Introduction:

The quality of education has always been an ongoing issue in various regions of the world, many concerns have been raised over the years regarding this matter. Education is a basic human right for all and it must be taken into account seriously. Education helps each individual reach their full potential in life. The goal of a 'Safe and Accessible Education' is simple: to make sure that each kid gets a high-quality education and appropriate education surroundings wherever they'll specify their opinions freely whereas keeping them as safe as possible. Sadly, fulfilling this goal isn't that easy. Initially, the emphasis on education as a Human's right began in 1995. It became an internationally central concern in the World Conference on Human Rights. Educational challenges became even more difficult to overcome with the COVID-19 outbreak and the whole pandemic period. We can say that the COVID-19 pandemic is the largest disruption of education systems in history. Pandemic affected a huge number of students in most of the countries and continents and continues to do so. However, this pandemic is far from over and some serious precautions should be taken all around the world.

Figure O.12 Many countries lack information on learning outcomes

Percentage of countries with data to monitor progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals for learning by the end of primary or lower secondary school
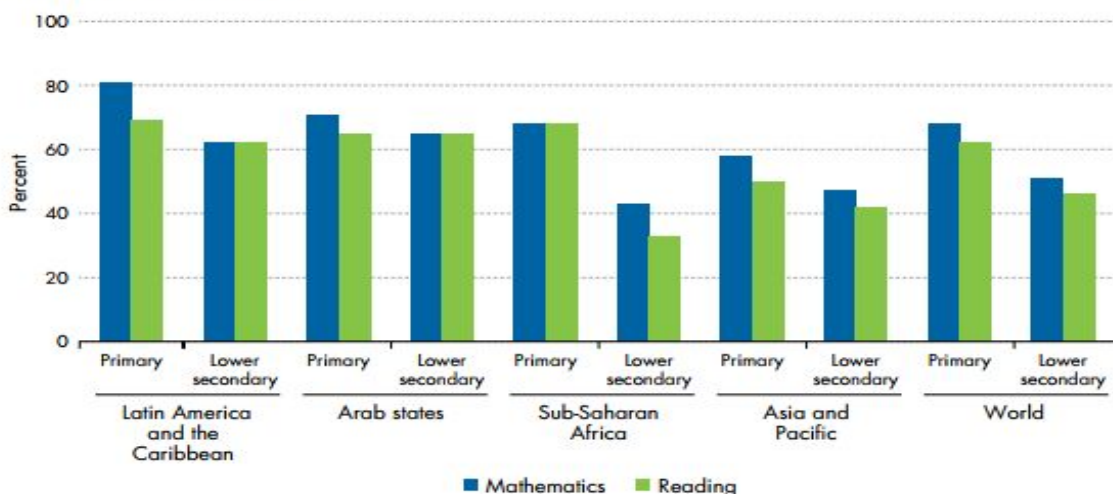
Source: UIS (2016). Data at http://bit.do/WDR2018-Fig_O-12.
Note: Regiional groupings follow UNESCO definitions.

Definition of key terms:

Elementary education, also called primary education, is the first stage for formal education. It begins at about age 5 to 7 and ends at about age 11 to 13. It prepares pupils in fundamental skills and knowledge areas.

Secondary education is the second stage for formal education all around the world. It begins about age 11 to 13 and ends usually at age 15 to 18. Secondary school institutions are called academies, colleges, high schools, middle schools, preparatory schools, or upper schools among other names.

Higher Education is a type of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. These kinds of institutions include universities, colleges and various professional schools. The basic entrance requirement for most of the higher educational institutions is the completion of secondary education.

Pedagogy is the profession of teaching; especially, education. This definition covers various perspectives of teaching, but essentially pedagogy is related to the studying methods. We can give examples of pedagogical approaches such as; developing the information skills, learning and innovation skills, communication skills, life, and career skills.

Basic education is a range of educational activities that takes place in various places. It aims to meet basic learning needs as defined in the World Declaration on Education for All. Basic education involves primary education (elementary education) and lower secondary education.

Universal education, also known as universal access to education, is the idea that all children in the world should have access to proper schools. All people can have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, race, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, or physical and mental disabilities.

Child soldiers are any children under 18 years of age that are used by state or non-state armed forces for military purposes. Throughout history, children have been involved in military regimes. Children who survived armed conflict suffer a psychiatric illness, and behavioral problems such as heightened aggression, leading to a high risk of poverty and unemployment when they become an adult.

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is an international group of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) that promotes education for children and adults. The organization defends education as a basic human right. It is a unique platform, merging education concerns from the countries facing the most development challenges to the more developed countries.

Background Information:

Education matters because it decreases social inequalities, reduces poverty, empowers all of the minorities and also women. Furthermore, education brings significant returns for a country and helps countries to achieve sustainable development and lasting peace. Education is the key to the achievement of all other human rights. Education as a Human's right began in 1995 with the start of the global organization Decade for Education As a Person's Right. Educational issues became a serious concern internationally once the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

With this conference, the problem of education was settled in most of the countries' top priority list. World organizations began to work harder during this field, too. Two years later, Decade for Human Rights Education was approved by the world organization. This declaration was adopted by the Assembly in 1948.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

According to the UN as of yet 500 million students cannot access online education, furthermore, 35% percent of primary schools cannot provide their students with the necessary handwashing facilities, something crucial when it comes to preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Even without taking the pandemic into account, 200 million children will not have access to education in 2030. The pandemic has only increased the troubling inequalities already present in education systems around the globe. Even in the top 20% of the richest households in developing countries, only 79% of children are able to complete school, those statistics are even more concerning for the top 20% of the most impoverished households, only 34% of children who come out of those households will be able to complete school.

Across the globe 617 million teens and children do not have a basic understanding of math or basic literacy skills. Currently 750 million adults are illiterate, a disproportionate amount of those adults are women. It is important to note that half the illiterate world population live in South-Asia while another quarter of the illiterate world population inhabit sub-Saharan Africa.

Current targets include:

4.1 - By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2 - By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.3 - By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 - By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship

4.5 - By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations

4.6 - By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men, and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.7 - By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development

Current situation:

Right now the world is facing a critical crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. Closures of schools have impacted the world's student population negatively. Pre-existing education inequalities have increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. It reduced opportunities for many of the vulnerable children, youth, and adults. Especially those living in poor or rural areas; girls, refugees, persons with disabilities, and forcibly displaced persons are having a hard time continuing their learning. A critical number of additional pupils may drop out of school next year due to the pandemic's economical and financial impact.

Before COVID-19 pandemic, fulfilling the goal of education as a basic human right was an appalling challenge to overcome for the world. Despite the near universal enrolment at early grades in most countries, an extraordinary number of children – more than 250 million – were out of school,2 and nearly 800 million adults were illiterate. Furthermore, even for those, learning was far from guaranteed. The early 2020 estimate of the financing gap to reach Sustainable Development Goal 4 – quality education – in low and lower-middle-income countries was a staggering $148 billion annually. It is estimated that the COVID-19 crisis will increase this financing gap by up to one-third. (https://www.un.org/development) It is each government's responsibility to stay true according to principles and conduct reforms. Then the children, youth and adults can have the rightful education that they need from the start.

UNESCO: (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was formed on 16 November 1945. UNESCO's main goal is to contribute to the building of a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication, and information.

UNESCO supports that education is a human right for all. The Organization is the only United Nations agency with the aim to cover all aspects of education. First of all, despite well-documented, long-term benefits, early childhood education remains neglected in the education system around the globe. There is no way a child can learn something or contribute to her/his education career if she/he hasn't taken any early childhood education. Basic early childhood education is the first step for the creation of a well-mannered individual and it should be taken into consideration severely.

UNESCO is working with countries and ministries of education in affected countries to ensure learning for all children and youth in the whole COVID-19 pandemic process. Also, most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these nationwide closures are impacting millions of learning. UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the impact of school closures, especially for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Myanmar: In Myanmar, also called Burma, five-year primary education, starting at age 5, is compulsory; in some rural areas, however, formal schooling may not be viable. Secondary education consists of a four-year cycle (lower secondary level) followed by a two-year cycle (upper secondary level). In history, most of the Buddhist monasteries had schools connected to them. Therefore, children, particularly boys, attended the standard Buddhist monastic education system. Then, in 1866, the British Empire established an education center in lower Myanmar, and also the monastic education system was transformed into classroom education. When Myanmar gained its independence, new education plans were prepared. Throughout the years, Myanmar's educational system has suffered under military regimes. Direct military rule started in 1962 and it became a military dictatorship under the Burma Socialist Programme Party and that rule claimed to save the country from disintegration. During this time, the United Nations and other organizations have reported consistent and systematic educational violations within the country. As a result of over 50 years of military rule, Myanmar is

currently one of the world's poorest countries, and its education system is in a very weakened state. The system's physical infrastructure is poor; teaching methods haven't progressed much and teachers, whether in schools, colleges or universities, have few opportunities and small incentive for professional development. Additionally, to the present challenges in Myanmar, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even worse. Millions of students are affected because of the school closures in Myanmar. Unfortunately, the second wave in COVID-19 cases derailed things once more.

Ethiopia: In Ethiopia, the school system consists of eight years of elementary education. This method is split into two cycles of four years and four years of secondary education that is divided into two stages of two years (4+4+2+2). Education is technically compulsory for all children until grade eight; however actual participation in elementary education is far from universal. Low enrollment rates, and widespread conflict are two reasons why.
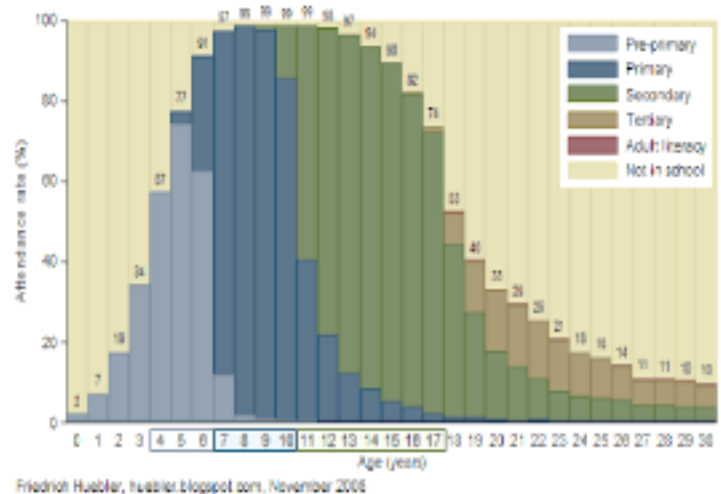
According to government statistics from 2011, 20 percent of children dropped out as early as grade two, and only about 50 percent of pupils remained in school until grade eight. Also, the availability of preschool programs is extremely restricted in some areas. On the other hand, Ethiopia's higher education (mostly universities) is bound to expand exponentially in the following years.

Ethiopian government has never been as concerned about the poor quality of education in Ethiopia as today. The cycle of poor quality education is inflicting dangers for the country. The root cause of the poor quality of education in Ethiopia is that the misguided, politicized, and authoritarian administration of the education system by EPRDF (The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front), along with the government's lack of political will to truly address this root cause of the problem.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, we would not be mistaken if we say that it has become more difficult to get to the root of the problem now. Starting from 16 March 2020, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia has formally announced the closure of schools, including Kindergarten to Higher Education, and called on the people to stay at home. Yet, it was insufficient to keep the spread of the epidemic under control, as many of the people could not lock themselves down for two weeks. Although the governments have been struggling to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 through providing learning, challenges have an affect on lives.

Brazil: Brazil's education system and education institutions started to develop long after the regular time and didn't build necessary teaching skills that might provide support for the pupils. As a consequence of its underdeveloped education system, Brazil had some serious issues associated with quality and inappropriate use of resources. It was necessary to build more schools, to pay the teachers better, and to convince families to send children to school. The main problems in Brazil's education system were quality and retainment. When the demographic expansion and migration decreased, Brazil started to face some serious issues of empty classrooms, for the first time in their history. Brazil has one of the world's highest levels of income inequality, and this is related to education. Brazilian society failed to have the elements that may lead its population to develop its educational institutions; and also the Brazilian state, both at the national and regional levels, failed to have the human and economical/financial resources.

Two crucial links were missing, a well structured and arranged teaching profession for basic education and higher education that may unfold, implement, and foster values of education. Brazil's education system is still struggling with some serious problems. In Brazil, more than 180,000 schools are currently closed and 47 million students are trying to adapt to a new routine of distance education because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, unequal access to computers and digital tools has made it harder for young learners and teachers to teach low-income students. These low-income students are the ones most likely to drop out of school, so they need to be taken care of in more special ways. Brazil is struggling with a situation in an area that traditionally does not have a culture of digital, remote work, or distance education and these barriers make things harder for the society and also for the government.

Friedrich Huebler, huebler.blogspot.com, November 2008

Timeline of events:

December 10. 1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	This document is a milestone in the history of human rights. For the first time countries agreed on the freedoms and rights that every individual deserves for every one of them to live their lives freely and equally. According to article 26; everyone has the right to education, education shall be free and elementary education shall be compulsory.
December 14, 1960	Convention Against Discrimination in Education	This multilateral treaty aims to combat discrimination in the field of education. It also ensures the free choice of religious education and private school, and the right to use or teach their languages for national minority groups.
December 16, 1966	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	It ensures the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to education. According to article 13, education is both a human right and an essential means of realizing other human rights. Also, articles 13 and 14 are the most wide-ranging and comprehensive articles on the right to education in international human rights law.

December 18, 1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	In this article, for the first time, countries condemned discrimination against women in all its forms and agreed on eliminating discrimination against women. Additionally, the right to education for women was guaranteed.
November 20, 1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child	This treaty is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. According to the treaty, all countries take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of violence and discrimination.
March 5-9, 1990	World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs	The purpose of this treaty was providing education for everyone. According to article 1, every person - child, youth, and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.
March 30, 2007	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	This convention upholds and safeguards the inherent dignity of all persons with disabilities. Article 24 protects the right to education of persons with disabilities. It proclaims the right to inclusive education and prescribes the steps that have to be taken to this end.
July 9, 2010	UN General AssemblyResolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations	The resolution urges all the member states to implement strategies and policies to ensure and support the realization of the right to education as an integral element of humanitarian assistance and humanitarian response.

Previous attempts to solve the issue:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus was classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation in March 2020 and a public health concern in January 2020. Therefore the world is still trying to navigate through these times however many governments have distributed technological devices to students and educational staff across their countries for them to access online education. Others such as Germany (up until recently) have opted to shut down other facilities such as restaurants, malls, etc but only keep schools open. Many schools that have reopened have implemented strict safety measures such as keeping masks on at all times, washing hands, sanitizing classrooms, etc. However many countries cannot afford to provide their students with sufficient

resources, these issues can possibly be solved with enough funding.

Possible solutions:

In the case that a government is able to financially, providing students and educators in areas with a high amount of COVID-19 cases with the necessary resources such as access to an internet connection, technological devices, etc should be a priority. Many students in underdeveloped countries also cannot access education due to issues with location and infrastructure, opening up schools in remote areas where students facing this issue live can make education much more accessible for them. Funding for these types of resolutions may come from NGOs, charity, taxes,etc. An ideal option for these students as well as those with safety concerns would be online learning as location and safety wouldn't be an issue provided that they have access to an internet connection and devices.

Useful links:

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