



*Partners for Justice*

Human Rights Council  
Fourth Session  
Item 2 of the agenda  
21 March 2007

Question to Mr. Vernor Muñoz, Special Rapporteur on the right to education, from Susana T. Fried, Global Rights, Partners for Justice and Center for Women's Global Leadership:

Mr. Muñoz: Thank you for your report and your focus on the right to education of persons with disabilities. I commend you for focusing your report on this important issue that is greatly in need of a perspective that encompasses the intersection of education, disability, marginalization and social exclusion, as well as other factors for which persons may face discrimination. These multiple forms of discrimination present a barrier to enjoying the right to inclusive education.

Global Rights' Amplifying Youth Voices Program has been working with ethnic minority young women and men in countries around the world to document violations of the right to education in their diverse communities. Our findings support your conclusions that when combined with disability, belonging to certain identity and social groups, social conditions and gender exacerbate the discriminatory and exclusionary effects noted in many education systems. Did you find, as we did, that it is common for children with certain identities or from marginalized communities to be labeled as "disabled" and segregated in "special" or vocational schools?

We have also found that young people face barriers to enjoying their right to education because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. We have documented cases of young women who are perceived to be lesbians being expelled from school in several countries. The discrimination and bullying that young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth experience in schools throughout the world may seriously undermine their enjoyment of the right to education as well.

Finally, we have also documented the challenges to equal educational opportunities for young women. Across the globe, girls and young women find their access to education impeded because of gender inequality in combination with other social, economic and political circumstances, including the condition of trafficked persons, residence in a rural community, health status, class, ethnicity and race. Please could you talk further about how children with disabilities are further discriminated against because of these other factors for which they may face discrimination, such as their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression?