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Introduction

Education is a core tool for developing countries to boost their standard of living in the long term and exide other rival economies. Proper education has a positive effect on the economy and the society of the country and contributes to a more equitable, prosperous, and stable world.

According to UNESCO: "Twenty percent of young people in developing countries fail to complete primary school."Education is a human right for all throughout life and access must be matched by quality. It is a fundamental expectation of a literate and numerate population that can apply knowledge. But in these areas of the world, very few people have access to education and there are those who, despite completing primary school, have learned relatively little and find it difficult to read and count.

Many factors influence the availability of education in these countries such as poverty, gender disparities, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, lack of education materials, child labor, and health issues. Moreover, children who face these problems are less likely to finish their studies.

Definition of Key Terms

Less Economically Developed Countries - LEDCs are also known as developing countries. These nations, compared to more developed ones, are characterized by lower industrialization and lower standards of living. They often face challenges such as poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure.

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund: An agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide.

UNESCO - is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It contributes to peace and security by promoting international cooperation in education, sciences, culture, communication, and information.

Child Labour - Labor force under 18 years. Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

Climate Hazards - Weather-related, hydrometeorological events that can cause harm to humans, property, livelihoods, resources, and the environment.

COVID - COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2. It can be very contagious and spreads quickly. Over one million people have died from COVID-19 in the United States. COVID-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, the flu, or pneumonia.

PASEC - The Program for the Analysis of Educational Systems of CONFEMEN (PASEC) has existed since 1991, it implements evaluations aimed at reporting on the performance of the education systems of the member countries of CONFEMEN, in sub-Saharan Africa in the Middle East, Lebanon and since 2011 in Southeast Asia.

General Overview

Various factors affect education in these regions and thus access to basic education becomes difficult. The underlying reasons for girls' low enrollment are related to insecurity and the role of girls and women in society. According to traditional norms and practices, women do not belong at school and should rather take care of the tasks at home. Only 16 percent of schools in Afghanistan are girls-only, and many lack adequate sanitation, further hindering participation. They may face threats of violence, early marriage, or be forced into domestic roles instead of attending school, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

Children are exposed to climate hazards such as floods, cyclones, extreme heat, and droughts often disrupt education. Climate-related disasters frequently lead to the closure of schools, either due to damage to infrastructure or concerns for students' safety. In the aftermath of events like floods or cyclones, schools may remain closed for extended periods, depriving children of valuable learning opportunities and disrupting their academic progress.

School buildings are often vulnerable to damage from extreme weather events, particularly in low-income and vulnerable communities with inadequate infrastructure. Climate hazards can pose significant health risks to children, impacting their ability to attend school and engage in learning activities. Extreme heat waves can lead to heat-related illnesses, while floods and droughts can exacerbate waterborne diseases and malnutrition, further compromising children's health and well-being. The uncertainty and upheaval caused by these events can affect their emotional resilience and ability to concentrate, making it challenging to participate effectively in school and engage with educational materials.

In regions plagued by conflict, access to education becomes severely limited. Destruction of infrastructure and security concerns often prevent children from attending school. Families may prioritize survival over education, leading to increased dropout rates and a lack of enrollment. Even in areas where schools operate, the quality of education is often compromised. A shortage of qualified teachers, lack of resources, and disruption to the curriculum due to conflict-related factors result in an inferior learning experience. The trauma of conflict can have profound psychological effects on children, impacting their ability to learn and engage in education. Witnessing violence, experiencing displacement, and living in constant fear can hinder cognitive development and emotional well-being, making it challenging for children to concentrate and participate effectively in school.
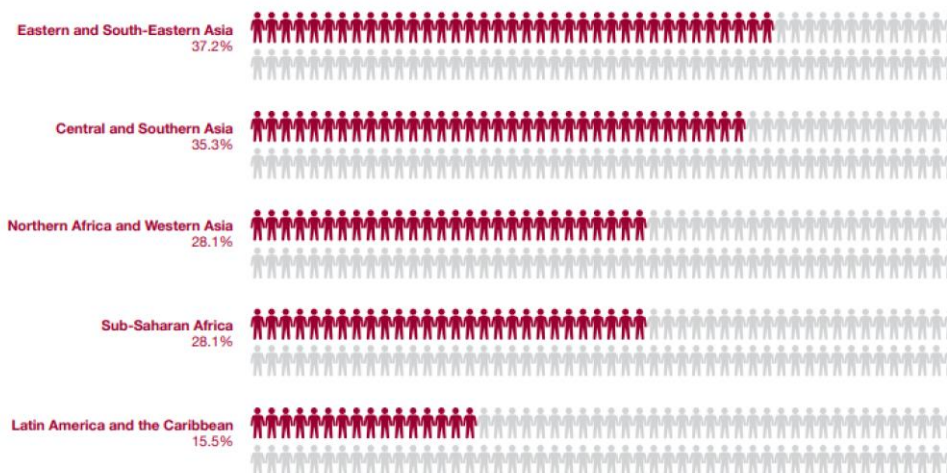
Child labor is a significant barrier to education and deprives millions of children of their fundamental right to learn and develop fully.
Child labor forces children to stop with studies in order to contribute to the household income or support their families. They are denied the opportunity to go to school and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for their personal and professional development. Without access to quality education, children cannot escape the cycle of poverty and provide themselves with better opportunities in the future.

Across all regions, significant shares of children in child labour are out of school

Fig 28. Percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years in child labour not attending school, by region

Eastern and South-Eastern Asia
37.2%

Central and Southern Asia
35.3%

Northern Africa and Western Asia
28.1%

Sub-Saharan Africa
28.1%

Latin America and the Caribbean
15.5%

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education systems worldwide, with profound consequences for students, teachers, and communities, particularly in LEDCs. The shift to distance education exacerbates existing inequalities in access to education in LEDCs. Many students lack the necessary technology, internet connectivity, and digital literacy to effectively engage in online learning, increasing the digital divide.

The economic consequences of the pandemic are an additional strain on LEDC households, exacerbating poverty as children are often forced to work or do housework, which further impairs their ability to engage in learning activities and attend school regularly.

Major Parties Involved

People's Republic of China: In 1986, China passed the Compulsory Education Law, making nine years of education compulsory and free of charge, significantly improving access to primary education. By 2019, China achieved near-universal enrollment in compulsory education.

Ireland: In 1998, Ireland introduced the Education Act, which emphasizes the importance of access, participation, and effective education for every child, including at the primary level.

Italy: In 2000, Italy reformed its education system with the Moratti Reform, focusing on inclusivity and accessibility, including efforts to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream schools.

Afghanistan: In 2002, following the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghanistan began rebuilding its education system, significantly increasing access to primary education for boys and girls.

United States of America: In 2002 The United States launched the Africa Education Initiative (AEI), aiming to improve education across the African continent, including in least developed countries. The initiative focuses on increasing access to primary education, improving the quality of teaching, and providing textbooks and learning materials. It represents a significant investment by the U.S. in the education sectors of developing countries, aiming to strengthen educational foundations and support the achievement of universal primary education.

Niger: In 2003, Niger launched an ambitious ten-year education development plan to increase access to and the quality of primary education, with significant emphasis on reaching out-of-school children.

Nigeria: In 2004, Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program, aiming to provide free, universal, and compulsory primary education for all children.

Canada: In 2005, Canada's government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), part of broader efforts to support families and indirectly increase access to education, including primary levels.

Czech Republic: In 2005, the Czech Republic implemented the Education Act, which aimed at providing equitable access to education for all children, including those with special educational needs.

Switzerland: In 2005, Switzerland continued to uphold its high standards in education, focusing on accessibility and quality across all cantons, including primary education.

Russia: In 2010, Russia launched a comprehensive education reform to modernize its educational system, focusing on increasing accessibility and improving the quality of education across all levels, including primary, education.

Mali: In 2010, as mentioned earlier, Mali implemented the Ten-Year Education Development Program (PRODEC), focusing on access and quality of primary education. This program, supported by international donors, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), focuses on constructing and rehabilitating school infrastructure, providing school meals, and training teachers.

South Sudan: After gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan embarked on developing its education sector, with numerous challenges but also with significant international support aiming to improve access to primary education.

Hungary: In 2013, Hungary introduced the Public Education Act, focusing on reducing early school leaving and promoting equal access to education for disadvantaged children, including those in primary education.

France: In 2013, France launched the "Refondation de l'École de la République" initiative, aiming to reform the education system to make it more equitable and accessible, particularly focusing on the most disadvantaged areas.

Chad: In 2013, Chad committed to improving its education system under the "Interim Education Sector Plan," focusing on access, quality, and management of primary education.

Denmark: In 2014, Denmark introduced the School Reform with a focus on improving the quality and inclusiveness of its primary education system, emphasizing longer school days and new pedagogical approaches.

Germany: In 2014, Germany increased its investment in education and research, with a significant portion aimed at improving access and quality of primary education, including for children from immigrant families.

Estonia: By 2014, Estonia became recognized for its high-quality education system, focusing on accessibility and innovative teaching methods in primary education.

Malta: In 2014, Malta initiated an extensive educational reform, focusing on inclusivity and quality in primary education, aiming to cater to diverse learning needs.

Guinea: In 2015, Guinea, in response to the Ebola crisis, implemented measures to safely reopen schools and continue education, including primary education, after significant disruptions.

Sweden: In 2018, Sweden invested heavily in improving educational quality and accessibility, including initiatives specifically aimed at increasing digital literacy in primary education.

Timeline of Events

1948 - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares education a basic human right, setting the stage for global education initiatives.

1960s-1970s - The UNESCO Declaration of the 1960s and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) emphasize the right to education, influencing national policies in developing countries.

1990 - The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, marks a pivotal moment, focusing on universalizing access to basic education and significantly improving learning outcomes.

2000 - The Dakar Framework for Action, "Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments", is adopted at the World Education Forum, setting six goals to be met by 2015, including expanding early childhood care and education, and achieving universal primary education.

2000 - The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are established, with Goal 2 aimed at achieving universal primary education by 2015, reinforcing global commitments to education accessibility.

2015 - The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replace the MDGs, with Goal 4 focusing on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. This includes targets specifically aimed at eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring access to all levels of education for the vulnerable.

2020-2024 - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, international organizations, governments, and NGOs launch numerous initiatives to mitigate the impact on education in LDCs, focusing

on remote learning solutions, safe school protocols, and strategies to address learning loss and ensure continuity of education.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Universal Primary Education (UPE) Initiatives: Many countries, particularly in the Global South, have launched Universal Primary Education initiatives aimed at ensuring that all children have access to basic education. These initiatives typically involve the removal of school fees, the construction of new schools, and the recruitment and training of teachers to accommodate the increased demand for education.

Education For All (EFA) Goals: The Education For All movement, launched in 1990 by UNESCO, aimed to achieve universal access to primary education by 2015. This initiative galvanized international support and led to increased investment in primary education in many developing countries. However, while significant progress was made, the goal of universal primary education was not fully realized by the target date.

Multilateral Aid and Development Assistance: International organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and bilateral aid agencies have provided financial and technical assistance to support primary education in developing countries. This assistance often takes the form of funding for infrastructure projects, teacher training programs, curriculum development, and policy reforms aimed at improving access, quality, and equity in education.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Recognizing the crucial role of teachers in delivering quality education, efforts have been made to improve teacher training and capacity-building initiatives. This includes the development of pre-service and in-service training programs, the provision of teaching materials and resources, and the implementation of professional development opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness and pedagogical skills.

Community-Based Approaches: In many contexts, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society groups have played a vital role in addressing primary education challenges. These initiatives often involve community-driven development projects, parent-teacher associations, and grassroots campaigns aimed at increasing awareness, mobilizing resources, and fostering local ownership of education initiatives.

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