC/38/32/Add.1

³⁹UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2018). Available from: [Link](#), UN Doc. A/73/262

⁴⁰UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ Mission to Mongolia (2010). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc A/HRC/14/25/Add.3

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Besides the general recommendation for an inclusive approach to ECCE, the Special Rapporteurs have made a number of specific recommendations to prevent exclusion. These recommendations have been reflected both in thematic and as well in country visit reports. Some important recommendations include:

State responsibility for ECCE Provision: The Special Rapporteurs noted in many country visit reports the absence of adequate public ECCE and privatisation of ECCE as some of the main reasons for exclusion. To prevent the exclusion of children from marginalised communities, they strongly recommended making ECCE a State's responsibility. For instance, in the [2019 report](#) on 'the implementation of the right to education and SDG4 in the context of the growth of private actors in education', the Special Rapporteur Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry asked States '*to prioritise free, quality, public education at the pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels for everyone, especially for the vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalised groups*⁴¹'.

This has been emphasised in many country reports. For example, in the [Malaysia](#) report, the Special Rapporteur Vernor Muñoz recommended to '*establish policies that enable preschool education and infant care to be made the responsibility of the State, thereby guaranteeing access to those services on an equal footing for all children*'.⁴²

Regulatory framework for governing the privatisation of education: In addition, the Special Rapporteurs also suggested developing a regulatory framework for governing the privatisation of education. For instance, Mr. Kishore Singh, who challenged the privatization of the ECCE in the [2014 report](#) on 'Privatization and right to education', recommended States to develop a regulatory framework based on the principles of social justice and equality. He stated:

*'States should develop a regulatory framework governing the privatization of education. Such a framework should be inspired by general principles of social justice and equity as well as by education as a public good, subjecting private providers to full accountability for their operations and rigorous scrutiny'*⁴³.

Further, this was reemphasized by the special rapporteur Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry in her 2017 report on the 'role of equity and inclusion in the right to education'. She recalled regulating private actors as a State obligation. She said,

⁴¹UNGA,'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education' (2019). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/41/37

⁴²UNGA,'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education' Mission to Malaysia (2009). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc. A/HRC/11/8/Add.2

⁴³UNGA,'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education' (2014). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/69/402

‘State obligations to realize the right to education include the obligation to regulate private educational institutions, as set out in general comment No. 24 (2017) on State obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the context of business activities, of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/GC/24, para. 21).’

Further, she said that ‘private schools must not be permitted to engage in any form of discrimination’ and ‘States must ensure that any private school system does not create economic discrimination or segregation in the education system’.

Public investment for ECCE: Analysing the education budgets allocated to education, and specifically to ECCE, the Special Rapporteurs also repeatedly emphasised the need for public investment for ECCE both in thematic reports as well as in-country visit reports. For instance, in the 2007 report, Mr. Vernor Muñoz recommended states invest in inclusive ECCE programmes as it can lay the foundation for the lifelong inclusion of children in education and society⁴⁴. Similarly, in the 2011 report on ‘financing education and update on education in emergencies’, Mr. Kishore Singh observed the limited investment for early childhood education in emergency situations and called for an increased budget allocation. The call for increased budget allocation⁴⁵ to ECCE is noted in at least 12 country visit reports.

Inter-Cultural Approach to ECCE: Further, in the context of addressing vulnerabilities of different communities, like indigenous people, refugees, migrants, and minorities, the Special Rapporteurs emphasised the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate ECCE as a key for inclusion. As mentioned earlier, in a 2010 report, Vernor Muñoz believed that culturally and linguistically appropriate early childhood learning could play an effective role in offsetting social, economic, and language-based disadvantages⁴⁶. This has been also emphasised in many country visit reports.

CONCLUSION

These references to the various dimensions of ECCE serve to emphasise its centrality to education systems and individual development. The content contained in successive Special Rapporteur reports reflects the growing recognition of the importance of ECCE, especially as regards inclusivity in educational systems. ECCE provides an opportunity to address inequalities and discrimination in education. Due priority should be given to ensure equal access to ECCE for all without discrimination of any kind, in line with successive Special Rapporteur recommendations regarding legal frameworks for inclusivity, regulatory structures, public financing, and interculturality.

⁴⁴UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2007). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/4/29

⁴⁵UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’ (2011). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/66/269

⁴⁶UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education’, (2010). Available from: [Link](#) UN Doc.A/HRC/14/25