

# **Engaging for and Engaging with Children on Human Rights: Perspectives from Seven Regional Post-Graduate Programmes**

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## **Abstract**

In 2019, seven regional human rights post-graduate programmes across the world agreed to develop a thematic focus on child rights within their curriculum and to engage on the topic through various activities. Their goal was to advance child rights by building capacity, mainstreaming them within their curriculum and by implementing projects that engage on child rights. These regional programmes have since undertaken numerous child rights activities across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas that offer a unique opportunity for a comparative study.

While most of these academic programmes focus on teaching and research, they have also been directly involving children through a great variety of projects such as child mootings, child teams and child research; some based on the principle of child participation, while others falling under human rights education for children. Additionally, they have promoted and advanced child rights through projects that raise awareness, strategic litigation and clinical work (human rights clinics).

This diverse range of activities provides a unique comparative perspective on how academic institutions, operating in very different contexts (Lebanon, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Thailand, Armenia, Argentina, Italy and Kyrgyzstan), address child rights education and the principle of child participation. This engagement extends beyond curriculum integration, mainstreaming and research.

This comparative analysis examines the different activities that the regional programmes implement, through interviews with child rights focal points and the examination of the different activities they engaged in. It explores the meaning of academic involvement with children, the opportunities it offers but also some of its shortcomings and associated risks. It questions the role of universities when it comes to child rights promotion and the implications of the activities with which it engages on its larger function, position and role on the national and international level.

Specifically, the paper addresses how the principle of child participation translates within academia, and how universities engage with child rights advocacy, while keeping with their commitment to evidence-based approaches, critical analysis and value neutrality.

Presentation language: English

## **References**

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## **Short CVs (max 70 words)**

Jihad Nammour is the Academic Coordinator of the Global Campus Arab World, a regional post-graduate programme in Democracy and Human Rights coordinated by Saint Joseph University of Beirut in partnership with Birzeit University, Carthage University, the International University of Rabat, the University of Jordan and the University of Southern Denmark.

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