

Forum: Special Conference on Post Pandemic World

Issue: Measures to ensure equal access to education by restructuring government educational programs

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the process and the discipline of teaching and learning in school and school-like settings, which have the formal and non-formal socialization of students as their goal. Education is something that everyone should have access to in order not only to come in contact with other people, but also to gain basic life skills needed for a harmonic cohabitation in society. As one of the most significant tools in society, it has the potential to eliminate poverty while also improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability.

In the past few years, an education crisis has occurred, as an education rift has been caused by the economic crisis. This resulted in more than 600 million adolescents and children not having received appropriate education, and in turn lacking basic skills such as reading, writing and calculating. Therefore, it can be said that due to not only economic reasons but also political instability or natural disasters, a dysfunction of the educational programs and educational system is mostly visible in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) or Economically Developing Countries (EDLs).

More specifically, in Developing Countries (EDLs), female students face insurmountable obstacles of cultural nature which deprive them of their right to equal access to education. Government educational programs should be targeted so as to successfully deal with such inherent inequalities in many societies.

But it is not only such extreme conditions in a country that can result in poor education. Even in schools, a shortage of experienced and passionate teachers, insufficient educational resources, and inadequate facilities make learning difficult for many kids. Pupils may arrive in class too hungry, unwell, or fatigued from their job or domestic responsibilities, and are eventually unable to benefit from their tuition. It should be emphasized that the educational system of each country differs from one another. There are no specific guidelines that every country follows for their educational system.

In the past couple of years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, educational programs have changed, so that students have the opportunity to participate online in the different classes offered by

the school. But this change in the system has brought about another way of inequality, since many children and adolescents may not always have the funds to provide devices to have online lessons.

All in all, education is something that everyone should have access to, regardless of skin color, ethnicity, religion, or gender, or whether they are affluent or poor. It should, furthermore, be emphasized that educational systems and programs play an enormous role in alleviating social inequalities.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Educational System

The economic and social aspects that normally comprise public schools at a federal, state, or community level are referred to as an education system. Public funding, school facilities, staffing, remuneration, employee benefits, instructional resources, and other elements are examples of such considerations.

Educational Program

An educational program is a structured series of learning activities meant to help students gain information, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are appropriate to their unique requirements.

Educational Access

The ability for everyone to have equal access to education, regardless of social status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, with physical or mental problems. The phrase is used in both assistive technologies for the disabled as well as middle and lower class college admittance.

Education Policy

The concepts and policy choices that affect the area of education as well as the body of legislation and regulations that control how educational institutions are run make up education policy. The academic study of education policy is called education policy analysis.

School Restructuring

School restructuring, in general, refers to a complete overhaul or rebuilding of the educational system with the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The educational system

Education is frequently seen as a key resource for both individuals and societies. Indeed, in most nations today, basic education is regarded as both a right and a responsibility – governments are generally required to promote access to basic education, while people are frequently forced by law to get education up to a certain minimal level. But throughout the years, different countries around the world have either a stronger or a less strong educational system. This can lead to people not having the same access to schooling premises, as not every school around the world works the same way. The following are three characteristic examples of diverse educational systems from different continents, some deemed more successful while others not.

The U.S. educational system

Students in the United States typically finish 12 years of elementary and secondary school before proceeding to post-secondary education. In the United States, the school year begins in August or September and ends in May or June. The majority of pupils start school in the fall. The academic year is split into three sections, or semesters. The first semester starts in September and ends in December, with a short holiday break until January. The second semester begins in January and lasts until May. The last semester is a summer vacation break. Summer vacation is available to postsecondary students from June through August.

The Finland educational system

Finland has the greatest proportion of high school graduates worldwide. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, Finland boasts the world's most advanced educational system. In Finland, the educational system comprises childcare programmes, a one-year "pre-school," and an 11-year obligatory basic comprehensive school. Secondary general academic and vocational education, higher education, and adult education are all required.

The Peru educational system

Peru has had a recent economic boom and has grown to be a popular travel destination following decades of political unrest and high levels of inflation. This progress is evident in the educational system, where a growing number of international students are traveling to the nation to enroll in both short- and long-term programs. Currently, there are many students from abroad, even from the U.S.A studying in Peru. Still, even nowadays, the nation has trouble providing all of its residents with equitable access to higher education. Peru's education system is comparable to that of the United States. It provides free basic education for children aged 3 to 5, primary education for children aged 6 to 11, and secondary education for children aged 12 to 16. However, school is only required from the ages of six to sixteen.

Equal opportunities in education and its effect on the society

Society is required to provide adolescents with a quality education that equips them with the knowledge and abilities they need to participate as productive individuals in the community. Additionally, society as a whole would benefit from this because in any other case, children not receiving a solid education would not be beneficial for society. This means that talents of individuals that could otherwise contribute to society, are often not nurtured. Each kid has skills that develop with formal education. By not pursuing these skills, society misses out on potential for advancement and development. The long-term social and financial implications of low education result in further lost potential. Large public and social costs associated with inadequate education include lower income and weak economic growth, decreased tax revenues, and higher costs of social security and also health care.

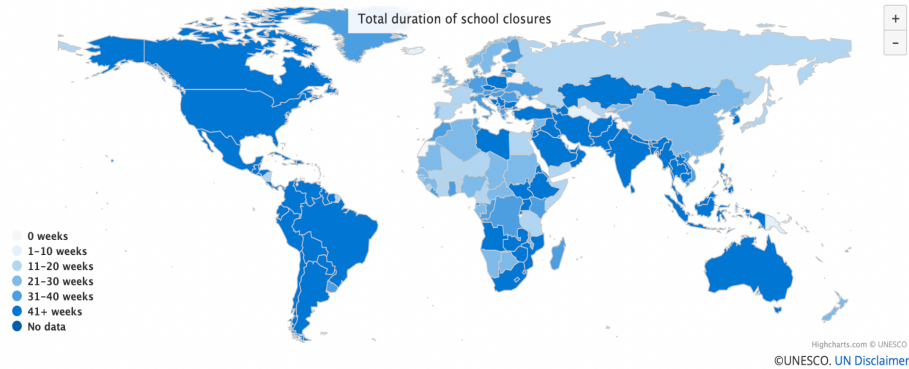
The belief that children should have equal access to school is universally recognised. This thesis is based on two observations regarding education and children. Firstly, education has a significant impact on a person's life chances in terms of employment success, preparation for democratic citizenship, and overall human flourishing; and secondly, a child's life chances shouldn't be determined by certain morally arbitrary birth circumstances like their social class, race, or gender. However, there is significant disagreement regarding the exact definition of the idea of equality in educational opportunities and its implications.

For individuals as well as for communities as a whole, education has both practical and intrinsic significance. For individuals, the instrumental goals of K–12 education include access to higher education and a range of private benefits that come with a college degree, such as access to fulfilling jobs with more time off and better health insurance; increased personal and professional mobility; better decision-making abilities and greater workplace autonomy. More research has revealed a connection between education levels and both health and wealth: the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to be both healthy and wealthy. Education is also seen as having intrinsic value at the same time. A key element of a thriving existence is the development of one's abilities and talents, which can be both joyful and beneficial .

The Covid-19 impact in the education and the education programs

Instead of becoming the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, children are its unseen victims. However, efforts to restrict the disease have disrupted the lives of youngsters all across the world. During lockdown, families are under more stress than usual, and many are struggling financially. Additionally, due to the suspension of services, children are losing out on vital free meals and immunizations that might save their lives. While programmes that prevent and address violence, abuse, and neglect are halted, others confront growing risks to their safety and welfare. Because of the disruption in healthcare access, many kids, especially the most

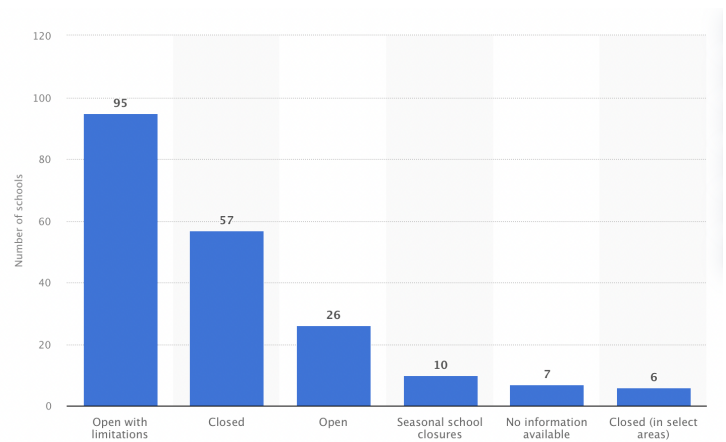
vulnerable ones, even run the danger of passing away from diseases that may be avoided. Government actions to limit and lessen the epidemic are having long-lasting and significant effects on children's lives.



Total duration of school closures worldwide; Source: UNESCO UN Disclaimers

Due to school closings intended to stop the spread of COVID-19, more than 1 billion students are at risk of falling behind. Countries have been creating remote education programmes to keep youngsters throughout the world studying. However, many children all over the world, especially those who live in lower-income homes, lack access to the internet, personal computers, televisions, or even radios at home, which exacerbates the consequences of already-existing learning disparities. Students who do not have access to the tools required for at-home study are only partially able to further their education. As a result, many run the danger of never going back to school, which would reverse years of advancement in global education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on higher education. Face-to-face classes have been replaced with online learning platforms as a result of campuses being abruptly closed as a social isolation strategy to stop community spreading of the disease. The pandemic has highlighted the flaws in the present higher education system and the necessity for greater digital technology training for instructors to keep up with the world's fast evolving educational landscape. The utilisation of online learning and virtual education may become a crucial component of



Number of countries with closed schools worldwide in 2021

the higher education system in the post-pandemic world.

As a result of the closure of schools in 188 nations (as of April 2020), several among them are looking at alternate methods of delivering ongoing education making use of technologies like the Internet, TV, and even radio. However, many low- and middle-income countries do not promote access to these technologies, particularly for impoverished households.

The Change of the Educational programs and system throughout the years

In terms of orientation and operation, the higher education system has undergone significant modifications in recent decades. Such developments are based on the perception of the state's shifting role in development. Market ideology has arisen as a dominant force with political upheavals, determining the trajectory and means of economic and social progress. The state's investment aims are now more aligned with economic rationality and less with social concerns and fairness. This transformation is seen in the educational system's decision-making process, notably in higher education.

Multiple Changes have been visible in the last couple of years. Such changes are for example the revision of the educational curriculum. With the advancement of curriculum reform, greater emphasis has been placed on the modification of curriculum reform implementation. Changes to the pre-designed curriculum goals during curriculum implementation that deviate from the initial expectation in terms of curricular features and state are referred to as alteration. There are two types of changes in curriculum implementation: amplification changes and attenuation changes. The curriculum itself is the source of the change.

Further, the world is now living in the Information Age. A flourishing change is new technology that aids learning. New tools enable students to communicate with people all around the world. With the press of a button, a mountain of information is instantly accessible. The teacher no longer has complete knowledge. They are now an important coach, demonstrating to students how to choose, work with, add to, and apply information in meaningful ways. Many educational systems are finding it difficult to educate pupils for today's fast-changing environment. People all across the world are debating how to interest pupils in their study. Students must acquire information and skills that will be useful in today's and tomorrow's workplaces, further education, or training.

MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds

As one of the most important UN organizations worldwide and known for its help towards children in need, it has had a huge impact on the issue of having equal access to education. For

a long time UNICEF believes and supports that Education is a basic human right. UNICEF aims to provide children and adolescents with the information and skills they need to flourish in 147 different countries across the world.

Save the Children

Save The Children is an International non-governmental organisation which is dedicated to promoting children's rights and other child-related concerns. Learning and education are among their main areas of interest, particularly for youngsters who are experiencing crises, extreme poverty, or prejudice in the classroom. Early childhood programming from Save the Children aims to ensure that kids are properly prepared for school by offering preschool settings and at-home teaching resources.

African Education Program

Being an Non Governmental Organization with its headquarters in the USA has the ending of the cycle of poverty in their communities through educating and developing the youth of Zambia as its main goal. Their main vision also includes a generation of young people in Africa with equitable access to the resources required to become informed, responsible, and compassionate citizens who work to improve the conditions in their communities affected by HIV/AIDS and extreme poverty, since the entire African continent is plagued by both issues.

UNESCO education

With gender equality as its guiding principle, UNESCO offers global and regional leadership in education, enhances educational systems across the world, and uses education to address current global concerns. From early childhood, to higher education and beyond, its work involves high-quality educational development.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
23 April 1635	In Boston, Massachusetts, the first public school in what would become the United States was created. This boys-only public secondary school, known as the Boston Latin School, was managed by schoolmaster Philemon Pormont, a Puritan pioneer.
1817	The Connecticut Asylum for the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons opens in Hartford,

	becoming the country's first permanent school for the deaf.
1833	Oberlin College at Oberlin, Ohio, became the first mixed-gender college of higher education in the United States in 1833. Mixed-gender classes were permitted to Oberlin's preparatory department in 1833 and the college department in 1837.
1839	The first state-funded teacher education school was established in Lexington, Massachusetts.
1954	Brown v. Board of Education is decided, and the Supreme Court rules that separate but equal educational facilities are inherently unequal, reversing the previous judgment in Plessy v. Ferguson.
1960	Ruby Bridges becomes the first African American to attend New Orleans' William Frantz Elementary School.
June 23, 1972	Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) outlaws sex discrimination (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) in any federally funded education programme or activity.
2007	To remove the usage of mental retardation, the American Association on Mental Retardation wants to alter its name to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 8/4¹

This Human Rights Resolution with the title “The right to education” conducted on the 28th meeting on the 18th of June 2008 and passing without going through the voting procedure mostly deals with every child’s right to education. Concerned that 72 million children, 57% of which are females, and 37 million of which live in conflict-affected fragile states, are not in school, and that 774 million people, 64% of whom are women, still lack basic reading skills the Human Rights Council (HRC) passed this resolution that clearly states that every child on an international level has equal rights to being educated, despite its cultural identity, sex and religious belief.

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 36/12²

This specific Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2017 focuses on making every member State adopt human rights education and training, while it recognises the 2030 Agenda and the 4th development goal as very important for such a goal.

UN Treaty International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights³

The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a multilateral treaty approved by the United Nations General Assembly (GA) on December 16, 1966, and entered into force on January 3, 1976. It recognises the negative right of a person not to be robbed of their means of subsistence among which education is included. Furthermore, it states that everyone has the right to work under "just and favorable conditions," including the right to form and join trade unions, social security, including social insurance, family life, paid parental leave and child protection, an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and the "continuous improvement of living conditions," health, specifically "the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health," education.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

A very important Amendment that changed the world of education is the IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This Amendment outlaws sex discrimination (including pregnancy, sexual

¹ ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_8_4.pdf.

² "Human Rights Documents." ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/36/12.

³ "UNTC." United Nations Treaty Collection, treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4.

orientation, and gender identity) in any federally funded education programme or activity. According to the Title IX regulation, "except as provided elsewhere in this part, no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other education programme or activity operated by a recipient on the basis of sex." While female athletes and sports programmes still have fewer teams, less scholarships, and poorer budgets than their male counterparts, female involvement at the high school level has increased by 1057 percent and by 61 percent since Title IX's implementation.

Brown v. Board of Education

Brown v. Board of Education, in full *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, case in which, on May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court declared unanimously (9-0) that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prevents states from refusing equal treatment of the laws to any person within their territories. The court said that segregating educational facilities for white and African American pupils was fundamentally unfair. It so rejected the "separate but equal" approach proposed by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which holds that laws mandating separate public facilities for whites and African Americans do not violate the equal protection provision provided the facilities are roughly comparable. Although the 1954 ruling was limited to public schools, it meant that segregation was prohibited in other public buildings. *Brown v. Board of Education*, widely regarded as one of the most important decisions in the Court's history, inspired the American civil rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The legal triumph in *Brown* did not suddenly revolutionize the country, and much work still to be done. However, removing segregation from the nation's public schools was a significant impetus for the civil rights movement, paving the way for progress in desegregating housing, public facilities, and institutions of higher education.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Reevaluating the educational system

The fundamental structure of educational systems has an impact on equity. Traditionally, educational systems have classified pupils based on their academic performance. Evidence from secondary and elementary school research shows that such sorting might exacerbate disparities and injustices, especially if it occurs early in the educational process. Early sorting might also degrade overall results.

Socioeconomic structure in education systems is of great importance. Secondary school systems with major socioeconomic gaps had for example students with lower average math and reading scores and a wider range of reading outcomes. Indeed, social background is a greater impediment to educational attainment than in systems where there are no socioeconomic variations across schools.

Promoting equality

Selecting students based on academic achievement creates significant socioeconomic inequalities between institutions. It also strengthens the relationship between socioeconomic position and performance, tending to accelerate the advancement of those who have already had the best start in life thanks to their parents, and is related with greater performance at the top of the scale in mathematics and science.

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