

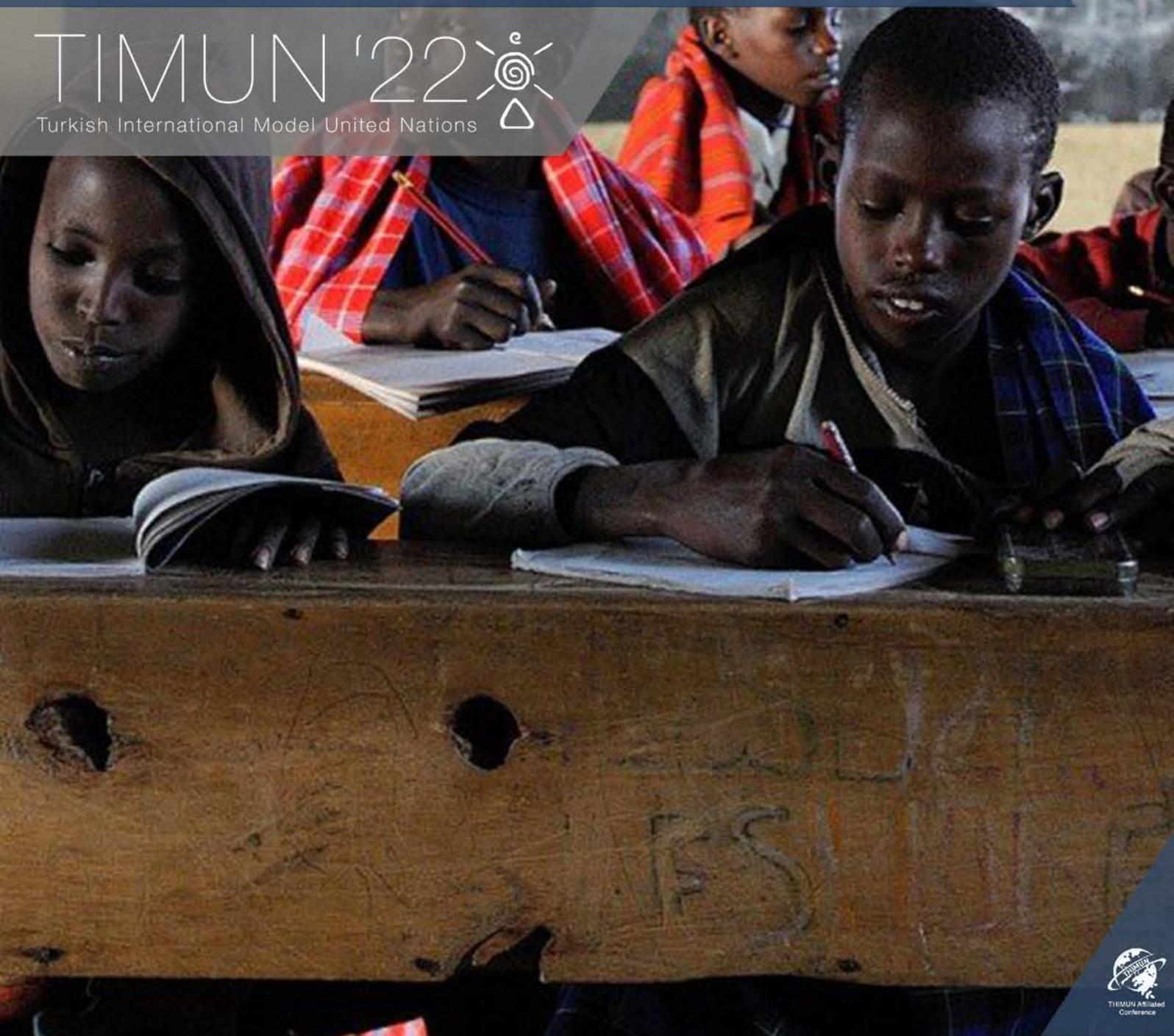


**SPC2:** Special Conference on Health and Family Welfare

**Student Officer:** Selay Ertürk

**Issue:** Breaking the relationship between the poverty cycle and education

**TIMUN '22**   
Turkish International Model United Nations





Committee: Special Conference on Health and Family Welfare (SPC2)  
Issue: Breaking the relationship between the poverty cycle and education  
Student Officer: Selay Ertürk – Vice President

## I. Introduction

The initial stage of a protracted cycle of poverty that can last for generations starts when a new child is born into an impoverished family. When a family has a low income, their availability of resources is typically very limited or nonexistent. In other words, they have very limited possibilities to advance themselves, causing the whole family to be firmly stuck in the poverty trap, which is called a poverty cycle. According to Concern Worldwide US, “(...) just over 588 million people are living in extreme poverty, meaning that approximately 7.7% of the global population lives below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day. Put another way, 588 million people presently have a lack of basic assets and/or do not see a return on the assets they have. For most people, this forms a cycle of poverty ...” (Right2Learn Foundation).



Image 1: United Nations Sustainable Development, Goal 4: Quality Education

Education is a cure for lowering poverty rates. However; broad, potentially long-lasting, and severe challenges can result from childhood poverty, particularly when the youth don't acquire adequate education. The majority of adults who are indigent now did not receive a basic education, not taking the high school



into account. Additionally, their kids tend to miss out on the education experience. This is a crucial issue because education has a major impact on poverty and means of helping to eradicate it.

Since people who live in extremely impoverished rural areas are obliged to travel long distances in order to get to school, they might find it time-consuming, thus unnecessary, to spend most of their time on the journey, which can be supported by the fact that 1 out of 5 children from 6 – 17 years is not attending school according to current research studies. Looking after the menage or working to support the family seems like a more favorable choice. However, the important element is to make sure that those families are able to appreciate the fact that the more proficient the children in that family get —the more children who can read, write, solve problems, and have greater comprehension abilities— by receiving a proper education, the subsequent generations can, in fact, break the cycle of poverty. This is attributed to the reason that the children will be more employable and have access to higher prospects as adults than their parents did. In brief, the advantages of education seem to extend to future generations.

A multigenerational cycle of affluence that is fueled by education can dislodge cycles of poverty. As society evolves into a more complex structure, better education will become more essential. To exemplify, in the future, a college education will be demanded more than half of all new occupations that are now developing. The ramifications for the whole world may be severe if educational attainment does not keep up.

## II. Involved Countries and Organizations

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia started to alleviate the great importance of education while eliminating poverty approximately two decades ago. The growth in income distribution holds the promise to provide Saudi Arabia's citizens that are obliged to live in poverty to access their full economic potential. That means, making an investment in education may have a significant yield. In 2013, a five-year education plan worth 21.33 billion dollars was approved by the King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. This plan carried the aim to strengthen Saudi Arabia's educational system, including building 1,500 nurseries, training about 25,000 instructors, opening educational centers, and doing other projects that are relevant to the cause.

### MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative

With the intention of theoretically, programmatically, and technically assisting the countries in the area, the MENA LSCE Initiative was launched in 2015. Bearing in mind the low education rates seen all through the MENA region countries, this initiative aimed to enhance learning and optimally employ such learning in economic, social, and personal development. More specifically, MENA LSCE believes that



education should be holistic and long-lasting, enabling children from low-income areas to reach their full potential.

## Israel

Israel is the second most educated nation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, based on the data gathered in 2017 by the OECD. In order to overcome the lack of reading culture in preschools, as well as the family environment, the municipality of Uhm-elFahm –Uhm-elFahm being the country's one of the largest Arab cities— along with other partners presented a reading program. Parents developed their reading-related skills to better lead reading-related sessions, as they progressed through the preschools and daycares. The program's outcomes increased the standard of reading activities between parents and children, whilst showing proliferation in both children's and parents' interest in reading at home, contributing to the country's high literacy rate of 97.10% (World Population Review). Accordingly, The OECD's report on education recognizes Israel as one of the most educated countries in the world; almost half of the countries 25 to 34 years old held bachelor's degrees.

## UNICEF

Recognizing the life-long impacts of poverty on children, UNICEF is one of the leading institutions that aim to provide the necessary resources and opportunities to children in order to enhance the quality and access to their education. UNICEF accepts the reasons that cause poverty such as failing to provide social protection programs that assist children as the utmost priority, scarce financial and social funds, impediments like lengthy administrative procedures, a lack of knowledge about rights and programs, etc. To tackle the eradication of poverty, UNICEF takes effective initiatives that tackle the roots of the education problem, such as generational poverty or gender inequality arising from tradition. UNICEF believes that education is the key element to attempt to solve the issue.

## Global Partnership Education (GPE)

Global Partnership Education program is a multi-stakeholder collaboration that is the most extensive worldwide fund thoroughly devoted to alter education in lower-income nations. To provide every child with a possibility to improve their conditions in terms of education, GPE follows a strategic plan, prioritizing SDG 4, including the construction of new schools, the conduction of research in order to gather data about the children who had dropped out of school or simply never received a proper education at all.

## Ethiopia



Ethiopia recognizes the educational gaps between rural and urban locations nationwide as well as issues like household deprivation and the prevalence of children that prevent children from completing their education. Although Ethiopia has enabled significant expansions in school enrollment over the past 10 years, these expansions have not been supported by modifications in the quality of the education given. Thus, the Ethiopian government is now cooperating with consequential international funders to conduct the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) in response to the requirement to stress a more prominent emphasis on the quality of the education received by Ethiopian students.

## Canada

Approximately more than 300,000 high school students in Canada, today, encounter prominent obstacles to graduating (Pathways to Education). Since the early 2000s, the Canadian government has been collecting data on literacy and attendance to school percentages from low-income families, while working collaboratively with award-winning Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Pathways to Education, where free public transportation and financial aid for postsecondary level education are offered in return for obligations such as consulting with an advisor on a frequent basis. Such programs seem to be useful for the underprivileged groups as can be seen from the attendance percentages of 85-90, considering the fact the program is totally voluntary.

Moreover, Canadian Education Statistics Council, with its first official report signed in 2009, has initiated an ongoing project called the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program (PCEIP) as a collaboration between Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education to collect a number of statistical measurements on the country's educational systems.

## AJEEC-NISPED (Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation and Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development)

AJEEC-NISPED is a nonprofit organization (NGO) whose mission is to develop active citizenship through volunteerism, early childhood education of the highest caliber, and health promotion while bolstering the Jewish-Arab cooperation. The shift from a traditional way of living to a more urban and modern one creates significant difficulties for early childhood education in most of the Arab countries, which is recognized by AJEEC-NISPED. Therefore, the early childhood education programs offered by the initiative are based on the local identity and ideals of the Arab community, since AJEEC-NISPED seeks better integration into education in breaking the cycle of poverty.

## III. Focused Overview of the Issue



## 1. The Relationship Between Education and Poverty

Poverty is most probably considered a negative situation in domestic life, especially where it impacts education. Children who aren't even sure they can feed themselves once they return home from school and survive every day may find it difficult to focus and retain new material during class hours, which can further cause problems. Besides, the education given in low-income areas is more likely to be inadequate in terms of lack of school materials or shortage in teachers, which increases the likelihood that the poverty cycle will persist.

Quality education is fundamentally about fostering children's growth in social, emotional, cognitive, and communicative abilities. Children can then use these skills to increase their future incomes, leading to more fulfilling and successful lives. According to UNESCO, an estimation of 171 million people could flee severe poverty (Giovetti, Olivia), if all children in low-income nations have solely the most fundamental

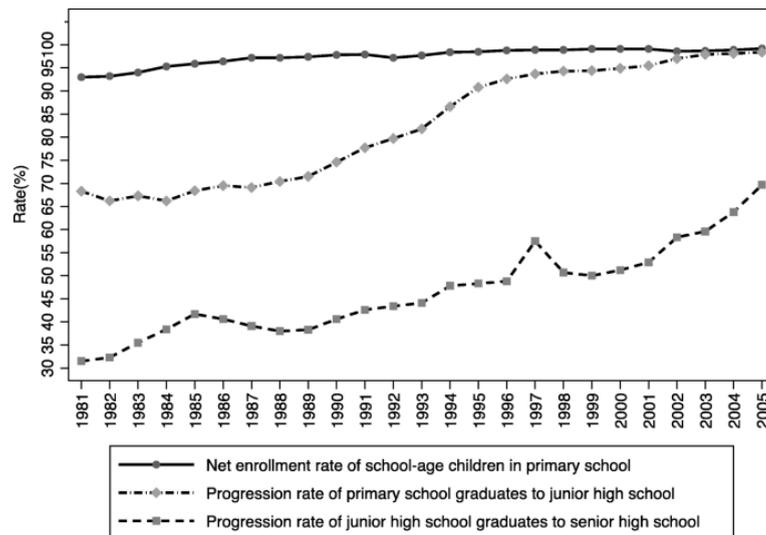


Figure 1: Enrollment to school rates (Journal of Population Economics)

reading capabilities. In line with the aforementioned information, the Stand Together Foundation further explained the situation, “Educational failure is at the crux of cyclical poverty; we can’t address one without the other. Fundamental to a child’s growth and an adult’s success, education is integral to intellectual, emotional, and physical development” (Trotta, Ragni). For all these reasons, the UN made achieving a high standard of education one of its Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030, urging every Member State to act on the situation immediately with goal number 4, “Quality Education”, which aims to increase access to free, equitable and quality education and learning opportunities.

## 2. The Effect of Education on Poverty



One of the most preferred routes out of poverty is through education, because of how tightly it is connected to economic expansion. According to a 2021 study co-authored by Stanford University and Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, between 1960 and 2000, greater math and science proficiency was tied to 75% of the rise in the global gross domestic product (GDP), proving that education is in fact the key factor of financial development.

Based on a 2019 Oxford report, “Good-quality education can be liberating for individuals, and it can act as a leveler and equalizer within society” (Cyndy Dimakiling). All individuals have a fundamental right to access proper education, which can be used to overcome financial obstacles keeping some groups of people from advancing as much as others when it is customized to the specific needs of those marginalized communities.



Image 2: Education for a new global reality

### 3. Barriers in Front of Accessible Education

Many nations offer free education, although there may be additional expenses for uniforms, books, and transportation, particularly in remote locations where a student may have to commute for more than an hour in each direction. In addition to the financial income lost by not sending a child to work or even instead getting them married, the expenses could be too great for a family to bear. This is where the governments need to step in.

Governments in certain nations intentionally allocate less of their gross domestic product (GDP) to education, which results in a decline in the accessibility and quality of public education.

Another barrier in front of adequate education is gender inequality. The way women are treated in their

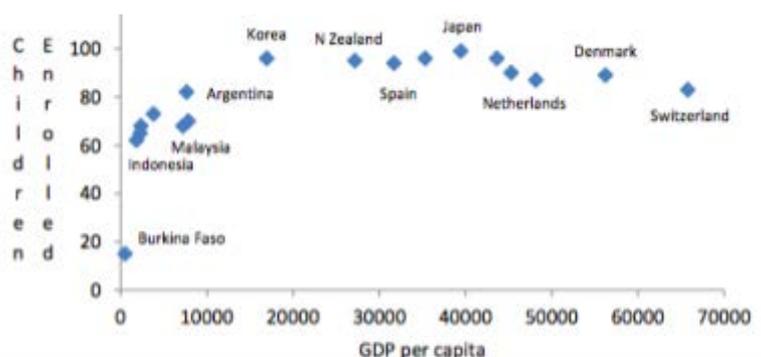


Figure 2: Education and National Income



communities impacts the huge gender disparity in the classrooms, as well, which should be addressed while tackling the issue of breaking the poverty cycle via education. One way to overcome this situation is by creating novel methods to engage female students in education that do not cross the traditional values of a community. For instance, as demonstrated in Afghanistan, when Concern USA created a program for community-based education in order to enable pupils in rural areas to attend lessons close to where they live, the education rates of girls saw a dramatic increase, since reaching school did not appear as dangerous as perceived before.

According to data obtained from 68 nations, a woman's level of education is a major determinant of a child's survival (UN Women). Therefore, considering the fact that out of 796 million illiterate people, more than two-thirds of them are women, it should be alarming for countries and NGOs to take serious measures in the amount and quality of education received by females. To exemplify, as one of the leading institutions

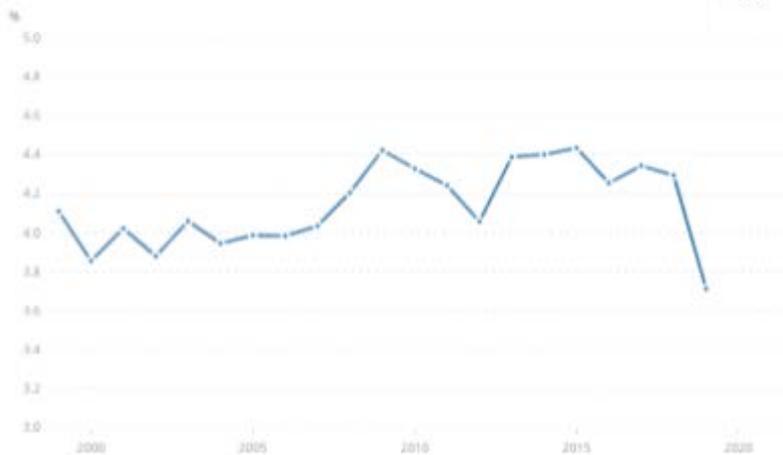


Figure 3: Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) by UNESCO Statistics (World Bank)

of women in education in the world, UN Women has been implementing educational initiatives to advance gender equality, modifying formal school curricula and policies, and providing training for educators, students, and parents to focus on these issues. In short, UN Women has been providing the public with exemplary commitments in means of breaking down barriers to closing the gender gap in education.

Education is generally considered the “real equalizer” since this poverty antidote can deliver access to resources, employment opportunities, and certain skill sets that would help one while improving themselves. Therefore, getting a formal education for female individuals is especially significant, since it indicates a chance to carry themselves to the top, develop their abilities, and have an occupation.

Apart from the accessibility of education, its quality is just as important. Supporting the impoverished people on their educational journey by improving education quality, and helping them transition from low-paying jobs in agriculture to higher-paying ones in industry and services will make ending poverty more feasible. More crucially, when the national education expenditure is directed toward the poor, it can have a double positive effect, lowering poverty in the short term and increasing the likelihood that underprivileged children will be able to attain formal employment and escape the intergenerational cycle of poverty. In order



to guarantee that prosperous jobs are created for the newly educated, higher-quality education should be complemented with a robust investment climate.

## IV. Key Vocabulary

**Poverty:** The World Bank defines the extremely poor as people who make less than \$1.90 per day based on data about basic necessities gathered from 15 low-income countries.

**Literacy:** Literacy is a “means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world” (UNESCO, 2019).

**The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Countries:** According to the World Bank, the MENA region consists of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, Yemen, which is the focus regions of this report.

**Gini Coefficient:** The aim of the Gini coefficient is to measure comparative income inequality, according to inequality in the total distribution of consumer spending throughout the whole population at hand.

**Head Count Index:** The percentage of the populace that lives below a certain poverty line.

**Poverty Gap Index:** The additional money that a typical impoverished individual would be required to spend in order to get around is measured by the poverty gap index and is stated as a percentage of the poverty line.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** GDP calculates the financial value of the final goods and services, which are purchased by the end consumer, and produced in a nation during a specific time interval.

**Learning Poverty:** Learning Poverty, as defined by the World Bank, refers to the proportion of 10-year-old kids who are unable to read and comprehend a simple story. The World Bank aims to reduce the learning poverty rates by half, by 2030.

**Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Independent organizations that are not related to any government. They aim to convey a certain idea or notion on a local, national, or international level.

## V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
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15 September 1930	The Suffrage Movement founded equality between men and women, which finally permitted women to be able to apply to have the occupation of teacher.
17 May 1954	“The Brown V. Board of Education” started the process of desegregation in schools.
6 April 1965	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was accepted, which allowed chances of education for the unfortunate ones.
1 January 1975	The Individuals With Disabilities Act was accepted as a law, which confirmed to make schools provide education to children with disabilities as well.
17 October 1987	The UN declared the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
September 2015	United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, Member States officially adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
24 January 2018	The UN declared the annual International Day of Education in order to celebrate the importance of education for development.

## VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

- A/76/533/Add.8

[https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3950343/files/A\\_76\\_533\\_Add.8-EN.pdf?ln=en](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3950343/files/A_76_533_Add.8-EN.pdf?ln=en)

This is an adopted amendment by the General Assembly, focusing on the topic of “Sustainable Development: Education for Sustainable Development”.

- A/76/472

[https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3949543/files/A\\_76\\_472-EN.pdf?ln=en](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3949543/files/A_76_472-EN.pdf?ln=en)

This is an adopted report by the General Assembly, focusing on the topic of “United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law”.



- A/RES/70/1

[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_70\\_1\\_E.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf)

This is an adopted resolution by the General Assembly, focusing on the topic of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

- Human Rights Council- Resolution 8/4

[https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A\\_HRC\\_RES\\_8\\_4.pdf](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_8_4.pdf)

This is an adopted resolution by the Human Rights Council, focusing on the topic of “The Right to Education”.

- A/HRC/47/L.3

[https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3931720/files/A\\_HRC\\_47\\_L.3-EN.pdf?ln=en](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3931720/files/A_HRC_47_L.3-EN.pdf?ln=en)

This is an adopted report by the Human Rights Council, focusing on the topic of “Realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl”.

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

This is an agenda accepted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which aims to create a framework for the growth and stability of the world. It urges all Member States to take effective measures in order to reach every single one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, within the global partnership of the nations.

## VII. Failed Solution Attempts

In low-income households where daily survival is the foremost priority, education is frequently overshadowed, although education is the most beneficial way of supporting young people while they find decent employment, leading to a secure, productive life, free of poverty. Time has repeatedly demonstrated that education is one of the most effective forms to terminate the cycle of poverty. To exemplify, no nation has ever managed to reach sustained economic growth before obtaining a minimum literacy rate of 40%. Nevertheless, according to the data collected by Humanium, as of 2020, more than 750 million adults remain illiterate, two-thirds of which are women, remain illiterate and lack the knowledge necessary to



enhance their own and their children's living conditions (Humanium), proving that solutions proposed for the matter at hand have not been successful on the whole.

One of the many reasons why these past attempts have failed is because of the quality of the education given to low-income people. Education given in overcrowded classrooms, with no access to trained teachers, no essential stationery materials, etc. will not ensure the fulfillment of skills gained from schooling. Without proper schooling, low-quality secondary education, or vocational training programs the desired outcomes will not be reached.

Another key element that needs to be stressed in every solution attempt to break the cycle of poverty through education is the inclusion of both genders in education. Most of the time such an attempt to tackle this issue is handled in a way that is not considerate of the traditional values of a society. For instance, many countries within the MENA region are patriarchal and dominated by men. Thus, the education of girls is far less supported.

The last reason why the initiatives of expanding the impact of education to a greater destitute population are not effective is due to the failure to reach the families of the youth. Parents who lack education themselves tend to fall short of stressing the significance of education, supporting their children in the pursuit of a school diploma, and challenging gender norms. Children who receive a successful education more conceivably impart that information to their own offspring, creating an education pattern between generations. The importance of family culture should never be underestimated, when it comes to placing more value on and expectations for education.

## VIII. Possible Solutions

Education is one of the most predominant factors regarding living conditions of an individual, persistently impacting children's education over time. High-quality education yields more literate and accoutred individuals, which opens many doors for them throughout their lives. Those opportunities are the effects in the long run, which inevitably lead to a contribution to breaking the cycle of poverty. Therefore, governments and NGOs should take noteworthy measures in order to overcome and face the issue at hand. Countries should initially fill up the data gaps by evaluating the learning levels of students in order to address the learning crisis. Moreover, governments should create finance procedures that take into account the greater expenditure required to reach children who are underprivileged by deprivation. Thus, for low-income youths, long-running, high-quality early education programs should be organized by the governments. A simple approach could be increasing the number of secondary schools, high schools, and community colleges.



One of the key points to keep in mind while uncovering the solutions to break the poverty cycle by education is ensuring equal opportunities are presented to both female and male individuals. Particularly, in the MENA region, adolescent girls are 1.5 times more likely to drop out of lower secondary school, while 1 in 5 girls get married before turning 18. Since girls are, for instance, frequently more at danger of gender-based abuse and child marriage, while boys are more likely to be pushed into child labor or enlistment in the armed forces by the opposing sides, managing to engage both genders in education will procure the actual development in diminishing the cycle of poverty.

Another key element to identify is the utilization of technology within the curricula that are delivered to low-income families. Oftentimes it is the case that students coming from low-income families do not get to have the same chances and levels of education. Using successful technology-enabled interventions, access to quality education would increase. Therefore, technological adjuncts that will bolster the education journey of more unfortunate children should be made to the curricula.

## IX. Useful Links

- <https://www.unicef.org/mena/life-skills-and-citizenship-education>

MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative

This website gives information about an initiative that began in 2015 and specifically focuses on the MENA Region, assisting the countries in the area to improve learning and more effectively invest such learning in personal, social, and economic development.

- <https://www.childfund.org/poverty-and-education/>

The relationship between poverty and education is explained by the Child Fund.

- [http://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Learning\\_Generation\\_Exec\\_Summary.pdf](http://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Learning_Generation_Exec_Summary.pdf)

A report on “Investing in education for a changing world” by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity focuses on the significant role of education in the eradication of poverty.

- <https://www.right2learnfoundation.org/how-does-education-help-children-break-the-cycle-of-poverty/>



The relationship between supporting education and its vital effects on breaking the poverty cycle, explained by the Right To Live Foundation is delivered.

- <https://gaml.uis.unesco.org/learning-poverty/#:-:text=The%20World%20Bank%20calls%20on,a%20simple%20story%2C%20by%202030>

The concept of learning poverty is described by UNESCO.

- <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Disability/SDG-CRPD-Resource/policy-guideline-sdg4-education.pdf>

Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) mentions the structural changes that need to be implemented in order to enhance the worth given to an inclusive education system.

- <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sdgsinacademia-goal-4>

The continuous action that the UN has been committing to in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is explained.

- <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/space4sdgs/sdg4.html>

The definition and scope of the Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOFOSA) are given.

- <https://www.sdg4education2030.org/the-goal>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development talks about the general overview of the SDGs and goes in-depth with their grounds.

- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-4-quality-education>

The UN branch of the UN Women provides information concerning Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education to better understand the gender gaps in education.

- <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/12203/long-run-effects-from-comprehensive-student-support-evidence-from-pathways-to-education>

The effects that are wished to be obtained in the long run of providing equal quality education for everyone are discussed.



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