

HART Prize for Human Rights

“HART is the only foreign NGO to help with education in Miango, Plateau State” – HART partner in Nigeria. Why is education such an important human right?

Education is often described as the key to unlocking doors of opportunity, and a fundamental human right. For many individuals around the world, access to quality education is not readily available, hindering their ability to reach their full potential. In Miango, Plateau State, Nigeria, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) is the only foreign non-governmental organization helping to improve access to education for the local population. This essay explores the importance of education as a human right, focusing on how it empowers individuals, promotes equality, and fosters societal progress.

Plateau State, located in central Nigeria, has been plagued by long-standing tribal conflicts that have had a devastating impact on the state’s economy. There have been numerous violent outbursts, fatalities, and property destruction as a result of the disputes, which are mostly between the Fulani and Berom indigenous tribes. Because of this, the poverty rate of Plateau State is an astounding 71%, which illustrates the extreme financial hardship that its citizens face. Investing in education can help break the cycle of poverty and empower individuals to contribute to the state’s growth and prosperity.

Education is a key part in shaping a child’s future, equipping them with knowledge and skills that enable them to make informed decisions about their lives. On top of this, by equipping children with practical skills that extend beyond books, education exposes them to diverse ideas, encouraging creativity and critical thinking. This ultimately leads to a better quality of life and provides individuals with the necessary tools to improve overall well-being and break the cycle of poverty. A well-educated child is more likely to secure a stable job, leading to a higher standard of living. According to article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, education is also a key aspect of child rights, highlighting the importance of education in the “development of children's personalities, respect for cultural identity, and preparation for responsible life in a free society characterized by understanding, peace, tolerance, and equality of sexes.” Moreover, for children who may not have proper meals at home, free school meals play a key role in ensuring their health and well-being and schools offer a safe and supportive environment for children from abusive homes to escape for most of the day. Here, they can learn, grow, and thrive.

Furthermore, education is the catalyst behind the development of social justice and equality. It helps reduce inequality and discrimination by providing equal opportunities to all individuals, irrespective of their circumstances or background. The Education Reform White Paper published by the British government in 2005 highlights the need for a world-class education system that provides equal opportunities for children from all backgrounds to succeed in adult life in modern Britain. The purpose of the White Paper was to improve the education system in Britain to compete globally, promote fairness, cohesiveness, productivity, and innovation, and ensure that every child receives an excellent education, regardless of their abilities or needs, describing education as “the foundation of our culture and the best investment we can make in the future of our country”.

Additionally, education plays a critical role in fostering societal progress. It acts as a driving force behind economic development, innovation, and advancements in science and technology. Educated societies, most common in high income countries, tend to have improved healthcare systems and increased political stability. Education enhances children’s intelligence and knowledge, giving them

the resources they need to thrive and contribute to the growing economy. 19 of Britain's prime ministers attended Eton College and a further 30 went to Oxford University, would they have been able to achieve this without their excellent education? Would the greatest scientist be able to become a great scientist or carry out their research without being educated on how to do so? Large-scale engineering projects like the construction of bridges, dams, and skyscrapers require the specialized knowledge and skills acquired through engineering education and training. NASA's Apollo Program, which successfully landed humans on the moon in 1969, was made possible by the education and training of engineers, scientists, and astronauts. By investing in education, countries can cultivate a skilled workforce, and create sustainable solutions to global challenges.

In conclusion, education is a fundamental human right necessary for the development and growth of all children. By ensuring universal access to quality education, we can create a more just and developed society. The work of organizations like HART in Miango, Plateau State highlights the importance of education in transforming lives and communities. Education should not just a privilege but a right that is accessible to everyone. Only through education can we nurture and unlock the full potential of children and create a flourishing world.