***Article 28***

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

***Article 29***

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

During my field experience in the Philippines, my research question kept evolving as I met and discussed with various students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders. I was placed at Mary Help of Christians School in Calamba, Laguna. Mary Help of Christians is a private school, and parents must provide tuition; there are a few scholarship recipients, but not many are available. Calamba City Laguna is home to many large corporations and other industry. Many parents I met worked for Proctor and Gamble, Avon and Nestle. One parent worked for the department of labor. My research question is “How does socioeconomic status affect the educational rights of children in the Philippines? I decided to base this definition of rights on The UN declaration of the rights of the child. This declaration was ratified by the Philippines but not by the United States. Because I am a teacher in a public school in the United States, I am inherently inclined to see the Philippines school system through the lens of my own culture and school.

Article 28 section B states, (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; Since the election of Benigno Aquino, the Philippines has made compulsory education a priority, but the nation still faces so many infrastructure problems that they have little resources to get children to school from rural areas or to prosecute parents whose children are not in school.

At Mary Help of Christians, transportation to school requires a great deal of effort. A volunteer parent organizes and collects money from the other parents, and hires the drivers through these collected funds. The drivers are certified by the school as safe to be around students, and they are required to attend catechism classes. The transportation service drivers also volunteer their time to take the students to teach catechism to poorer communities. In the public schools transportation is not a guarantee. Students in remote rural communities must make their way to school any way that they can, thus sometimes the effort is not worth the payoff.

**c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own**;

Section C pertains the cultural identity of students. The Philippines education system is taught in English. This means that students in the Philippines were taught to read in a language different than the one they used at home. The government has begun to remedy this problem with the Mother Tongue Curriculum. Because research shows that a child with literacy in her first language, will build a stronger foundation of literacy long term, all children will first learn to read in their native dialect. This is a massive undertaking that will require time and teacher training, but it is research based and will prove to be huge benefit for students over the long term.

***Article 29***

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

**(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential**

This article leads me to reflect upon another issue facing Filipino schools and something that US schools are also grappling with, class size. The class size at Mary Help of Christians is around 24 per classroom. The average size for most public school classrooms is around 40. It appeared to me that the public and private schools are working at cross purposes. The private schools cannot keep teachers because the public schools pay at least 25% more in wages. At MHC, half the “batch” of new teachers from last year is gone this year. Parents chose private school because not much can be done with 40 students in a class, and those with different learning styles or learning disabilities are often overlooked. Most teachers wear microphones to be heard over the din of 40 students. There is little or no recognition of students with disabilities etc. At MHC, the principal discussed the idea of a shadow teacher when dealing with Operational Defiant Behavior or ADHD etc. The parent must pay for the shadow teacher to follow the student around and keep the student on task.

Much like the United States, children born into poverty situations in the Philippines are less likely to attend school, or to finish primary or secondary school. Children who live far away from their public schools must overcome insurmountable obstacles on a daily basis, and those that live in town must find enough extra pesos to take a Jeepney or a tricycle. One group of students in another fellows’ placement walked two hours to school every day. Once in the classroom, class sizes of over forty make learning difficult and in some cases almost impossible. Students at Mary Help of Christians are comfortable in their small classes and are mist definitely learning much more. These students must also feel secure in the knowledge that they will be driven home in a safe and secure school bus whose drivers are specially certified to drive children.