Education in New Zealand:

Education is a natural human right that should be granted to all people regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, social/economic status, or residency. Education is the leading pathway to human development and creating a long-term environment of health and success. As stated on the United Nations website, “It opens doors and expands opportunities and freedoms. It contributes to fostering peace, democracy and economic growth as well as improving health and reducing poverty.” ("Education for all," 2013) Education is not just a series of systematic instruction, but rather a life long endeavorment that unites the world together and sparks global community. The UN Secretary-Generals’ Global Initiative on Education generates three fundamental priorities for education in all countries. These priorities are to put every child in school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship. The country of New Zealand is diligently working to administer and amplify these priorities in their education system.

The first of the UN Secretary-General’s three priorities is to put every child in school. In 2002, the country of New Zealand released a document that showcased in great detail a 10-year plan set forth by the Government for Early Childhood Education. The 10 year plan was used through the 2012 school year, and is still be using today. The 10-year plan explains, “The early years of a child's learning make a significant difference to the way they develop and go on to learn throughout their lives. Getting it right at this vital stage will build the lifelong foundations of success, not only for our children, but also for New Zealand.” ("Early childhood education," 2010) Early childhood education is crucial to the social, economical, and political future of a child. The first few years of education pave the pathway for children to develop and acquire essential skills and information that will help them later on in school and proceed to benefiting them later in life. In order to provide all children with the ability to learn and ensure that their learning is to the highest potential New Zealand established new precedents for teachers, increased budgets to hire more teachers so more students could attend, and strongly established collaborative relationships between ECE services, students, parents, teachers, and health services. These new guidelines were monitored and evaluated at checkpoints throughout the ten years.

The second priority is to improve the quality of learning. New Zealand’s 10-year plan not only supported early childhood education, but also established precedents to improve the quality of learning. As stated on the Global Education First Initiative website, “School attendance should open pathways of learning and discovery, but too often is does not. “ ("Priority number 2," 2006) This is a result of barriers that prevent students from possessing a nurturing and valuable education. These barriers can include lack of qualified teachers, shortage of materials, language, weak foundation of early learning, and family environments. All of these factors act as barriers that hold a child back from learning to the best of their ability. New Zealand’s 10-year plan acknowledges these barriers and provides detailed resolutions to diminish these barriers. As discussed earlier, New Zealand has established stricter qualifications for teachers. In order for students to have the highest quality of learning, they need to have teachers and educators with the same quality. New Zealand’s education system, or ECE, has set forth new budget plans to cover the costs of more teachers as well as make sure that all schools are equipped with the necessary materials. New Zealand has taken the necessary precautions and steps to increase the quality of learning in their country and make sure that all students are equipped with the best education.

The third and final priority is to foster global citizenship. Every day the world experiences global challenges and hardships that can also be resolved with global solutions. Education needs to be made up of more than just literary and mathematic elements. In order for the world to function cooperatively and efficiently, “Education must be transformative and bring shared values to life. “("Priority number 3," 2006) It is important for education to discuss the different aspects of the world and how life functions and thrives in other countries. It’s crucial that a country’s education teaches children basic life concepts and how to use these concepts in the real world. The country of New Zealand is a big advocate for fostering globalization. They believe that education stems far more than just reading and writing, but rather establishes community and global growth. New Zealand’s 10-year plan discusses standards and programs that teach children about New Zealand’s history (Maori) as well as teaches children the history of other countries and the world itself. New standards and concepts are helping the children of New Zealand to become global ambassadors that will be capable of fostering global citizenship.

Education is not a privilege. Education is a human right that should be accessible and beneficial to all children without exemptions. The UN Secretary-Generals’ Global Initiative on Education generates three fundamental priorities for education in all countries. These priorities are to put every child in school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship. New Zealand developed a 10-year plan that not only met these priorities, but completely blew them out of the water. With higher qualified teachers, access to an abundance of materials, and engaging students with information and concepts that will help them succeed in life, New Zealand has a head start on the rest of the world in establishing the UN Secretary-General’s three priorities of education.

Citations:

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