

Forum: Human Rights Council (HRC)

Issue: Emphasizing the Significance of Removing Obstacles to Education, Guaranteeing Inclusive and High-Quality Education for Everyone, and Advancing the Right to Education

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Introduction

Currently, an estimate 258 million children and youth are out of school within the world—most of them coming from sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Children from the poorest households are up to seven times more likely to be out of school compared to those from wealthier families. Gender parity at the primary level has been achieved in only 44% of countries, with wide gaps remaining at the secondary and tertiary levels. Students with disabilities are up to 2.5 times more likely never to attend school compared to their peers without disabilities. The following report looks at obstacles to education that are pervasive across most of the world and the needs of ensuring that all students receive a quality, inclusive education. It will outline recent developments in the area, under key statistics, and the fundamental human right to an education.

Key Terminology

Educational Stratification

Unequal allocation of educational resources, opportunities, and outcomes on the basis of socioeconomic, racial, and other demographic factors.

Intersectionality in Education

Intersectionality in education refers to how different identity markers such as economic class, gender, and disability status among others intersect to form challenging learning experiences.

Capability approach towards education

Background

The human right to education roots back to 1948, where the Proclamation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to education." Since then, such a principle has been restated in various international treaties and accords, effectively establishing education as an enabling right. In the recent past, improvement in net enrolment rates for primary education has registered globally, especially in developing regions. Still, major challenges to quality and inclusive education persist. It is estimated that in 2019, there were 258 million out of school children and youth globally, and the majority were in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.

Girls living in the poorest households are up to four times as likely to be out of school compared to other girls in the same country; besides, children of the poorest households are seven times more likely to be out of school than children of the better-off households - In only 44% of countries of the world, has gender parity in education been achieved; and in the primary level only, large gaps still existed in levels beyond that. Children with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school; further barriered entry to and completion of school vex other ground of children, including indigenous children, those from ethnic minorities, as refugees and migrants. Such inequities in education, too, have broad economic, social, political, and environmental implications. The costs of lost economic opportunities from excluding people from education are enormous; for example, the World Bank has estimated that the current widespread learning crisis may have resulted in over \$10 trillion in lost lifetime earnings for the current generations of learners. This also serves to create intergenerational cycles of disadvantage through disparities in educational access, thus setting social mobility back and fostering other social and political tensions. More importantly, education—specifically of girls and women—has an important role in fighting global environmental challenges, considering that the number of children, knowledge of climate change, and sustainability in the use of resources are positively correlated with high levels of female education.

Major Parties Involved

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been at the forefront of ensuring the right to education globally. With a mandate to cover education, science, and culture, it is expected "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information." Educationally, it runs well over a dozen programs for the universalization of access to effective, inclusive learning. Among others are the 2030 Education Agenda, where the aspiration is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030". It also puts out its independent report annually called the Global Education Monitoring Report on the follow-up status for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. However, UNESCO has vigorously expressed its concern about the exclusionary barriers that derive this education from those children who live in poverty, of whom there are girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and ethnic minorities. For example, the Global Education Monitoring Report by UNESCO of 2020 argues that children with disabilities are distinctly 2.5 times more unlikely to access school in their lifetimes than their non-disabled peers. UNESCO in this regard, has detailed the inclusive education policy and the practice followed in the school systems, responding to the diverse needs of learners. Therefore, the work of UNESCO in education is crucial because it gives leadership to the agreement on the global monitoring advancements in the provision of technical advice for national governments. More data, research, and normative frameworks are elevating education as a priority at the international level in the development states with a commitment to the realization of the right to education revealed by UNESCO. Working in line with member states, the civil society, and the private sector, UNESCO mobilizes actions and investments that will break the barriers standing in the way of quality learning for hundreds of millions of children and youth.

Federal Ministry of Education, Germany

WLMUN XVIII: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

As the government agency responsible for the education policy and administration in Germany, the Federal Ministry of Education (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, or BMBF) plays a key role in the promotion of inclusive and equitable access to quality education in the country. The Ministry emphasizes promoting equality with regard to educational status among all and enabling all children to reach their potential foolproof with respect to their varied background. Some of the BMBF's key focuses are as follows:

- Inclusive education: The BMBF is in support of mainstream schooling for special needs and the disabled. In this view, BMBF gives tuition aids in terms of cash and money to enable the teaching strategies for the benefit of students.
- Early childhood education: It is for this reason that the Ministry commits significant resources towards increasing access to preschool and daycare services. The Ministry sees high-quality early childhood programs as paving the way for success for young children, not just in terms of school onsite, but in their overall projections through life.
- Digital education: In the response to COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry increased investments in equipment and tools, accompanying them by mass training programs to prepare the teaching community in providing fair access to remote and hybrid models of teaching and learning.
- Internationalization: The teaching body of the Ministry encourages the internationalization of the German educational system, as regards the exchange programs applied both to students and lecturers, so as to foster the development of global competencies and intercultural purposes. The scope of what the work conducted by the BMBF often implies is therefore profound, considering that the sponsoring of education within Germany is frequently regarded as one of the best and most equitable across the globe. Through the promotion of open and creative education policies, the Ministry is hence able to ensure that each German pupil, regardless of social or economic standing, is provided access to connect with such opportunities that will allow them to grow to their greatest potential.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description/Note
1948	The United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declaring education a human right.
1960	UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education taken, for the abolition in all school's discrimination on any ground.
1990	The World Conference on Education for All takes place in Jomtien, Thailand, at which world leaders commit themselves to achieving basic education for all children, young people, and adults.
1993	In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which re-emphasized that the right to education was a human right, there is a call to remove any impediments to realization
2000	Dakar Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum sets the goals to raise efforts towards the attainment of twelve years of basic education free of charge, to expand UNESCO activities for the promotion of gender equality in the education field.
2006	The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive and accessible education.
2015	Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, with Goal 4 specifically focusing on the undertaking to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report highlights the influence of barriers that must be dismantled, including those linked to poverty, gender, or displacement caused through disability, for realizing the SDG 4 targets.
2020	The COVID-19 pandemic upsets education systems globally, focusing key concerns of the global education agenda on strengthening resilience and continuity of learning, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable populations.

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2021	The UN Transforming Education Summit took place, ensuring a pathway to address systemic impediments to education and the ensured access of all, in all places, to high-quality and relevant learning.
2022	The OECD Education at a Glance report places great emphasis on policies for inclusive education, - including targeted support of poorer performing students - to decrease educational inequalities.
2023	The UNESCO Futures of Education report demands a paradigm revolution in education to prioritize a right to education, social justice, and to empower learners to address global challenges.

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WLMUN XVIII: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

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Previous Attempts/Solutions

For a long time, several international efforts have recognized or tended to promote the right to education. It was only in 1948 through the announcement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further pursued by the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education that education was announced as one of the basic human rights of all human beings. Comparatively, it is only through the decisions obtained from the 1990 World Conference on

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Education for All and commitments made by the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action in seeking the goal of universal primary education for all and attainment of gender equality that at least—many of the goals set therein were not fully realized. Added to this, the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, and several reports from the UNESCO and OECD recently reiterated this, emphasizing how important it is not only to remove barriers but also to provide education of high quality and with inclusiveness. Great strides have been made, but much work remains to be done to translate these commitments into realized change, such that the right to education is fully realized for all learners in treatment across the world.

Potential Solutions

1. Increase Funding and Investment in Education:

- Allocate more resources to education, especially in underserved and marginalized communities, to address infrastructure gaps, improve teacher training and compensation, and provide necessary learning materials and technology.
- Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and debt-for-education swaps, to mobilize additional funds for education.
- Ensure that education budgets are equitable and directed towards the areas and populations with the greatest needs.

2. Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks:

- Enact and enforce laws and policies that prohibit discrimination and guarantee the right to education for all, including vulnerable groups such as girls, children with disabilities, refugees, and ethnic minorities.
- Develop comprehensive and inclusive education strategies that address systemic barriers and promote access, quality, and equity in education.
- Align national education policies with international human rights frameworks and the Sustainable Development Goals.

WLMUN XVIII: One Step Back, Two Steps Forward

3. Improve Access and Inclusivity:

- Implement targeted interventions to increase enrollment and retention, such as providing scholarships, subsidizing transportation, and addressing cultural and social norms that limit educational opportunities.
- Ensure that school infrastructure, curriculum, and teaching methods are accessible and accommodating for students with diverse needs, including those with physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities.
- Promote multilingual and culturally responsive education to better meet the needs of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

4. Enhance Quality and Relevance of Education:

- Invest in improving the quality of teaching, including through better pre-service and in-service training, competitive salaries, and ongoing professional development.
- Develop and implement student-centered, competency-based curricula that equip learners with necessary knowledge, skills, and values
- Integrate educational innovations, such as digital learning technologies and project-based learning, to enhance the quality and relevance of education.

5. Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement and Accountability:

- Foster meaningful participation of students, parents, communities, and civil society organizations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of education policies and programs.
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, identify gaps, and hold education systems accountable for delivering high-quality, inclusive education.
- Promote transparency and open communication to build public trust and support for education reforms.

6. Facilitate Lifelong Learning Opportunities:

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- Expand access to early childhood education, which lays the foundation for future learning and development.
- Provide flexible and diverse pathways for secondary and tertiary education, including vocational and technical training, to cater to the diverse needs and aspirations of learners.
- Invest in adult education and continuous learning programs to empower individuals throughout their lives and support the development of a skilled, adaptable workforce.

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