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TOPICS

1. Challenging child marriage in Sub Saharan Africa
2. Improving the access to formal education for children in rural areas of LEDCs

CHAIRS

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Introduction:

Education is an important medium of acquiring essential knowledge and skills. It is more than just learning from books. It is an effort of the older generation to transfer their life wisdom to their offspring. Our world is constantly changing and developing so it is very important to teach and bring up intelligent people who could understand the problems of modern society and solve them in a proper way. Education makes people capable of doing new interesting things that can go a long way to improving human living conditions and standards.

Education and learning is definitely important in everybody's life. It is the key for a structured and successful life and it is the key to awake the potential in a human being, without formal education many people will be taken under their level. Formal education is classroom-based and provided by trained teachers, which is fairly normal in MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries) but unfortunately, it is not yet represented realistically in LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries), especially in the rural areas.

The improving of this situation is one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations which shows its importance and that we have to strike for, to have a chance to fulfill and reach the Goal until 2030. Education is essential, everybody, independent from race, religion or sex should have the right to education.

"It shall be free, compulsory, generally available and equally accessible to all basis of merit."
— Declaration of Human Rights, article 26 on the right to education.

Definition of Key Terms:

UDHR The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN in 1948. Concerning this topic, especially the 26th of the 30 articles is relevant. This article states that everyone has the right to education.

Education Definition given by the Cambridge English Dictionary: Education is "the process of teaching or learning, especially in a school or college, or the knowledge that you get from this."

LEDCs A country is considered a LEDC (short for: Less Economically developed Country) once it has a low standard of living, a low Human Development Index and an underdeveloped industrial base.

HDI The Human Development Index is an index measuring the countries achievements in the economic and social sectors. (LEDCs have a low HDI score.)

GGGR The Global Gender Gap Report is published annually and measures the gender inequality in countries all over the world.

Formal Education Formal learning is education normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic intentional way within a school, higher education or university.

Educational poverty Less than 4 years of education

Extreme Educational Poverty Less than 2 years of education

Background:

“Between 2000 and 2012, the total number of out-of-school children worldwide declined from 100 million to 58 million. [...] Education is a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability.”
– The World Bank

Many children every day are granted to go to school. Yet millions of children around the globe do not have access to this basic human right. The participation in basic primary education has jumped from 62% in 2010 to now 70%. The lowest participation rates are found in sub-Saharan Africa with less than a half (41%) of the nation’s children attain primary education. Shockingly low rates are also found in south Asia and Northern Africa with only 52%. One half of the 57 million children who are denied a full primary education will never step foot into a class room. One fourth of those who have access to primary education are not able to complete it, since they drop out due to various reasons.

There are many circumstances that can inhibit education for children. Especially the location of schools can lead to a decrease in school attendance rates, mostly in LEDCs lacking infrastructure. A study done in Mali investigating the correlation between school attendance and location showed that half of all villages reported that the distance from the school was too far away. This caused students to not attend school.

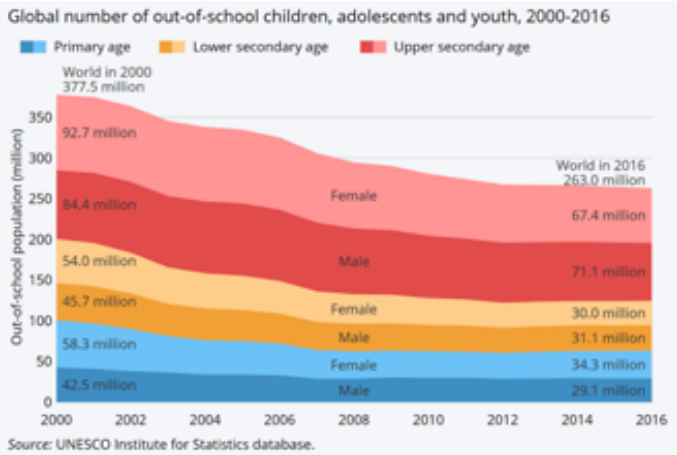


Fig. 1

Gender inequality leads to the lack of education for girls in particular. 54% of the children who do not attend school are girls. Two thirds of the 774 million people worldwide who are unable to read or write are girls. These facts clearly show the disadvantages females face globally. Often women are stereotypically in charge of the household. Therefore in

traditional countries the girls, if they ever get education, have to leave school at an early age to help their families. The Gender Gap Report shows that 5 of the last 10 countries are African. It becomes very clear that gender inequality is a major problem concerning education. 31 million of the 57 million children who are denied the access to education are girls. This displays the interdependencies between SDG 4 (education) and SDG 5 (gender equality).

Even though the quality of the education that is provided does not fit with the picture of finding a solution to achieving universal primary and secondary education in LEDCs, it is still very important to keep in mind. Why would we try to achieve universal education, if the education is of low quality? Less than 71% of teachers in South Asia and 61% of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa are trained. Also a shortage of teachers leads to overcrowded classrooms with sometimes 80 students per teacher. Not only the training and amount of teachers is problematic. Many schools lack the equipment to be able to educate the children satisfyingly. In 2016 34% of schools in LDCs had electricity and less than 40% had basic hygiene/handwashing facilities.

Such a bad quality of education leads to many problems. In 9 out of 24 African countries less than half of the students had minimum proficiency levels in math and reading. The same applies to 6 out of 12 Latin American countries. 61 million African children will reach adolescence without basic literacy and numeracy skills.

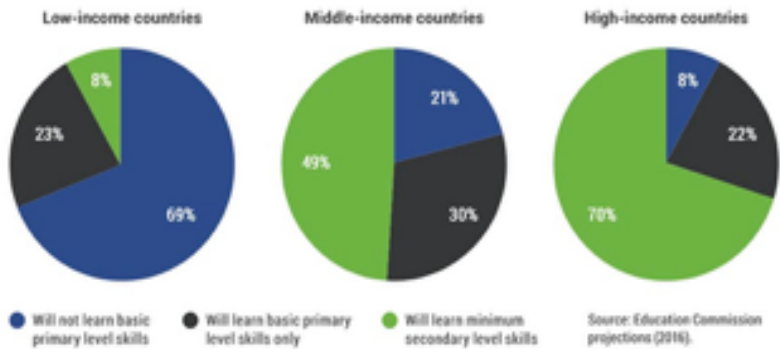


Fig. 2

In a developing, low income country, every additional year of education can increase a persons future wage by an average of 10%. This again illustrates the importance of education for all children.

Major Member States Involved:

Nepal:

In Nepal live 770.000 children in the age of 5-12 who are still out of school. In the Asian country many inequalities exist in relation to the children who are able to go to school. For the most poor children it isn't a possibility to enter a school building. The population in the rural areas of this LEDC is more that often very impoverished and needs its offspring for working in the primary sector at home. An additional problem is that only 11% of school buildings are earthquake-resistant which is an important issue in the region of Nepal, especially in the rural areas where earthquakes are fairly normal.

Over the last 20 years, Nepal has made significant progress in education but it isn't enough yet. However, the country still has many challenges to tackle. Issues that persist in education include poor quality and inequity in access, geographical remoteness, gender, and socioeconomic and ethnic differences.

Chad:

The school system in Chad is in need of improvement, only 10% of the 25 years or older population was in a primary school, so the most of Chad's people never saw a classroom from its inside which should definitely be changed. The main problem in Chad is the badly infrastructure which has to be enhanced. Most of the citizens do not even have a tight roof over their heads, so building schools is out of question. The fact that only 2.1% of the population can use the Internet is a clear sign of the drawback in this country. The UN should therefore work to improve the infrastructure to improve the school system. Chad has still a long way to go until we could see a clear difference.

Myanmar:

Myanmar's constitution guarantees access to free and compulsory primary education to all children, however, low levels of investment in the education sector have prevented the achievement of quality basic education for many children. According to the 2013 National Millennium Development Goal Report, it is considered unlikely that the country will achieve that they can keep their promise. At the moment only 4% of the adult population has finished school. The situation in Myanmar is likely to be compared with the current situation in Chad.

Niger:

Education in Niger, like in other developing nations, especially in the [Sahelian region](#) of Africa, faces challenges like [poverty](#) and the lack of school buildings. In fact, in Niger, most children at the ages of 7 to 15 attend a formal education facility, but Niger has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world, that indicates the quality of the instructions and manifests the point we should work for.

There are several factors that adversely affect the school system and attempt to improve it. Such factors are, for example, the growing and already enormously high population growth rate. There are simply not enough facilities for formal education to supply the needs of all school-age children. In addition, there is still a high rate of children who drop out of school early. Often they do this for family and economic reasons, so they can no longer enjoy the benefits of an educational institution.

Many children are also unable to start education due to major disadvantages for certain social groups, such as girls in rural areas, and children growing up in nomadic tribes, children with disabilities are not mentioned at all.

To all of these problems come the typical weather shocks in Niger, which have a negative or catastrophic impact on the education sector. You would have to build facilities that could defy this weather, but there is simply not enough money.

Possible Solutions:

First of all, the locations of schools should be reconsidered. There are not enough schools in many countries and sometimes these schools are not reachable for children. Infrastructure is an important factor here, as well as the exact location of the schools. Upgrade infrastructure is so a key point where the UN has to work for. This includes not just the building of new schools, it also is important to eradicate mud schools, without trained teachers and a student-friendly surroundings, and the fixing of basic infrastructure for example the introducing of libraries to provide proper learning environments and access to education for children living in rural areas. To introduce this solution the UN has to invest a lot of money to reach any successes but this is necessary.

Secondly, gender inequality sometimes results in advantages for boys. This limits the chances of the girls later in life. Many gender equality campaigns have already taken place, but there might still be something that can be done to tackle this sometimes small but significant problem. Here the UN has to pass some resolutions and laws to regulate the inequality.

The costs and quality of the schools are in many cases a real issue. Costs are a main factor of lower school attendance rates, and therefore a solution to high school fees must be found. These costs are added up to the costs of traveling to the distanced schools and the combination of these factors results in school drop outs. The children then have no choice, because their parents are simply not able to take over the high school costs due to their poverty. Demanding school fees should not play a role in LEDCs in order to give the children at least the opportunity to receive an education.

If then the children finally attend school, several ways of improving the quality of the schools can be useful. More educated teachers and better working conditions for them are main factors of the improving of the quality. Simple things like chairs and tables and chalkboards would make a difference already.

Also, an important point is the communication with the parents who often keep their kids at home for working. Informing these parents about the effects of having their children attend school could be helpful for achieving universal education.

The educational systems in many countries also need expanding. Secondary schools and universities would increase the skills, competences and knowledge of the children and develop them in such a way, that it would definitely increase their lives. But first we have to change and improve the access to primary school and primary education and after the first successes we can discuss about universities.

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Fig. 1: Global Number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth.

<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs48-one-five-children-adolescents-youth-out-school-2018-en.pdf>

Fig. 2: The expected learning outcomes of the children and youth of school age in 2030.

<https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/blog/2017/04/poverty-and-education-east-africa/>