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Study Guide



UNESCO

Children's Right to Education in developing countries

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Introduction: Committee

UNESCO- the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is one of the multiple specialized committees within the United Nations, known as the core “intellectual” agency and founded in 1945. The creation of this agency originates from the need to promote peace, and encourage collaboration among humans after the disasters of the 20th century, with an emphasis on the atrocities during the Second World War.

It was realized that simple economic and political factors were no longer sufficient as a deterring factor in avoiding armed conflicts. And with the escalation of tension between the Western Allies and their Soviet Bloc only a few decades after the end of the Second World War. UNESCO was founded in order to prevent a possible Third World War by establishing a global cultural solidarity as well as promoting global security through a close collaboration in education, science and cultural development.

In the eight decades of existence, the role of this committee remains building a long-lasting peace between Member States. However, UNESCO has also committed itself to not only enabling cooperation but also enabling development and enhance the knowledge and accessibility to information to the citizens of its Member States.

UNESCO’s objectives are pursued through five major programs- education, natural sciences, social and human science, culture and communication. Today’s new thinking on sustainable development reaffirms the founding principles of the organization and takes great part in enchanting the roles of the committee:

1. Uniting for education in order for every child, boy or a girl, has access to quality education as a fundamental human right and as a prerequisite of human development.
2. Protection of heritage and support for cultural diversity in order to build intercultural understanding. UNESCO created the idea of world heritage to protect sites of outstanding universal values.
3. Achieving scientific cooperation such as transboundary water management agreements in order to strengthen ties between nations and societies.
4. Protecting freedom of expression as an essential condition for democracy, development and human dignity.

In this committee we will be concentrating on the first of these.



Introduction: Topic

The 26th Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) declares: “Everyone has the right to education.” This Article further declares that the proclaimed right necessitates free and compulsory education at its basic level.

In order to enforce this, the decision “to achieve universal primary education” was accepted as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This decision prompted the founding of the “Education for All” (EFA) initiative.

At the end of 2015, the end date of the MDG saw the introduction of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDG). The fourth goal regards education: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

In light of the SDG on education the aspiration of the United Nations is to get every child into schools by 2030. UNESCO is responsible for ensuring it happens. But not all Member States afford all its citizens the required accessibility due to limitations or problems those states face. Firstly, not all Member States have the resources required to enable all its citizens receive the most basic level of education. Secondly even when a developing nation can provide education to its people, the quality cannot always be equated to that of the more developed nations. These two factors further the disparity between peoples and societies.



Information

The major way to calibrate Member States' standings and recognize global trends is the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM). This replaced the Education for All Global Monitoring Report from 2016. Each year it focuses on a different aspect of education and looks at literacy and proficiency in general. The system it uses to understand the state of education is through World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE). The findings of WIDE are used to inform policy makers and help influence their decisions for the future.

It is the findings of the GEM Reports and the information from WIDE that is showing that the world is not nearing the goal of all children in school by 2030. So far, there has been no rapid decrease in the numbers of children not going to schools, and the projected numbers for 2030 is going to be one in six children between the ages of 6-17 not in school by the time the UN decided all children must be receiving an education¹.

A major part of the issue is the progression from primary to more advanced educations. In two out of three states all children will have an opportunity to achieve an elementary education. However, one in two will be able to provide a lower secondary schooling to all the children, and only one in four will have parity with upper secondary education².

A factor in the fewer numbers progressing to fulfil a secondary education is gender inequality. Some societies believe that women and girls do not need a full education as they will grow up to be housewives, and two in three illiterate adults are women. An estimated 132 million girls are not in schools today, and one third of the poorest adolescent girls were never in school at all. These numbers sadly show that while education may have improved since the beginning of the MDG in 2000, for women there has been no change³.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/meeting-commitments-are-countries-track-achieve-sdg-4>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-education-monitoring-report-2019-gender-report-building-bridges-gender-equality>

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/investing-her-education-building-better-future>



Possible Solutions

Guided by the UDHR, MDG and SDG, there is need to make a global effort to create parity between the nations and peoples of the world. This could be done by a number of ways, or indeed a unification of ideas, but the actions need to be clear.

Funding is needed, whether to improve infrastructure in the developing world, or to be used for global improvement of the education systems by collaboration and organization.

Organization is the second aspect of improvement. Whether each Member State reserves the rights to decide the content of its education systems or if it accepts proposed curricula as presented by UNESCO, collaboration in assessments and calibration is still needed.

Third is the resources, both physical and contents. Some Member States cannot provide education due to the lack of educators, and the quality of those who do teach. Moreover, the books and contents of the teachers' lessons may also be in short supply.

Furthermore, even in places where there is no lack in pedagogues or the materials for their trade, there may be deficiencies in facilities such as schools and auxiliary organizations such as libraries, sports facilities etc. Most importantly perhaps, would be the incorporation of computers in the progression of duration systems in the developing world.

A major factor in the education systems of the developed world and in private systems is the work and time invested in exposing their students to technologies and computer proficiency. A good resolution would ensure that all students would have access to computers, not only due to their importance but also because they provide many of the solutions to the problems posed by the aforementioned issues of lacks and deficiencies in materials for education.

A different aspect could be to punish the Member States who don't invest in accordance to their commitments to the EFA plan. However, such a move would indeed be admitting defeat a mere five years into the fifteen-year SDG plan. It would do this by firstly causing the Member States who have already neglected their education systems to possibly avoid further development. And secondly it would perhaps cause some Member States without the resources, as drawn out above to be penalized due to their already poor condition.



Conclusion

Education is a basic human right according to the UDHR. That means countries not only need to encourage education by allowing the children to study but actively enable education by building the systems for their education. This entails the vast investment of large amounts money by governments into their children and education systems. And for that reason, many states cannot provide the level, accessibility and extent of time needed to see each child through the decade or more of schooling that is required.

The major issues are the lack of funding, whether by mismanagement or sheer lacks of funds. The lack of resources, whether in personnel or material. The disparities between groups and genders whether by cultural considerations or prioritising. When attempting to solve this problem, a resolution should look to address some, if not all of the following questions:



Guiding Questions

If punishments are counter-productive, what means does the committee have to ensure all Member States provide all their children with education?

Is there a way to enforce level of educators? And if so, what can be considered acceptable by the global community?

In what way can technology be used to replace or enhance more traditional methods of education?



Further Reading

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>

<https://ourworldindata.org/global-education>

<https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/allreports>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/investing-her-education-building-better-future>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/global-education-monitoring-report-2019-arab-states-migration>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-education-monitoring-report-2019-gender-report-building-bridges-gender-equality>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/meeting-commitments-are-countries-track-achieve-sdg-4>