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Introduction

The lack of resources in classrooms has in several ways impediment effects on the opportunities a child can have regarding their future education. Without the proper equipment, some may not be able to follow the flow of a lesson or understand a specific topic thus receiving inadequate grades, which can result in losing their interest in learning. A potential outcome of this situation is that pupils fail to complete the school year, the repetition of which inevitably increases the class size, or else, students will not be able to graduate from elementary school. Similarly, the issue has a direct and indisputable impact on the attitude of the teachers, who will consequently be compelled to work with an increasing number of juveniles while the educators are in need of finding alternative methods to convey their knowledge. The demanding endeavour to successfully achieve these goals is bound to result in burnout, from which point the teacher is distinctly likely to fail at educating. The issue concerned is the most severe in high-poverty regions - such as Sub-Saharan Africa -, where the educators need to buy the required resources themselves, such as sheets of paper and pencils, in order to be able to deliver some kind of education, with a strong probability of it not being even close to what is described as quality education.

Secondly, teaching involves mutual cooperation between the lecturer and the listeners, which cannot be implemented presuming that the teacher is unable to understand a child because of their nationality, culture, religion or gender. The lack of acknowledgment and understanding from the teacher's perspective appears in the educational progress of the child concerned as a handicap, which is possible to be a discouraging force regarding their future studies. However, in the Sub-Saharan region, there is a much greater issue that desperately needs to be solved. Besides the devastating deficiency of teachers, only two-thirds of the ones employed possess a proper qualification. Not only are they unfamiliar with alternative educational methods or the

usage of the newest technological advancements that could be integrated into the education system, but they lack fundamental knowledge about their subjects and how the pupils should be treated, making sure gender inequality does not arise in such situations.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable Development Goals - A universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. There are 17 goals in the 2030 Agenda.

SDG4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” - Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda.

Sub-Saharan Africa - The term used to describe the area of the African continent which lies South of the Sahara Desert.

Pit latrines - The simplest form of the predecessors of the toilets, which consist of a pit dug in the ground and a cover slab above the hole.

Refuge - protection or shelter from danger, trouble, unhappiness, etc.

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, the motto of which is “for every child”.

General Overview

Of all regions, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. The probability of attending school and thus having the chance to reach their potential, escape poverty and build a better future for themselves, their family and their community decreases with the increasing age of the pupil. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of 6 and 11 are estimated to be out of school, followed by one-third of those aged between 12 and 14 and almost 60 percent of juveniles between the ages of 15 and 17. Besides the low number of students in African schools, gender disparity appears as an alarming issue that needs to be balanced out as soon as possible. According to the UNESCO Institution for Statistics (UIS), 9 million girls of 6 to 11 years old are out of school, which is one and a half times as many as the number of boys of the same age as them. By the time they grow up into adolescents, the

exclusion rate of girls grows to 36 per cent, four times more than that of boys. This tendency contributes to the two-thirds of the 750 million adults worldwide without basic literacy skills that women account for.

One of the several reasons that could have led to this devastating situation is the insufficient equipment in the classrooms. As a result of this, even those who attend school are not able to benefit from the education they receive and tend to end their studies at some point even before reaching the opportunity to graduate. Most of the facilities regardless of being located in a rural or urban area lack electricity services. Without lighting in the classrooms, children cannot see their textbooks, although there are not many of them available even if they are, the devices are usually outdated and. Furthermore, groups of three or even four students are obliged to share the same copy. Disturbingly, there is a scarcity of the simplest pieces of equipment needed for a pupil to make usable notes, of pens and exercise books. This shows that while the enrollment rate in African countries is approximately 80 percent, a much greater ratio of children lacks the fundamental skills to lead a healthy and successful life.

Furthermore, not only do schools in Africa have a scarcity of textbooks as well as pen and ink, but their facilities are also poorly maintained or even expose the students' safety to threats. Many of the buildings were erected in the late 1950s or the early 1960s with mud blocks, which by now have become hazardous. In fact, in many regions' lessons are held in the open, and in case of rainy seasons, children are crowded into the available tiny classrooms. In the country of South Africa, there have been two fatal accidents recorded recently that were caused by pit latrines. Additionally, the deficiency of a sufficient number or even any number of restrooms negatively affects the attendance rate, since pupils with slight stomach bugs or girls on their period rather stay at home, where a more hygienic environment is provided. Data from the Joint Monitoring Programme, which was carried out by UNICEF and the WHO together, shows that 42 per cent of schools worldwide fail to provide basic hygiene services and 29 per cent of educational institutions lack the resources to provide healthy water services for their pupils. These ratios are a lot more devastating in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, where coverage of basic water and hygiene services in schools remains under 50 per cent.

Lastly, the presence of a number of unqualified pedagogues in the educational system is equally concerning. The low salary that a teaching job can provide discourages many candidates from the career. And even from those who end up in it, there are still many who did not choose this profession voluntarily, they simply got rejected from their preferred university and as a refuge enrolled on the pedagogue training programme. Therefore, their work lacks devotion and they are ready to leave the system any time a more interesting opportunity

comes on the market. Devastatingly, an increasing number of those with dedication and passion seem to be less competent, as a result of the lengthy procedure to find candidates for the unappealing rural positions, where several difficulties need to be faced. The proportion of primary teachers having the required qualifications decreased from 84 per cent in 2000 to 65 per cent in 2019. Besides these deficiencies, in African countries less than 50 percent of teachers are female in primary education, who could be an inspiration or role model for young ladies, furtherly, encourage them to proceed with their studies. Instead of them, male teachers are employed in many institutions, who may be insensitive to gender issues therefore girls do not feel safe in their school environment and finally opt for dropping out. In secondary education, their proportion is beneath 30 per cent. In regard to countries where properly educated teachers are available, the issue often seems to be the unpreparedness for multicultural classes or disadvantaged pupils along with the pedagogues' lack of knowledge about the information and communication technology, which could be integrated into the educational system thus increasing its efficiency.

The School for Africa initiative was started by UNICEF, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Hamburg Society for the Promotion of Democracy and International Law in 2004. They believe that every child deserves the right to a proper education and therefore to a happier life. The organisation collected USD 300 million with the help of 27 countries, which was used to build a number of new schools and renew existing ones, ensure access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities for children, build school playgrounds, and equip classrooms with the necessary educational materials, school desks and chairs in 21 African countries giving opportunity to 30 million pupils.

In 2006 Develop Africa, a nonprofit organisation was registered. The team seeks to bring development to the continent via supporting education. From incoming donations, they provide aid to African educational institutions including school supplies, scholarships, solar lights to enable them to study during dark hours, mosquito nets to prevent them from catching malaria, and computer and vocational training.

The importance and the great impact of education on children's lives have been recognised by the United Nations' fourth Sustainable Development Goal, which was adopted by all UN members in 2015. Progress towards quality education had already not been as sufficient as required to reach the 15-year plan, when the COVID pandemic broke out resulting in a great decline in the number of children acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The Future of Education in Africa Conference took place on the 18th of September 2023. The aim of the conference has been the same for years: “to take severe action and renew commitment to school enrolment as well as address the falling standard of Education in Africa’s educational system” including the issue of low and inequitable access to education facilities and irrelevant curriculum.

Major Parties Involved

Central African Republic: According to the World Inequality Database on Education, the primary education completion rate in the C.A.R. was around 27 per cent in 2019. This number of juveniles aged at primary graduation age finished their studies successfully, covering 30 per cent of the boys and 24 per cent of the girls. In spite of having reached these relatively small figures, the youth literacy rate is even below, 21 per cent of those aged between 15 and 24 years have mastered fundamental reading and math skills. Dreadfully, only 12 per cent of their age group completed their lower secondary education. The main causes of the former figures comprise the continuous presence of numerous political, economic, and security crises and instabilities. These prevent the education system from receiving a high proportion of the governmental expenditure, therefore renovation works and preparations are impossible to be done before the new school year.

Uganda: A survey carried out in Uganda in 2019 showed that 27 per cent of juveniles at graduation age were certified with sufficient knowledge. The gender inequality among those passing the exams was awareness-raisingly high. 37 per cent of male students and only 19 per cent of female learners completed their primary education. According to data measured by UNICEF, the dropout rates in Uganda reach their height in the rural regions, where children may have to cover huge distances to reach the learning facilities, whereas enrollments for secondary education are the lowest there, at around 8 per cent. Not only the lack of sanitation and textbooks is concerning but in June 2023 nearly 40 pupils were assassinated at a school in western Uganda. The intruders set the dormitory of the school on fire resulting in the death of 17 students and made a deadly attack on 20 juveniles with machetes. The massacre demanded the life of adults as well including a facility guard and three members of the local community. The militants that caused the disaster are linked to the Islamic State group.

Liberia: Data from the Demographic and Health Surveys shows that 31 per cent of juveniles graduated successfully from primary education in 2019 in Liberia. Gender disparity in

this sector is considerably small but not negligible. 29 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls were credited with proper literacy and numeracy skills. This difference is even more reduced in the lower secondary educational sector, where 27 per cent of males and 28 per cent of females completed their studies. The analysis carried out by the Liberian government comprises tremendous student-textbook ratios. The figures are six students for a single language book in a public primary school, seven junior secondary pupils for one language book and eight of them share a math textbook. According to the formerly mentioned analysis, only 13.8 per cent of the national expenditure represented education in 2020-2021 instead of the recommended 20 per cent for all those countries that aim to achieve SDG4. The fact has been highlighted that higher education receives almost five times more than the expenditure in primary and secondary education.

Chad: A survey by the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys revealed that 33 per cent of children of graduation age in Chad completed their primary education in 2019. 29 per cent of female and 38 per cent of male pupils finished their studies successfully. An enormous difference appears between the two genders concerning the possession of basic literacy skills. 32 per cent of the age group between 15 and 24 years has acquired them, however, 46 per cent of males and only 18 per cent of females of that age. Due to humanitarian crises, the government is unable to spend the required sum on addressing the issues in the educational system, even though it has expressed its commitment towards SDG4. The figures for completing lower secondary education sink way below that of primary. Only 17 per cent of the corresponding age group managed to graduate in 2019, 11 per cent of female and 24 per cent of male students. The youth illiteracy rate appears to be 68 per cent, 82 per cent of women and 54 per cent of men lack the ability to read properly between the ages of 15 and 24. Afterwards, higher education is almost impossible to get access to comprising technical education and professional training.

Timeline of Events

2004 - School for Africa initiative started by UNICEF

2006 - Develop Africa, a nonprofit organisation registered

2015 - United Nations' fourth Sustainable Development Goal adopted by all UN members

2023 September 18 - Future of Education in Africa Conference

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Numerous approaches have been made by governments, committees of the United Nations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in order to find a solution to the increasingly concerning issue. Even though due to their measures progress has been made, it seems to be not efficient enough, particularly in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goal on education by 2030.

Several charity organisations have been founded in the 21st century setting the goal of transferring donated money to indigent countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in the form of facility equipment, textbooks and sanitation infrastructures. All of them have been increasing the quality of education in the target regions, however, this improvement is not speedy enough to make conditions meet SDG4 until 2030. Even though this may not seem to be the final solution that ultimately puts an end to the miserable state of education in Africa, it did make some achievements and contributed to a brighter future and must not be stopped until quality education is provided.

Since 1984, UNESCO has defined the African continent as a priority in the implementation of its mandate. Since then, the committee has been actively working with governments and organisations of the continent, including the African Union. The abolishment of the issue of improper equipment and under-qualified teaching staff is also supported by UNICEF.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

As seen in the case of countries where school attendance and graduation rates are especially low, reasons include instability in internal politics or foreign policy as well as armed conflicts, wars or plundering attacks. Even though old facilities can be renovated after a dreadful strike by intruders, their reliability will be decreased, and nothing will eliminate the opportunity of a future assault. Considering that these offensives risk the well-being of the students as well and violate their right to proper education, they must be stopped, so that improvement can be implemented in safe conditions.

If safety is ensured, governments should with might and main focus on the condition of educational facilities and the access to proper sanitation and clean water. In upgraded buildings, students can enjoy the process of learning therefore reducing dropout rates. This attributes the presence of proper hygiene conditions, which would no longer force children to stay home with lighter illnesses. Moreover, that the easy and quick accessibility of the facilities should be provided in all countries. The construction of complex road systems is

essential to enable pupils to use some kind of transportation on their way to school to shorten the hours-long walk and not tire them out before even their first lesson.

Regarding the pedagogues, the most recent curriculums and extension courses should be granted under any circumstances. The importance of this is that it increases the efficiency of the education system. If students are able to encounter the newest inventions of the modern era while they are still studying, they will face fewer barriers and difficulties when they step out into the life of a working person. However, schools and teachers are not only responsible for delivering the course material but also for helping the children develop their social skills, which are indispensable, and get a better understanding of the world and the society they live in.

In countries, where governments are not willing to spend enough on the education system or are unable to do so, awareness should be raised. Education is the future of us, of our children and of the world. All measures must be taken to increase knowledge about its importance, how it is the foundation of a brighter future, a happier life, a society and a sustainable future. Education should never suffer deprivation regarding both the teachers and the proper equipment and if it does, no one should stay silent about it. With cooperation inside communities, countries, in between states and lending a helping hand to each other the issue can be tackled.

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