

Do we Feel Ready to Teach Children's Rights? Exploring the Readiness and Proposals of Future Educators in Higher Education

Charikleia PITSOU^a, Maria IATROU^b

^aUniversity of Patras, Greece, xpitsou@upatras.gr

^bGreek Ministry of Education Religious Affairs and Sports, Greece, iatromaria@sch.gr

The promotion and protection of children's rights is a fundamental responsibility of education systems worldwide. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities, fostering a culture of respect, equality, and active citizenship from an early age. Therefore, it is essential that future educators are adequately trained to integrate children's rights into their teaching practice. Providing future teachers with knowledge, tools, and confidence to address them is not only a matter of readiness and competence, but also of social justice and democratic engagement. Having into account the above this qualitative study examines the readiness of fourth-year Greek university students -future primary teachers- to teach children's rights. Findings reveal that the majority of participants do not feel adequately prepared to teach children's rights. They cite a lack of training and insufficient focus on the subject within their university curriculum as key barriers. Despite this, university students suggested thoughtful and pedagogically sound teaching techniques and methods for integrating children's rights into classroom practice. The results highlight a significant gap in teacher university curriculum, while also underlining the potential of student-teachers to engage creatively with rights-based education when given the appropriate tools and support. All in all, the study put emphasis on the importance of embedding Children's Rights Education within initial teacher education and advocates for its inclusion as a mandatory subject in university teacher curriculum.

References

- Jerome, L., Emerson, L., Lundy, L., & Orr, K. (2015). *Teaching and learning about child rights: A study of implementation in 26 countries*. UNICEF.
- Howe, R.B., & Cowell, K. (2007). *Empowering children: children's rights education as a pathway to citizenship*. University of Toronto Press.
- Karaman-Kepeneci, Y. (2006). A Study of University Students' Attitudes Towards Children's Rights in Turkey. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 14(3), 307-318. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181806778458095>
- Pitsou, C., Katsantonis, I. G., Katsantonis, A., & Gorozidis, G. S. (2025). Empowering and Promoting Children's Rights by Implementing Skills Labs Using Engaging Learning Activities. *Societies*, 15(4), 84. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc15040084>
- Pitsou, C., & Zotou, A. (2025). Embedding Children's Rights Education in Early Childhood: Fostering a Democratic Classroom Atmosphere?. *International Conference on Next-Generation Innovations and Sustainability 2025*. Futurity Research Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15114164>

Short CVs

Charikleia Pitsou, PhD, specializes in Human Rights Education. Her research interests encompass Human Rights, Child Rights, Active Citizenship, Applied Pedagogy, and Lifelong Learning. She is a member of the Special Teaching Staff in the Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work at the University of Patras and is also an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University. Her scholarly contributions include books, book chapters, and scientific articles published in Greek, English and French.

Maria Iatrou, Med, holds a degree in Primary Education from the University of Patras and a master's degree in educational sciences, with a specialization in social inequality and the teaching of Greek as a second or foreign language. Her academic interests focus on children's rights, diversity, the promotion of equity and social inclusion, as well as the implementation of inclusive policies within the educational contexts.



ΧΑΡΙΚΛΕΙΑ ΠΙΤΣΟΥ_ CHARIKLEIA PITSOU



ΜΑΡΙΑ ΙΑΤΡΟΥ_ MARIA IATROU