



The Hague International Model United Nations

Forum: Human Rights Council Subcommission 2 (HRC-2)

Issue: Promoting Equal Access to Educational Resources

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Introduction

Equal access to educational resources is something that the United Nations strives to achieve. It is at the core of the fourth 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), 'Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education opportunities for all'. (UN)¹

This is an area in which lots of work has been done in recent decades, and lots of meaningful progress has been made. Despite this, we still don't live in a world where everyone has equal access to educational resources. The inequality here can be down to many factors in various different situations, including race, gender, religion, wealth, social status, background, and more. Over 600 million children across the world cannot attain minimum proficiency levels in reading and math.

In brief, educational resources are tools designed to help with people's development and learning, and equal access means that everyone has the same opportunity to use them regardless of

¹ UN (2024). "Goal 4 | Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All." *United Nations*, 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4> Accessed December 7,

background or identity.

It's undeniable that this is a significant international issue. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) outlines in Article 26 that everyone has the right to education, and that elementary education should be free and compulsory (UDHR)². Additionally, Article 1 outlines that all human beings are equal in rights. This shows that inequalities in access to educational resources are in violation of people's human rights. Lack of educational resources can prevent people from pursuing higher education and/or achieving their potential academically, which in turn prevents them from making greater contributions to society and deepens social divides by making it nearly impossible to break the poverty cycle. Furthermore, education is an enabling right, meaning that when an individual's right to education is fulfilled it allows them to also fulfill their other human rights.

Promoting equal access to educational resources is crucial to fulfill people's human rights which allows them to reach their potential and contribute to society.

Definition of Key Terms

Equal Access

Equal access means that everyone, regardless of background or identity, has the same opportunity to use and benefit from something; in this case, to use and benefit from educational resources. The same resources and tools should be available to everyone regardless of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, or disability.

Educational Resources

Educational Resources are tools used to help with people's development and learning. They aim to reinforce students' learning and help improve the quality of their education. Educational resources could include textbooks, electronic devices, teachers, classroom materials, and anything else that falls under the above definition. In general, to access educational resources, students need to attend schools or be homeschooled.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A set of 17 targets that apply universally which aim to mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and combat climate change. They were adopted by world leaders in 2015 and entered into force on 1 January 2016. They follow up from the Millennium Development goals which were in place from 2000 to 2015. The most relevant to promoting equal access to educational resources is SDG4

² UN. (2018) "Research Guides: UN Documentation: Human Rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *Un.org*, 2018, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/humanrights/undhr#:~:text=The%20Universal%20Declaration%20of%20Human.of%2048%2D0%2D8.&text=Human%20Rights%20Day%20is%20celebrated%20on%2010%20December%20every%20year>. Accessed December 7, 2024

Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education opportunities for all.

Conflict Zones

Areas experiencing war or political instability that disrupts essential services, which could include housing, sanitation, transport, communication, water, health care, and education. Often due to these factors, people in conflict zones experience highly limited access to educational resources.

Marginalized Groups

Various groups of people within a culture, context and history who are at risk of being subjected to discrimination because of the interplay of different grounds and personal characteristics, including but not limited to sex, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, health status, age, sexual orientation, income, education, or the locality they live in.

Background Information

Currently, UNESCO estimates that 250 million children and youth are out of school, which has increased by 6 million since 2021 (UNESCO)³. 40% of primary-school age children lack basic literacy skills, along with 765 million young people and adults. Over 600 million children across the world cannot attain minimum proficiency levels in reading and math (UNICEF)⁴. Over two thirds of the adults who are unable to read are women. In developing countries, 1 in 4 girls are not in school. Low and middle-income countries are short of, on average, 97 billion US dollars per year between now and 2030 to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. 44 million teachers must be recruited to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030.

Causes of unequal access to educational resources

Many factors hinder equal access to educational resources from being achieved across the world today. These can be broken into several groups as follows.

Policy and governance barriers

In many countries, educational resources are distributed by governments based on the pressure populations put on the governments to do so. This pressure usually comes from parents who are educated themselves, often tending to be members of cultural majorities living in urban areas (UN Chronicle)⁵. The pressure coming from rural, indigenous, or impoverished populations is often less.

³ "250 Million Children Out-of-school: What You Need to Know About UNESCO's Latest Education Data." 21 Sept. 2023, www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-

⁴ UNICEF. (2019) "Education." *Unicef.org*, UNICEF, 2019, www.unicef.org/education. Accessed December 7, 2024

⁵ Schmelkes, Sylvia. "Recognizing and Overcoming Inequity in Education." *United Nations*, United Nations, 22 Jan. 2020, www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/recognizing-and-overcoming-inequity-education. Accessed December 7 2024

This leads to fewer resources, such as infrastructure, teachers and equipment, being allocated to these minorities.

Additionally, teachers in disadvantaged areas tend to receive less training and support, leaving them less prepared to facilitate their students' learning.

Social and cultural barriers

When all students of a country are taught based on one curriculum, it can be difficult for students from impoverished or rural areas, and members of cultural or other minority groups to relate to and see the significance of what they are being taught. Curricula don't always involve or account for the diversity of the population. For example, students being educated in a language different to their native language often learn much less than their classmates.

Minority students often face discrimination, unfriendliness and exclusion for their classmates and teachers at school. This can discourage them from learning and attending school.

It is crucial here to discuss gender disparities in access to educational resources. There are many reasons why more boys are educated than girls; over 130 million girls and young women around the world are not currently enrolled at school (Global Citizen)⁶. In some cases, poverty forces parents to choose which of their children to send to school, and often a boy's education is prioritized over that of a girl due to cultural and societal roles. Girls also can miss days of school when on their menstrual cycle due to a lack of access to sanitary products.

Economic barriers

In many cases, while primary education should be free, there are expenses including uniforms, textbooks, classroom materials and stationery, exam fees, and unofficial 'informal fees' that parents can't afford. This means they simply can't send their children to school. When children aren't attending school they can work jobs or do chores to help their families and/or gain some income for the family, which for many impoverished families becomes an appealing option.

Additionally, children from poorer backgrounds often suffer from hunger and/or malnutrition. Malnutrition can impact brain development, leading to stunting, which impairs growth and development and negatively affects children's cognitive abilities and their ability to focus. It is estimated that 155 million children are stunted around the world.

Conflict and physical/geographic barriers

Almost 250 million children in today's world live in areas affected by conflict. In these zones, education often becomes unsafe and/or less of a priority. Educational infrastructure is often

⁶ Rueckert, Phineas. "10 Barriers to Education That Children Living in Poverty Face." *Global Citizen*, 13 Aug. 2019, www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-barriers-to-education-around-the-world-2.

destroyed and children could be forced to join armed groups. Young girls living in conflict zones are 90% more likely to be out of secondary education compared to girls elsewhere.

For many children, a journey to their nearest school is not one that they can walk. A lack of transport infrastructure or access to transportation methods often means that children living in rural areas don't attend school. This is especially the case for malnourished children or children with disabilities, for whom a long walk is simply unreasonable. Many children are also at risk of violence when their route to school is unsafe.

Children living in rural areas also often have less access to the internet than students in urban areas – this leads to unequal access to various educational resources

Impacts of unequal access to educational resources

Impact on the individual

When students don't have the same level of access to educational resources as their peers, it can limit their academic achievement. This inequality could take a toll on students' mental health and self-esteem, for example in terms of stress and anxiety, which could lead to disorders and negatively impact their performance in, experience with, and outlook on education. Thus unequal access to educational resources could limit students' academic achievement and career opportunities, both directly through a lack of quality learning materials and environment, and indirectly through impacts on their mental health. This leaves them at a disadvantage to their peers regarding skills, knowledge, and opportunities in life. Resources like well-trained teachers, schools to attend, textbooks, and classroom supplies all directly help students to achieve their academic potential. Without these, students could be unmotivated or unable to learn and drop out of education. This limits their career opportunities in the future. According to estimates by the World Bank, approximately 10 percent more is earned by an individual for every year of education.

Impact on the community

In a community, when students have limited access to educational resources and face the issues above, it becomes difficult for people to break the poverty cycle, leaving generations to come to the same fate of an incomplete education. When these students are given better access to educational resources, not only can they make greater contributions to society, they can also earn a better living to provide for their families and ensure their children can access educational resources. This allows for communities to grow in wealth and productivity, increasing quality of life for community members. With limited access to education in a community, the local economy would be negatively impacted, for example small businesses could lack skilled workers. Many targeted educational programs and initiatives worldwide have helped communities to break out of the poverty cycle. For example, a program named Bolsa Escola in Recife, Brazil, disincentivized child labour and increased school enrollment rates by providing children with scholarships that gave them an

income while allowing them to attend school (UN)⁷. Children attended basic educational courses and enrichment activities such as music and art, and the program worked closely with families including through sending representatives to visit them. This education can allow the children to become members of the skilled workforce and work higher-paying jobs in the future.

Impact on society as a whole

Equal access to educational resources leads to a more complete education overall which is crucial to achieve progression as a society. Education helps reduce inequalities, including gender inequality, empowers people to live healthy and sustainable lives, and promotes tolerance among different communities. An educated workforce has more productivity, creativity, and the ability to spur economic growth (UN Today)⁸. Educated populations are more likely to ensure their children have proper nutrition and are vaccinated. Additionally, education is crucial to combatting public health crises, like outbreaks of HIV/AIDS, or the COVID-19 outbreak.

In this way, by achieving education equality we help address many other issues that society faces today. Without education equality it is much more difficult to make meaningful progress in tackling other societal issues like poor health, discrimination, and tensions.

Major developments in achieving equal access to educational resources

Primary and secondary school completion rates have been rising for decades, showing that progress is being made. That said, the pace they are rising at is slow and uneven. There is a large disparity between school completion rates in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) and Lesser Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). Around the world, 17% of children and youth are out of school. However, this is significantly higher in LEDCs, such as 31% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 21% in Central Asia, compared to 3% in Europe and North America (UN Chronicle)⁹. Lower GDP nations often require assistance to provide their populations with access to quality educational resources. This is because providing access to educational resources usually requires investment and money to be directed into education systems. Further contributing to the disparities are the barriers to equal access to educational resources discussed earlier.

Between 2015 and 2021, primary school completion rates rose from 85% to 87%. Lower secondary school completion rates went from 74% to 77% and higher secondary school completion rates from 53% to 58%. The number of out-of-school children has dropped by more than half since 1990. Enrollment in primary schools in the developing world is at 91%.

⁷ United Nations. "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Through Education | United Nations." *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/ccoi/breaking-cycle-poverty-through-education

⁸ Ikusika, Oluwaseun. "Addressing the Global Education Crisis." *UN Today*, 10 Oct. 2024, untoday.org/addressing-the-global-education-crisis/

⁹ United Nations. "Recognizing and Overcoming Inequity in Education | United Nations." *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/recognizing-and-overcoming-inequity-education.

These increases can be largely attributed to the focus that was put on equal access to education by the 2015 Millennium Goals, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the UDHR. As a result of these quality education has become something everyone expects to access as a fundamental right, not a privilege reserved for few. The main way these instruments have led to meaningful change being made is by sparking changes in government policies and leading to the establishment of international aid initiatives and programs. Essentially, more funding and resources have been allocated to education systems. In spite of this progress, the large global disparities and inequalities in education remain and in many parts of the world, barriers to accessing educational resources persist..

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN and International involvement

The UN continuously monitors and takes action on this issue, through a number of sub-bodies, resolutions, international treaties, and programs. For further UN actions on this topic see the timeline below and the section 'Previous attempts to solve the issue'.

UN Resolutions on this topic include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A)
This establishes a set of rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to. One of these is the right to education (Article 26).
- Convention against Discrimination in Education, 22 May 1962 (6193)
This aims to eliminate discrimination in education systems around the world so everyone has equal access to quality education, regardless of factors such as race, gender, language, or others.
- Human Rights Education, 26 July 2001 (ECOSOC Resolution 2001/38)
This highlights the importance of education in promoting peace and tolerance worldwide, and promotes the inclusion of these values in education systems.
- The Right to Education in Emergency Situations, 9 July 2010, (A/RES/64/290)
This outlines various measures for member nations to protect people's right to education in the case of an outbreak of conflict and highlights the importance of doing so.
- The Right to Education of Persons with Disabilities, 14 April 2014 (A/HRC/RES/25/20)
Asks all member states to protect the rights of people with disabilities in their education systems to allow for their full inclusion and equal access to educational resources.
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1)
This outlines a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030, one of which is Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education opportunities for all.

- The Girl Child, 17 December 2015, (A/RES/70/138)

This emphasizes the need to promote equal access to educational resources specifically to girls.

- International Day of Education, 3 December 2018 (A/RES/73/25)

This proclaims 24 January the International Day of Education.

Sub-Saharan African Nations

Sub-Saharan African nations face difficulties providing schools and students with access to educational resources. At primary and lower-secondary levels, under one half of schools in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to drinking water, electricity, computers and the internet. There is a digital divide here which widens the gap between under-connected and highly digitalized countries. Although reforms are gradually being implemented, many schools in this region do not meet global standards.

Aside from the facilities in the schools themselves, enrollment rates in this region are also low. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for almost 30% of all out-of-school children across the world. One in five children there are not attending school and only half of children attend upper secondary school (UNESCO)¹⁰. Data from Global Findex finds that 54% of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa are very worried about school fees and 29% name school fees as their biggest financial worry (World Bank)¹¹, which indicates that the low school enrollment rates here are in part due to challenges posed by poverty.

Afghanistan

Since the Taliban took over in 2021, 1.4 million girls and young women have been denied access to secondary education. They allow girls to be educated up to the age of 12, but beyond this age the education of women and girls is strictly forbidden. Women have also been banned from attending Universities. A UNICEF survey taken in April 2023 showed that there are approximately 7.8 million school-age children out of school in Afghanistan. The recent decrease in school enrollment in Afghanistan (since the Taliban took over) is largely responsible for a decrease in global rates of enrollment in education. About half of primary school-age children in Afghanistan are enrolled in education, and only one fifth of secondary school-age children (UNESCO)¹². One example of a discriminatory policy is when the Taliban

¹⁰ "250 Million Children Out-of-school: What You Need to Know About UNESCO's Latest Education Data." 21 Sept. 2023, www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data

¹¹ Klapper, Leora, and Mansi Panchamia. "The High Price of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa." *World Bank Blogs*, 13 Mar. 2023, blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/high-price-education-sub-saharan-africa

¹² "250 Million Children Out-of-school: What You Need to Know About UNESCO's Latest Education Data." 21 Sept. 2023,

ordered all public and private institutions in Afghanistan to suspend medical education for women and girls (EEAS)¹³. This violation of human rights is worsened by the fact that in Afghanistan, women and girls can only be treated by female health professionals. This shows how in Afghanistan, unequal access to educational resources leads to inequality in society as a whole. The UN Security Council has criticized the Taliban's restrictions imposed on women and girls in a Resolution adopted unanimously¹⁴.

The Global Campaign for Education

The GCE is a global, civil society movement that advocates for everyone's right to education. They have many global initiatives, including advocating for inclusivity in education, financing strong education systems, and achieving equal access to educational resources for girls and marginalized groups. One example of an ongoing GCE initiative is that GCE representatives have been encouraging governments in areas affected by conflicts, natural disasters, or other states of emergencies to create comprehensive and inclusive policy plans to facilitate educational needs and the rights to education for all (GCE)¹⁵. This was successful in addressing educational challenges posed after Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. Another focus of the GCE is to strengthen members' capacities to offer people access to inclusive education and disability advocacy, and to finance strong education systems. They are working to implement the GCE Strategic Plan which aims to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Timeline of Events

Date Description of event

Date	Description of event
December 10 th , 1947	Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly. It outlined in Article 26 that everyone has the right to education, and that elementary

www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data

¹³ "Afghanistan: Statement by the Spokesperson on Latest Restrictions Imposed by the Taliban on Women and Girls." EEAS, 2024, www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/afghanistan-statement-spokesperson-latest-restrictions-imposed-taliban-women-and-girls_en

¹⁴ LEDERER, EDITH M. "UN Security Council Criticizes Taliban Ban on Afghan Women's Medical Education." *AP News*, 13 Dec. 2024, apnews.com/article/un-afghanistan-women-taliban-medical-education-ban-4d33b8e97ad26d84bfd0bfd8d133b0c Accessed 19 Dec. 2024.

¹⁵ LEDERER, EDITH M. "UN Security Council Criticizes Taliban Ban on Afghan Women's Medical Education." *AP News*, 13 Dec. 2024, apnews.com/article/un-afghanistan-women-taliban-medical-education-ban-4d33b8e97ad26d84bfd0bfd8d133b0c Accessed 19 Dec. 2024.

	Human Rights	education should be free and compulsory.
December 14 th , 1960	Adoption of the Convention against Discrimination in Education	The Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE) was adopted in Paris, France. It prohibits and outlines discrimination in education, asks for inclusivity in education, and reinforces and outlines the right people have to quality education.
September 8 th , 2000	Adoption of the Millenium Declaration	The Millenium Declaration set targets for UN work between 2000 and 2015. These were called the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). One of these targets was to achieve universal primary education, and another target was to promote gender equality and empower women.
January 1 st , 2016	Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development came into force. Their aim is to end all forms of poverty by 2030, furthering the success of the Millenium Development Goals which were in place from 2000-2015. Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
March 11 th , 2020	COVID-19 was declared a pandemic	COVID-19 was declared a Pandemic by the WHO. Disadvantaged communities had more barriers and less access to online educational resources, and this increased educational disparities worldwide. The pandemic caused learning losses in 4 out of 5 of 104 countries studied.
September 19 th , 2022	The UN Transforming Education Summit	The UN Transforming Education Summit was held in New York. It aimed to bring education to the top of the global political agenda, to mobilize actions and solutions to recover learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to respond to a crisis of equity, inclusion, quality and relevance of education globally.
March 5 th , 2023	Entry of the Global Convention on Higher Education into force	The Global Convention on Higher Education entered into force. It establishes universal principles for transparent, fair and non-discriminatory recognition of higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education across the world, including the qualifications of

		refugees even where documentary evidence is lacking. This has large impacts on students studying abroad.
November 1 st , 2024	The 2024 Global Education Meeting and Fortaleza Declaration	The 2024 Global Education Meeting (GEM) was organized by UNESCO and held in Fortaleza, Brazil, hosted by the Brazilian government. The meeting aimed to foster multilateral dialogue among various stakeholders and called for greater investment in Education. It was held as the fourth GEM since the UN Global Goals were adopted in 2015. At the end of the GEM, the Fortaleza Declaration was adopted. This is a non-binding document aiming to address educational inequalities and promote inclusive, equitable education systems.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

UN

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO is the only organization within the UN that covers all aspects of education. They aim to build peace through international cooperation by working across education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. There are 194 member states and 12 associate members. UNESCO has taken many steps to keep education equality a global priority including establishing the International Day of Education (January 24th), and monitoring commitments made by 130 countries at the UN Transforming Education Summit in 2022. The Global Convention on Higher Education entered into force in March 2023, and aims to revolutionize mobility and access for students worldwide. The UNESCO General Conference meets every two years and in 2023 the 194 member states adopted the Recommendation on Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. This is a global instrument that lays out guidelines for using education to foster peace and human development.

UNESCO's 2024/5 Global Education Meeting (GEM) Report includes analysis of progress towards SDG4. It examines the effect leadership has on building better educational outcomes and looks at social and cultural factors. This report allows progress on the issue to be monitored and shared transparently. UNESCO convenes periodic Global Education Meetings to review, discuss and share progress made towards achieving SDG 4.

Separate from the GEM Report, the Fortaleza Declaration was adopted at the end of the 2024 GEM. Its aim is to address educational inequalities and promote inclusive, equitable

education systems. As it is so recent, its efficacy is yet to be determined, however it is not legally binding.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF aims to protect the rights of every child and works in more than 190 countries. They provide and advocate for many services, health, education, and nutrition included (UNICEF)¹⁶. They have a large emphasis on and involvement in education, with programs, initiatives, and partnerships in the fields of inclusive education, girls’ education, education in emergencies, early childhood education, primary education, adolescent education and skills, digital education, and strengthening education systems and innovation. These programs involve advocacy, awareness-raising, capacity-building, and implementation support.

UNICEF has many programs in place in fields around education, including through awareness-raising, advocacy, capacity-building and implementation support. They directly benefit children worldwide and make progress in solving this issue.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

The UNDP is the UN’s lead agency on international development. Their main goals are to reduce poverty and eradicate inequalities, and they are highly involved in working to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which includes achieving equal access to quality education.

For other previous attempts by the UN to solve the issue, please see the timeline above. The UN has made significant progress in solving this issue, however unequal access to educational resources persists and remains at the top of the global political agenda.

International Community

There have been many steps taken and lots of progress made worldwide to solve this issue; though it is complex by nature and requires a multi-faceted approach. Listed below are some of the actions member nations have taken to address education inequality.

Lebanon has created a 2025 education strategy with the target of providing vulnerable children with equal opportunities.(UNESCO)¹⁷ It provides them with government-funded education up to grade 9, and has a Cash for Education program that assists with expenses outside of tuition, around 15 to 20 US Dollars per child per month. The initiative applies to refugee children and others

¹⁶ UNICEF (2024). “Who We Are.” *Unicef.org*, 2024, www.unicef.org/who-we-are. Accessed December 7, 2024.

¹⁷ UNESCO. (2024) “7 Ways Countries Are Transforming Education.” *Unesco.org*, 2024, www.unesco.org/en/articles/7-ways-countries-are-transforming-education. Accessed December 7, 2024

alike. It aims to reduce child labor and increase the number of children attending school.

Bangladesh has institutionalized World Teacher's Day as a major national event. They focus on improving working conditions for teachers, including through salary raises and opportunities for career development. The aim is to professionalize and empower teachers.

Singapore revised its Nurturing Early Learners framework. Now, aside from academics, they have placed emphasis on the overall development of the child, including their values, social and emotional competencies, and learning dispositions.

The Dominican Republic has increased its education budget, ensuring it is in line with international benchmarks. They have a budget of 2,500 US Dollars per child, per year, and aim for transparency regarding its allocation and monitoring of its spending.

Bahrain has integrated Special Education Programs into 175 mainstream schools to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This has made their mainstream schools more inclusive of those with disabilities.

Estonia looks after children and youth impacted by crises by providing mental health services, financial and material support for them, such as 80,000 Ukrainian refugees.

Andorra adopted the Digital Strategy for Education 2022-2025 with the target of enhancing students' and teachers' digital skills and improving security, accessibility, and quality of digital resources.

Mauritius has recruited 600 trainee primary school teachers and created new teaching posts to address the shortage of primary school teachers. A 16.4% increase in the primary school teacher workforce has been predicted as a result.

Albania has developed a National Youth Strategy for 2022-29 and an Action Plan. Its aim is to ensure vulnerable and marginalized young people have equal rights, opportunities and support.

Sierra Leone has established a Youth Advisory Group representing all its districts. It allows young people to participate in and contribute to educational decision-making. This participation has been embedded into their legal framework.

Possible Solutions

Promoting equal access to educational resources is an extremely complex issue, requiring a multifaceted approach and many different steps to solve it. Some potential solutions are listed below.

Pressure on governments to reform education systems

Firstly, pressure could be put on governments to ensure that their education system is high on their list of priorities. This would mean they would put more time and resources into promoting equal access to educational resources and devote more of their budget to it, to satisfy the population. Aside from allocating funding to the issue, many member nations face a shortage of teachers and thus the training and recruitment of teachers needs to be prioritized in order to give the population access to educational resources.

For pressure to be put on governments, this issue needs to be a priority for the population. They need to be aware of the importance of equal access to educational resources, including the way education impacts health, nutrition, sanitation, development, the economy, peace, and all aspects of life. This awareness could be raised through a mass media campaign or educational program. UN Resolutions and conferences can also highlight to member nations' governments that this issue should be made a priority.

Frameworks in education systems that promote equal access

Schools need to have accommodations and frameworks in place for students from different social and cultural backgrounds, whether this be for those who are learning the local language or to prevent social exclusion of minority students. With social and cultural barriers, it is important to note that the situation in every country and area is unique, and some may require specifically tailored approaches to the local social and cultural context.

Financial barriers to accessing education, including lack of funding for schools, children being unable to afford school supplies and uniforms, and poverty and hunger affecting children's ability to learn, need to be mitigated. The allocation of more funding to schools would help with this, as well as the creation of schemes and programs to help families finance their children's school supplies and uniforms. Frameworks need to be in place in schools to identify if children are struggling with extreme poverty or hunger at home and to refer them to the necessary support systems. Furthermore there are many ways to increase the number of girls enrolled in education. This could involve teaching their parents the importance of education, or, as has been done in some member nations, providing financial incentives to families to send their children to school as opposed to having them work. This is a field in which NGOs could be involved.

Combatting physical barriers

In conflict zones, education needs to be made a higher priority. A lack of education during a time of conflict could lead to lifelong negative impacts for students. In the case of school buildings being unsafe, online or remote learning should be considered. Member nations could be encouraged to have frameworks and protocols in place so that, in the event of a conflict arising, they are equipped to facilitate quality education and provide students with access to educational resources.

For children who have too long a distance to walk to school, or a route which is unsafe to walk,

possible solutions could involve remote learning, the establishing of more schools, or the establishing of carefully monitored transport systems, such as school buses, organized by trained, authorized and vetted persons. Improving people's access to the internet and technology is crucial in ensuring they can access online educational resources.

Other notable aspects

Overall, throughout solving this issue, a special focus also needs to be put on lifelong education. Schemes to further educate adults and give them skills to find employment are crucial in improving their quality of life. These could include programs, online resources, or even textbooks. Furthermore, it should be noted that every member nation has a different level of equality in accessing educational resources, and they vary in different areas. Different countries have taken different steps to solve the issue and it's important that these are shared with the global community through reports, conferences, and international dialogue and cooperation.

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Appendices

- (i) Education statistics for many countries of the world, compiled by the World Bank:

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