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Challenge 10027 Program
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Topic Guide

“The Right to Education”

INTRODUCTION:

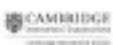
About 263 million children, adolescents and youth worldwide (or one in every five) are out of school. In many developing countries there are great challenges when it comes to the right to education due to: a lack of resources, lack of capacity, persisting inequality, and a lack of political will. Factors linked to poverty, such as unemployment, illness and the illiteracy of parents, multiply the risk of non-schooling and the dropout rate of a child. 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.

HISTORY:

In Europe, before the Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, education was provided for children by parents and the church. But, with the French and American Revolution, education was also established as a public function. Education had, thus far, been available to the upper social class only.

However, neither the American Declaration of Independence (1776) nor the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) protected the right to education as the liberal concepts of human rights in the nineteenth century envisaged that parents retained the primary duty for providing education to their children. It was the states obligation to ensure that parents complied with this duty, and many states enacted legislation making school attendance compulsory. Furthermore, child labour laws were enacted to limit the number of hours per day children could be employed, to ensure children would attend school. States also became involved in the legal regulation of curricula and established minimum educational standards.

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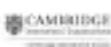
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In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill wrote that an "education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence." Liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century pointed to the dangers to too much state involvement in the sphere of education but relied on state intervention to reduce the dominance of the church and to protect the right to education of children against their own parents. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, educational rights were included in domestic bills of rights. The 1849 *Paulskirchenverfassung*, the constitution of the German Empire, strongly influenced subsequent European constitutions and devoted Article 152 to 158 of its bill of rights to education. The constitution recognized education as a function of the state, independent of the church. Remarkable at the time, the constitution proclaimed the right to free education for the poor, but the constitution did not explicitly require the state to set up educational institutions. Instead, the constitution protected the rights of citizens to found and operate schools and to provide home education. The constitution also provided for freedom of science and teaching, and it guaranteed the right of everybody to choose a vocation and train for it.

The nineteenth century also saw the development of socialist theory, which held that the primary task of the state was to ensure the economic and social well-being of the community through government intervention and regulation. Socialist theory recognised that individuals had claimed to basic welfare services against the state and education was viewed as one of these welfare entitlements. This was in contrast to liberal theory at the time, which regarded non-state actors as the prime providers of education. Socialist ideals were enshrined in the 1936 Soviet Constitution, which was the first constitution to recognise the right to education with a corresponding obligation of the state to provide such education. The constitution guaranteed free and compulsory education at all levels, a system of state scholarships and vocational training in state enterprises. Subsequently, the right to education featured strongly in the constitutions of socialist states. As a political goal, the right to education was declared in F. D. Roosevelt's 1944 speech on the Second Bill of Rights.

The emphasis on Human Rights Education began in 1995 with the beginning of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, though previously addressed in 1953 with the UNESCO Associated Schools Program, which served as an "initial attempt to teach human rights in formal school settings". The first formal request for the need to educate students about human rights came about in UNESCO's 1974 article Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, and Peace, and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The participants of the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights eventually met in 1978 to form a specific definition of what would be the required application of the education in formal curricula. The aims at which the Congress agreed upon including the encouragement of tolerant attitudes with a focus on respect, providing knowledge of human rights in the context of national and international dimensions as well as their implementations, and finally developing awareness of human rights translating into reality whether social or political on national and international levels.

Human Rights Education became an official central concern internationally after the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. This conference brought the issue of educating formally to the top of many countries' priority lists and was brought to the attention of the United Nations. It was two years later that the United Nations approved the Decade for Human Rights Education, which reformed the aims of an application once again. Since the development of the UN Decade, the incorporation of human rights education into formal school curricula has been developed and diversified with the assistance of non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and individuals dedicated to spreading the topic through formal education.





CAUSES and CURRENT SITUATION:

There are eight main barriers acknowledged by the UN when it comes to education around the world.

1. A lack of funding for education:

While the Global Partnership for Education is helping many developing countries to increase their own domestic financing for education, global donor support for education is decreasing at an alarming rate. The amount of total aid that's allocated to education has decreased in each of the past six years, and education aid is 4% lower than it was in 2009. This is creating a global funding crisis that is having serious consequences on countries' ability to get children into school and learning. Money isn't everything, but it is a key foundation for a successful education system. The Global Partnership is aiming to raise \$3.1 billion in new investment from donor countries into the GPE fund, as well as increases in other aid to education, and is also asking developing country partners to pledge increases in their own domestic financing.

2. Having no teacher, or having an untrained teacher:

What's the number one thing any child needs to be able to learn? A teacher, of course. We're facing multiple challenges when it comes to teachers. Not only are there not enough teachers globally to achieve universal primary education (let alone secondary), but many of the teachers that are currently working are also untrained, leading to children failing to learn the basics, such as maths and language skills. Globally, the UN estimates that 69 million new teachers are required to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. Meanwhile, in one out of three countries, less than three-quarters of teachers are trained to national standards. In 2016 alone, the Global Partnership for Education helped to train 238,000 teachers worldwide. With a successful replenishment, GPE can make teacher recruitment and training a top global priority for delivering quality education for all.

3. No classroom:

This seems like a pretty obvious one – if you don't have a classroom, you don't really have much of a chance of getting a decent education. But again, that's a reality for millions of children worldwide. Children in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are often squeezed into overcrowded classrooms, classrooms that are falling apart, or are learning outside.

In Malawi, for example, there are 130 children per classroom in grade 1 on average. It's not just a lack of classrooms that's the problem, but also all the basic facilities you would expect a school to have – like running water and toilets.

In Chad, only one in seven schools have potable water, and just one in four has a toilet; moreover, only one-third of the toilets that do exist are for girls only – a real disincentive and barrier for girls to come to school.

Since 2011 funding from the Global Partnership for Education has helped to build or rehabilitate 53,000 classrooms. With an additional \$3.1 billion, GPE could help build additional 23,800 classrooms, while training over 1.7 million teachers, among other things.



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4. A lack of learning materials:

Outdated and worn-out textbooks are often shared by six or more students in many parts of the world. In Tanzania, for example, only 3.5% of all grade 6 pupils had sole use of a reading textbook. In Cameroon, there are 11 primary school students for every reading textbook and 13 for every mathematics textbook in grade 2. Workbooks, exercise sheets, readers and other core materials to help students learn their lessons are in short supply. Teachers also need materials to help prepare their lessons, share with their students, and guide their lessons.

5. The exclusion of children with disabilities:

Despite the fact that education is a universal human right, being denied access to school is common for the world's 93 million children with disabilities. In some of the world's poorest countries, up to 95% of children with disabilities are out of school. A combination of discrimination, lack of training in inclusive teaching methods among teachers, and a straightforward lack of disabled accessible schools leave this group uniquely vulnerable to being denied their right to education.

Children with disabilities are one of the Global Partnership for Education's priorities. With a successful replenishment, the GPE will be able to work with its more than 60 developing country partners to promote inclusive education.

The GPE already has a proven track record in this capacity. For example, at the Daerit Elementary School in Asmara, Eritrea, children are taught that "All children can learn." And with funds from GPE, the school is pioneering inclusive education in the country.

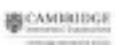
6. Being the 'wrong' gender:

Put simply, gender is one of the biggest reasons why children are denied an education. Despite recent advances in girls' education, a generation of young women has been left behind. Over 130 million young women around the world are not currently enrolled in school. At least one in five adolescent girls around the world is denied an education by the daily realities of poverty, conflict and discrimination.

Poverty forces many families to choose which of their children to send to school. Girls often miss out due to a belief that there's less value in educating a girl than a boy. Instead, they are sent to work or made to stay at home to look after siblings and work on household chores. Girls also miss days of school every year or are too embarrassed to participate in class, because they don't have appropriate menstrual hygiene education or toilet facilities at their school to manage their period in privacy and with dignity.

Ensuring girls can access and complete a quality education is a top priority for the Global Partnership for Education. Since its inception, GPE has helped 38 million additional girls go to school. Sixty-four per cent the developing countries GPE supports and works with succeeded in getting equal numbers of girls and boys to complete primary school in 2015. GPE funds have also resulted in better sanitary facilities, like toilet blocks and gender separated toilets worldwide. With a successful replenishment, GPE could get an additional 9.4 million girls in school by 2020.

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7. *Living in a country in conflict or at risk of conflict:*

There are many casualties of any war, and education systems are often destroyed. While this may seem obvious, the impact of conflict cannot be overstated. In 2017, around 50 million children were living in countries affected by conflicts, with 27 million of them out of school, according to UNICEF. Conflict prevents governments from functioning, teachers and students often flee their homes, and the continuity of learning is greatly disrupted. In total, 75 million children have had their education disrupted by conflict or crisis, including natural disasters that destroy schools and the environment around them. Worryingly, education has thus far been a very low priority in humanitarian aid to countries in conflict – and less than 3% of global humanitarian assistance was allocated to education in 2016.

Since its establishment, the Global Partnership for Education has committed nearly half of all its grants (\$2.3 billion) to conflict-affected and fragile states. Nearly half of all GPE funded countries classify as either “fragile” or “affected by conflict.” The Global Partnership is also right now looking at how to further improve its operations to accelerate support to countries in emergencies or early recovery situations.

8. *Hunger and poor nutrition:*

The impact of hunger on education systems is gravely underreported. Being severely malnourished, to the point, it impacts on brain development, can be the same as losing four grades of schooling. Around 171 million children in developing countries are stunted by hunger by the time they reach age 5. Stunting can affect a child’s cognitive abilities as well as their focus and concentration in school. As a result, stunted children are 19% less likely to be able to read by age eight. Conversely, good nutrition can be crucial preparation for good learning.

The Global Partnership for Education seeks to address national priorities as decided by developing country governments themselves. Where malnutrition is a major concern, the GPE is stepping in to address the problem.

For instance, in Lao People’s Democratic Republic, an innovative School Meals Program funded by GPE is addressing students’ nutritional deficits as well as promoting self-reliance, community ownership, and sustainability through integrated local food production and the active involvement of community members. As a result, Lao PDR has seen increased school enrollment (especially for girls), improved nutritional status, reduced household expenses, and stronger student-teacher-parent and community relations.

Current Situation:

- 262 million primary and secondary age children and youth are out of school
- Less than 1 in 5 countries legally guarantee 12 years of free and compulsory education
- 1 child out of 11 does not go to primary school
- 1 adolescent out of 5 are left out of a secondary education
- More and 1 in 2 children of primary school age did not reach the minimum proficiency level in reading quality standards



PAST ACTIONS:

„Education is not a privilege. It is a human right.”

Education as a human right means:

- The right to education is guaranteed legally for all without any discrimination
- States have the obligation to protect, respect and fulfil the right to education
- There are ways to hold States accountable for violations or deprivations of the right to education.

What guarantees education as a right?

International human rights law guarantees the right to education. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, adopted in 1948, proclaims in its article 26: "everyone has the right to education".

Since then, the right to education has been widely recognised and developed by a number of international normative instruments elaborated by the United Nations, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

It has been reaffirmed in other treaties covering specific groups (women and girls, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, indigenous people, etc) or contexts (education during armed conflicts). It has also been incorporated into various regional treaties and enshrined as a right in the vast majority of national constitutions.

UNESCO:

Through its programme on the Right to Education, UNESCO develops, monitors and promotes education norms and standards in order to foster the implementation of the right to education at country level and advance the aims of the Education 2030 Agenda. It provides technical advice and assistance to the Member States in reviewing or developing their legal and policy frameworks and enhances capacities, partnerships and awareness of key challenges.

The key element of UNESCO’s strategy in this field is ensuring state legal obligations are duly reflected in national legal frameworks and translated into concrete policies and programmes. It is aided in this by the rights-based approach of the new agenda as expressed in Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets.

THE FUTURE:

Here are some questions to think about in the future to further develop your ideas:

- Do you believe that countries are treating The Right to Education fairly and seriously or do you believe that there is still a lot to be solved? (develop your idea and point of view in order to have a good argument)
- What is, in your opinion the biggest barrier to education?
- What historical fact has the biggest impact on education today?
- Can you come up with different ideas for solving this problem?

SOLUTIONS:



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The solution to gain education access appears to be clear: build schools, provide supplies and train teachers. In some countries, girls are denied access to education because of cultural beliefs or household function. The U.S. government initiative Let Girls Learn, launched by the Obama administration in 2015, combines many departments including the Peace Corps and the State Department. The mission of the program is to expand educational opportunities to girls. The program focuses on community-led solutions and teaching girls they can be contributing members of their communities.

CONCLUSION:

A lot of progress was made when it comes to education up until now, the biggest being: Education being declared a human right. Even though many things were done to solve the lack of education, humanity is still facing many challenges and barriers that are still stopping children from being educated properly. Using this study guide as a model, research what actions your country has taken, is taking and will take concerning the right to education of children.

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