

Forum: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Issue of : Advancing programs for economically disadvantaged people to ensure appropriate education

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## **I. Introduction**

Education overall is a very frequent and important topic in our current society. The world is moving forward and continues to progress, without proper access to education, many individuals might risk being left behind. Therefore, discussing a topic such as advancing programmes for economically disadvantaged people to ensure appropriate education is both timely and vital. There are already several ongoing initiatives that are supposed to resolve this issue in countries such as Brazil, India, Bangladesh or Kenya, that will be further explored, however they are still remaining insufficient in closing the gap fully.

## **II. Key Terms**

### **A. Primary Education**

The first form of education taught to children. This includes grade 1-6 and starts a basic overview of math, social studies, literary skills, and more. This is what secondary education is based on

### **B. Secondary Education**

Secondary Education is a stage of education that follows primary education, which encompasses middle school and high school. This usually builds on the knowledge learnt in primary school.

### **C. Tertiary Education**

Tertiary education, also known as post-secondary education, is education pursued after completing secondary school (high school). This includes degrees for professional life, vocational training and more.

### **D. Vicious Cycle**

A vicious cycle is a series of events which intensify and aggravate each other which leads to the situation being worse as a whole.

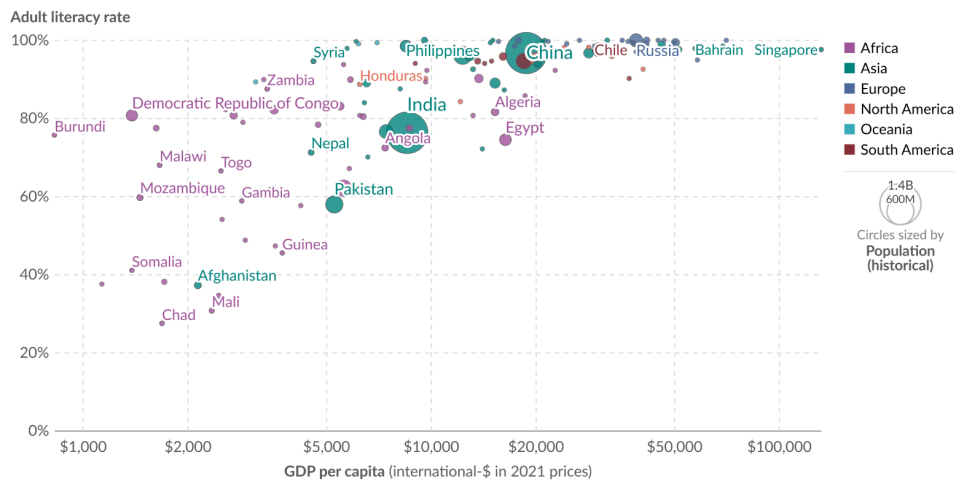
## **III. General Overview**

In many LEDCs, the literacy rate and secondary and tertiary education rate is below average. Having a low rate of education disadvantages a countries' economy, with a 1% increase in education quality accounting for a 2.8% percent increase of economic growth, this is seen through literacy rate, with most countries with a high literacy rate also having a high GDP per

capita, demonstrating the direct correlation between the two.

### Literacy rate vs. GDP per capita, 2023

Share of people aged 15+ who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement about their everyday life. GDP per capita is adjusted for inflation and differences in living costs between countries.



Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024); Data compiled from multiple sources by World Bank (2025)

Note: GDP per capita is expressed in international-\$<sup>1</sup> at 2021 prices.

OurWorldinData.org/economic-growth | CC BY

1. International dollars: International dollars are a hypothetical currency that is used to make meaningful comparisons of monetary indicators of living standards. Figures expressed in constant international dollars are adjusted for inflation within countries over time, and for differences in the cost of living between countries. The goal of such adjustments is to provide a unit whose purchasing power is held fixed over time and across countries, such that one international dollar can buy the same quantity and quality of goods and services no matter where or when it is spent. Read more in our article: What are Purchasing Power Parity adjustments and why do we need them?

Another effect of lacking education is gender inequality and lower health standards, this is because education of all levels empowers women to take part of the workforce, no matter if there is oppression against them or not, and education not only teaches the people of a nation to avoid risks to their health, it also teaches them the skills to fight these risks for example doctors or first aid classes or programs.

Another issue is that a lack of education due to insufficient financial resources often leads to unending, vicious cycles of lack of education. This is because, on average, the higher degree of education a person has, the more money they make, enabling them to buy better education for their children. But before going into the upward spiral of education, a person has to be able to be educated.

## IV. Major Parties Involved

### A. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations with the aim of promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts,

sciences and culture.

#### **B. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II.

#### **C. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a unique forum where the governments of 37 democracies with market-based economies collaborate to develop policy standards to promote sustainable economic growth.

#### **D. World Bank**

The World Bank is an international development organization owned by 187 countries. Its role is to reduce poverty by lending money to the governments of its poorer members to improve their economies and to improve the standard of living of their people.

#### **E. Brazil**

Brazil has implemented some impactful policies to spread education amongst low-income communities, amongst the most influential ones belong the Bolsa Família programme and the FUNDEB. One of the most significant is the Bolsa Família programme, which started in 2003. It offers financial aid to poor families in exchange that their children attend school and go for regular health check-ups. This “conditional cash transfer” approach has enormously improved the rate of school attendance and at the same time reduced the number of dropouts in the country. FUNDEB, The Fund for the Development of Basic Education, is another key policy in Brazil. This policy aims to direct national resources to poorer states and communities, making the distribution of public education more just.

#### **F. India**

India has implemented inclusive education policies by introducing enormous reforms. The Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009 entitles children of the age group of 6-14 years to free and compulsory education. A clause of the policy also makes it obligatory for all private primary schools to reserve 25% of their seats for students belonging to disadvantaged groups. Complementing this is the Midday Meal Scheme, the largest school lunch program in the world. It provides free lunch to millions of

children daily. Not only does the program address malnutrition, but also boosts attendance and retention rates in state schools, particularly among the poor.

#### **G. Kenya**

In 2003, Kenya made a giant stride by introducing Free Primary Education (FPE), free education in public primary schools. The policy resulted in a steep increase in enrollment, particularly among poor families and children in rural areas. However, it came with challenges like overcrowded classrooms and limited resources. In 2008, the government expanded its efforts under Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) that finances tuition in day secondary schools with the aim of improving retention and access for disadvantaged students.

#### **H. Bangladesh:**

Bangladesh has emphasized bottom-up education programs via both governmental and non-governmental avenues. One of the largest NGOs in the world, BRAC, runs the BRAC Education Programme, which seeks to bring informal primary education to rural and slum areas. For most, these schools are the only reasonable choice. Additionally, the government's Primary Education Stipend Programme (PESP) pays a monthly stipend to deserving children of poor households depending on attendance and performance. The children are hence motivated to stay in school and thus improve literacy and lower dropouts.

#### **I. United States of America**

The US subsidizes the education of low income family students under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

This program distributes federal funds to schools with a high proportion of students from low income families with the aim of improving educational services. For post-secondary education, the level of assistance is also provided in the Pell Grant Program which funds undergraduate studies for low income students, making it more affordable for those who would otherwise be unable to afford it.

## **V. Timeline of Key Events**

1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights gets ratified. The UDHR article proclaims that education is a human right, further attempting to
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establish the global norm that education should be free and compulsory at the elementary level.

- 1990 In the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand) the UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank together with other organizations launched the Education for All (EFA) movement. Their primary goal was to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. It was supposed to address and specify points made in the UDHR.
- 2000-2015 The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aims through MDG 2 to achieve universal primary education. It contributed to notable progress in enrollment rates, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, but disparities in quality and access persisted.
- 2003 Kenya introduced free primary education policy in January 2003, giving every child in Kenya a chance to attend primary school. As of 2020, 98% of children aged between 6-13 years are enrolled in primary school.
- 2004 India expands the midday meal scheme nationwide. The Mid Day Meal Scheme aims to feed students in school from class 1 to 8 with the aim to provide nutrition, increase school enrollment and retention, and provide food security. It is the biggest school lunch programme in the world with 120 million children being fed. It is administered by the Ministry of Education and is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (meaning expenses of the scheme are distributed between the Centre and the State). It has now been subsumed under the PM POSHAN Abhiyan.
- 2010 Brazil's bolsa família was recognized Internationally in October 2003. The federal government under President Lula da Silva introduced the Programa Bolsa Família (PBF), a nationwide CCT programme managed by the relevant local administration within a federal infrastructure. Its aim was to "improve the efficiency and coherence of the social safety net and to scale up assistance to provide universal coverage of Brazil's poor".

- 2015                      The United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a response to increasing global challenges the United Nations launched one of the biggest consultation programs in its history to find a new solution, resulting in an agenda of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to focus international development along three dimensions – economic, social and environmental.
- 2018                      GPE replenishment raises \$2.3 Billion for education. Donor countries nearly doubled their financial contributions to GPE, from US\$1.3 billion over the past three years to US\$2.3 billion for 2018-2020. This will allow GPE to expand its operations by about \$300 million annually over the next three years.
- 2020                      The COVID-19 crisis has significantly affected the education sector across all regions. The closing of schools has interrupted the functioning of the system, reducing student learning, and restricting the activities of education authorities, parents, and decision-makers.
- 2021                      The Global Education Coalition (GEC) is a dynamic global platform for multi stakeholder cooperation to drive education transformation to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4. The Coalition has grown into a significant network with more than 220 institutional partners from the UN family, civil society, academia, and the private sector, all united by a common goal to advance inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning.

## **VI. Previous and Possible Solutions**

### **A. Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

Global Partnership for Education. Bringing together developing countries, donors, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and foundations

### **B. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an international document adopted by



the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings.

**C. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals with measurable targets and clear deadlines for improving the lives of the world's poorest people. To meet these goals and eradicate poverty, leaders of 189 countries signed the historic millennium declaration at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000.

**D. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to transform our world. They are a call to action to end poverty and inequality, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy health, justice and prosperity. It is critical that no one is left behind.

**E. Education for All (EFA)**

Education for All (EFA) An international initiative first launched in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to 'every citizen in every society'.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Education is a fundamental cornerstone of society, and the world having people not being able to access this is not only unequal, it is a detrimental vicious cycle causing long stretches of time where minorities and people with lower housing income can not leave a state of lower education. However, there is hope, there are multiple organisations and programs which aim and strive towards causing equal global education as said in the sustainable development goals.

## **VIII. Questions to Consider**

- What actions should governments undertake to allow equal educational opportunities for children suffering economic hardships?
- How do you view the involvement of international bodies for the financing and supervision of educational programs in developing countries?
- How may a resilient education system be developed for sudden shocks such as pandemics and conflicts?

- Is there a need for cash, incentive-based transfers, or school feeding programs to be adopted or tailored to low-income countries?
- In what ways can learning technologies be integrated into the lives of children in rural and impoverished societies?
- How can both the enrollment numbers and the quality of education outcomes be improved simultaneously?
- In what ways can national governments identify and manage the hidden, discouraging costs of school education to improve participation at their attendance?
- What needs to be done in such programs to guarantee the enduring support in focus of the education aid programs?

## V. Sources for further research

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