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ECOSOC

Improving Education in the Less Economically

Developed Countries (LEDCs)

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<u>Foreword by the Dias</u>

Greetings Delegates!

The Dais of the Economic and Social Council is extremely delighted to have you as a part of our committee for MBMUN 2020.

We are actively looking forward to the debate and the brilliant ideas that you will showcase. Model United Nations are opportunities to present a multitude of skills: incorporating research, debate, and presentation. We hope you use this opportunity to display your skills and more importantly to grow in your experience as a delegate. The Agenda chosen is recent and of high importance, the outcome of which depends on you as delegates. Participating in a MUN not only adds to your resume, but it's an active part of shaping the world we live in. So, keep calm and try your best, do not let any setbacks stop you from going further.

Wishing you the best of luck,

The Dais of Economic and Social Council, MBMUN 2020

Introduction to the Committee

The Economic and social council is one of the subsidiary organs of the United Nations, which looks over matters of Economic and Social matters around the world. Chapter X of the Charter of the UN defines the roles and duties of the council in the Charter[1] is stated as follows-:

Article 62

> The Economic and Social Council may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any such matters to the General Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies concerned.
>
> It may make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
>
> It may prepare draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly, with respect to matters falling within its competence.
>
> It may call, in accordance with the rules prescribed by the United Nations, international conferences on matters falling within its competence.

The Economic and Social Council usually has annual reviews of the economic and social conditions. The debate and the recommendatory powers of the Council to the General Assembly means that the council acts as the 1st of response to any crisis and warns the government and individual on any upcoming issues[2]. The council was designed to be the UN's main venue for the discussion of international economic and social issues. ECOSOC conducts studies; formulates resolutions, recommendations, and conventions for consideration by the General Assembly; and coordinates the activities of various UN organizations. The UN charter allows ECOSOC to grant consultative status to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Beginning in the mid-1990s,

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[1] Nation, U., 1946. *Chapter 10: Economic And Social Council*. [online] Charter of the United Nation. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-x/index.html> [Accessed 16 May 2020].

[2] Green, J., 1956. ECOSOC: Its Roles and its Achievements. World Affairs, 115(3), pp.74-76.

measures were taken to increase the participation of such NGOs, and by the early 21st century more than 2,500 NGOs had been granted consultative status.[3]

Background

Education is a fundamental human right. Half a century ago, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration enshrined the right to free basic education. Subsequent commitments - the 1966 International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child - have reaffirmed this right.[4] In many less economically developed countries (LEDCs), education becomes a privilege. Due to the circumstances in which many children in LEDCs grow up, those children cannot enjoy this human right. More than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate.

Causes of lack of education

Marginalization and poverty: Children often find themselves on the margins of the education system and do not benefit from learning that is vital to their intellectual and social development. Factors linked to poverty such as unemployment, illness and the illiteracy of parents, multiply the risk of non-schooling and the drop-out rate of a child by 2. Undeniably, many children are forced to abandon their education due to health problems related to malnutrition or in order to work and provide support for the family.

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[3] Britannica, Encyclopedia. 2020. "Economic And Social Council | UN". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Economic-and-Social-Council.
[4] https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc_lib/135_1_education_in_africa.pdf

Financial deficit of developing countries: Many emerging countries do not appropriate the financial resources necessary to create schools, provide schooling materials, nor recruit and train teachers. Teachers do not benefit from basic teacher training and schools, of which there are not enough, have oversized classes. This overflow leads to classes where many different educational levels are forced together which does not allow each individual child to benefit from an education adapted to their needs and abilities.

Overview of the right to education worldwide

Sub-Saharan Africa is the most affected area with over 32 million children of primary school age remaining uneducated. Central and Eastern Asia, as well as the Pacific, are also severely affected

by this problem with more than 27 million uneducated children.

The children leave school without having acquired the basics, which greatly impedes the social and economic development of these countries.

Inequality between girls and boys: the education of girls in jeopardy

Today, it is girls who have the least access to education. They make up more than 54% of the non-schooled population in the world.

Girls' education is a major issue. Across the region, 9 million girls between the ages of about 6 and 11 will never go to school at all, compared to 6 million boys, according to UIS data. Their disadvantage starts early: 23% of girls are out of primary school compared to 19% of boys. By the time they become adolescents, the exclusion rate for girls is 36% compared to 32% for boys[5]

This problem occurs most frequently in the Arab States, in central Asia and in Southern and Western Asia and is principally explained by the cultural and traditional privileged treatment given to males. In sub-Saharan Africa, over 12 million girls are at risk of never receiving an

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[5] http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/education-africa

education. In Yemen, it is more than 80% of girls who will never have the opportunity to go to school. Even more alarming, certain countries such as Afghanistan or Somalia make no effort to reduce the gap between girls and boys with regard to education.[6]

In SDG 4, the instrumental importance of education for economic growth and poverty reduction is recognized. In Africa, the positive spillover of schooling can also be gauged by the fertility rates of adolescents (those aged 15 to 19 years of age), which drop with increased access to secondary school.

Figure I
Completion rates by subgroup in the period 2013–2017
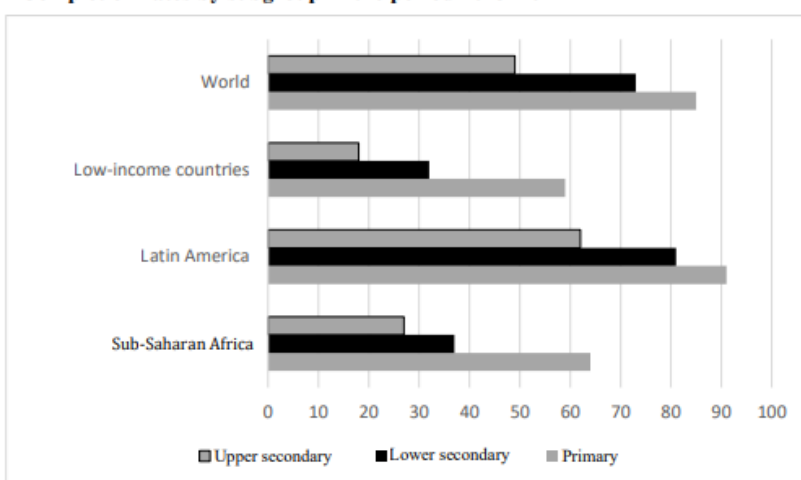
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics Database (2019).

Completion rates:

The figures for completion rates in primary and secondary education. Sub-Saharan Africa follows that general trend but reports much lower completion rates than in Latin America (see Figure I).

The aggregate primary completion rates also reflect country differences both in terms of progress made from the low initial status in the 1990s and the distance from the current target. Primary school completion has broadly improved in some countries in Africa.[7]

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[6] https://www.humanium.org/en/right-to-education/
[7] https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/ARFSD/2019/sdg_4_-background_paper_on_ensuring_inclusive_and_equitable_quality_education_-_en.pdf

Key Definitions

1) **Less economically developed countries and More Economically developed countries:** The LEDC (Less Economically Developed Countries) sector includes countries that have a lower GDP and a lower standard of living than MEDC (More Economically Developed Country) countries. MEDCs most often pertain to the expansion of manufacturing industries and provide a wider access to in-classroom public education than LEDCs because of their better financial stability, LEDCs generally rely on agriculture and have less educational opportunities for their populations[8]

2) **SDGs:** Goals adopted by all the UN Member States, that recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, with a special emphasis on collaboration – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests[9].

3) **Internally displaced persons:** According to the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, "Internally displaced people (IDPs) have not crossed a border to find safety. Unlike refugees, they are on the run at home. IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. They often move to areas where it is difficult for us to deliver humanitarian assistance and as a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world"[10].

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[8] LEDC and MEDC Education comparison, N.D, Mission 2015 Biodiversity
http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2015/2015/ledc_medc_edcomparison.html

[9] Sustainable Development Goals, N.D, United Nations
Https://sustainable development.un.org/?menu=1300
[10] IDP, N.D, UNHCR,
https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/internally-displaced-people.html

4) **Refugees:** As defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group."[11].

Key Parties

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO strives to achieve peace through international cooperation in Education, Science and Culture. UNESCO believes that education is a fundamental human right and must be accessible to all. It leads the Global Education 2030 Agenda through SDG 4[12].

UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund is a UN body that is responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. UNICEF operates in 144 countries. UNICEF has implemented the Out-of-School Children (OSCI) Initiative in 201, aiming to reduce the number of children out of school worldwide. The OSCI acknowledges cultural barriers and develops programs to help children receive an education and operates in over 90 countries. [13]

Global Partnership for Education: GPE works with over 70 partners and acts as a partnership and a fund, it mobilizes investments both externally and domestically to help governments around the world build stronger frameworks within their education systems based on data and evidence[14]. GPE has mobilized over 7 Billion dollars to help improve education worldwide. The GPE participated in the 70th summit of the General Assembly in which it adopted the 2030

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[11] IDP, N.D, UNHCR
https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/
[12] Unesco, Education transforms Lives, N.D Unesco.org
https://en.unesco.org/themes/education

[13] Unicef, Education, N.D, unicef.org
https://www.unicef.org/education
[14] Global partnership for education, N.D, Ensuring all children can unlock their full potential through education https://www.globalpartnership.org/

agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. The UNHCR also signed an agreement with GPE in 2016 to increase collaboration and provide education to refugees around the world[15].

United Nations Development Programme: The United Nations Development Programme operates in about 170 countries around the world helping to attain the eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion in society. The UNDP helps nations develop policies, partnering abilities, leadership abilities, institutional capabilities and build on their foundation towards sustainable development results[16].

Libya: Many public-school buildings are often used as shelters for IDPs in regions such as Sirte and Benghazi. Tripoli has overcrowded places and the absence of proper materials such as books and other stationary.

School-age population by education level

Pre-primary	264,706
Primary	766,337
Secondary	681,192
Tertiary	573,230

- Compulsory education lasts 9 years from age 6 to age 14
- For primary to post-secondary education, the academic year begins in September and ends in June

The Ministry of Education moved onto releasing school books online, for free but lack of electricity and internet connections limits the accessibility.[17] There is also a fear of security across Libyan schools as public schools do not offer transport, which the family must provide.[18]

[15] UNHCR agency, N.D, https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/4/572a43b94/unhcr-and-gpe-agree-on-closer-collaboration-to-ensure-childrens-education.html

[16] United Nations Development Programme, About Us, N.D, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us.html

[17] Fetouri, Mustafa, November 2016, In Libya, the education system suffers more than most, thenational.ae
https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/in-libya-the-education-system-suffers-more-than-most-1.211393

[18] Unesco, Sustainable Development Goals, Libya, N.D
http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ly

Syria: The ongoing conflict in Syria has left education in a deteriorating condition leaving over 7000 schools damaged and over 2 million children out of school. There is a lack of learning spaces, economic hardships, and protection concerns. The classrooms are often overcrowded, have inadequate teachers, and lack learning materials. UNICEF has been making deliveries to help improve the educational facilities[19].

Venezuela: Venezuela economic conditions continue to deteriorate in the midst of political feuds and hyperinflation. With regards to education, many families are unable to afford school supplies or even food, so many children have problems paying attention in class. In the beginning of the 2018-2019 almost 3 million children had dropped out due to the ongoing crisis. For students that do attend, they are exuberantly crowded and teachers are not able to cater and concentrate to individual needs[20].

Iran: Article 30 of Iran's constitution states that there must be free education for all but Iran faces severe problems with regards to education. A large part of the nation lives under the poverty line, and the nation faces severe problems of high inflation. Many schools are increasingly becoming privatized which prevents proper education for all those forced into the deteriorated condition at public schools[21].

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[19] Unicef, Syrian Arab Republic, N.D, Education
https://www.unicef.org/syria/education
[20] Sanchez, Erica, 4 Ways the Venezuela Crisis Is Affecting Children's Education, June 14th, 2019, Global Citizen
https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/venezuela-crisis-childrens-education/

[21] Stone, Pooya, 13th September 2019, Iran's growing education problems, Iranfocus.com

The Scope of Debate

The Economic and Social Council shall be deliberating that which pertains to improving the status of education in the low economic developed nations. We shall be looking at the causes of the reasons behind the falling standards of education. There are cultural barriers like social beliefs and norms and societal mentality which play an integral part in any society, what cultural norm or issues are playing hindrance for these regions to improve their education. We can also look at factors such as any economic issue such as poverty and how that plays a factor in providing education or any man-made or natural disasters which can be detrimental and how that affects the education in such a nation. The committee also looks at ways how these issues can be resolved or made better so that the quality of education is not hindered. You can look at how you as a stakeholder in this issue whether direct or indirect can play a role in bettering education in these nations.

Proposed Solutions

To limit the stigmas behind education, cultural ambassadors are suggested. These will hold meetings, display posters, have rallies that encourage education, especially in the case of the girl child.

Another possible incentive is the use of meal plans. This is especially prevalent in India, but needs to be more firmly implemented. The meal plan incentive ensures that at least one meal is taken care of in school, which promotes parents to send their children to school for the free meal.

Another aspect that could be further improved upon is the funds that are allocated. A strong cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations would ensure that education is made free and more accessible, with straining the nations resources heartily, but also allows for more legitimacy for the education and methods used by NGOs.

Further Questions

1. Is merely UN based funding sufficient or should other sources be looked upon?

2. Should a global standard for vocational and technical education be implemented?

3. The reasons as to why the past and the existent measures have failed to make any significant change despite global efforts?

4. Is it possible to replicate successful models from countries faring well in the education sector to LEDCs?

5. What is the role of technology and Artificial intelligence in the education sector, especially in Low income countries?

6. What is the role of Non-Government bodies and agencies in making education possible?

7. Has finding and creating quality teachers become a higher priority to counter high dropout rates?

8. Is it necessary at this point to subsidize and incentivize education?

Conclusion

Education is a vital right to all children around the world, and it is of paramount importance to ensure the health and development of every child. As such, the agenda pertains to those nations that need the aid in order to better education, and hence better their social and economic development to push them from being Less Economically Developed countries into More Economically developed countries.