

Forum:	Special Conference
Issue:	Ensuring the implementation and improvement of domestic education laws
Student Officer:	Katerina Mantaka
Position:	Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Katerina Mantaka, I am 15 years old and I am a student at Anavryta Model Lyceum. This is my second time chairing and I am more than thrilled to serve as a Co-chair in the Special Conference at the 8th PSMUN Conference. Although I have attended to 7 MUN conferences, I can assure you that the experience of PSMUN is one of a lifetime.

The idea of expressing freely your opinion, conducting constructive dialogue with people you probably have nothing in common with, educating yourself about social, political or environmental aspects of your contemporary societies, being aware, solving problems, making the world a better place to live in, although sometimes forgotten and unclear due to the procedures, is what makes me, and I believe everyone involved in such conferences, participating and working with passion and aspirations for MUN. In order to receive the perks of the debate you have to be prepared. Please do not constrain your preparation to this study guide. Its main goal is to introduce you to the topic, underline some aspects of central focus and to trigger you so that you know where and what to study. I really want to draw your attention on overviewing your country's policy on the issue in order to keep the debate closer to the facts as possible.

I hope the Study Guide to be of practical use and a tool to help you prepare suitably. I am looking forward meeting you at the 8th PSMUN Conference and have a fruitful and enjoyable debate. Feel free to send me any questions at my email address: cat.cat.caterina@gmail.com

INTRODUCING TOPIC

Education has been recognized as a human right in a number of international and regional legal instruments, such as treaties, but also in soft law (general comments, declarations, frameworks for action etc.). All legal documents recognize «a right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education»¹ with utmost aim to achieve free higher education. Despite the actions of international organizations, there are more than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate and do not have the awareness necessary to improve both their living conditions and those of their children. In correlation with the variation of educational systems around the world, the implementation of educational domestic laws is rendered slow and most of the times ineffective.

QUALITY EDUCATION

According to UNICEF², Quality Education is consisted of five components. Learners should be healthy and well-nourished so that they are ready to learn and participate during the lesson and furthermore be supported by their families and communities. The environment should be healthy, safe protective, gender-sensitive and have the resources and facilities that are necessary. The content has to be reflected in the relevant curricula and materials should be provided for the acquisition of basic skills especially in areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life and general knowledge in further areas such as gender, nutrition, health, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace. Furthermore, child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities ought to be processed by trained teachers. Lastly, a factor that should be considered of utmost importance is the outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. These national goals vary around the world but their aim and point is to include everyone in the educational system without discriminations.

AREAS OF SPECIAL FOCUS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to education; hence the right applies to all individuals, although children are considered as the main



¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_education

² <https://www.unicef.org/education/files/QualityEducation.PDF>

beneficiaries. This right includes the responsibility to educate individuals who have not completed primary education, have disabilities, are in poverty and do not discriminate due to sex, health and cultural identity.

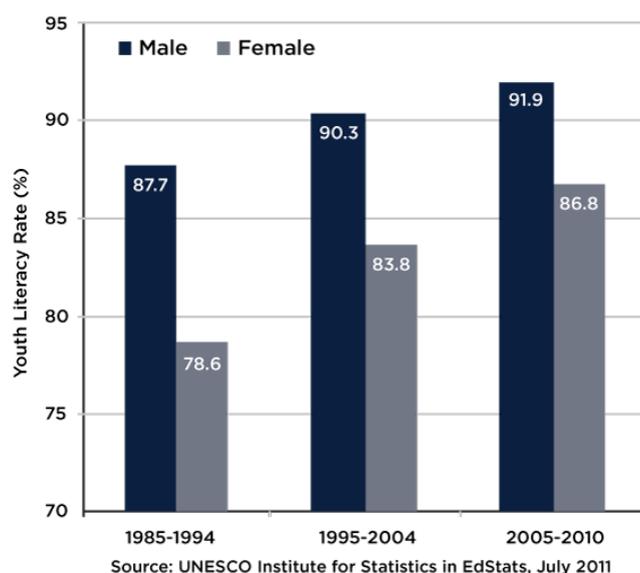
GENDER

Gender gaps still exist in access, learning achievement and continuation in education in many settings, most often at the expense of girls, although in some regions boys are at a disadvantage. For instance, in Arab States, central Asia and Southern and Western Asia the girls are destined to work in the family home and so their right for education is frequently violated. Despite progress, accordingly to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom and women account for two thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills. What are usually referred as the causes of this phenomenon are obstacles such as poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women?

MALNUTRITION AND HEALTH

The correlation between health and education is a known fact yet, the factors that shape this relation are unknown. “Poor health and malnutrition may prevent children from attending school and from learning while there. The equivalent of more than 200 million school years is lost each year in low income countries as a result of ill health”³. Stunting, underweight, vitamin deficiency, parasitic helminths are all components that might prevent a child from being able to focus and keep up with the lesson. One study found that very good health in childhood was linked to a third of a year more in school; another concluded that the probability of sickness significantly affected academic success: sickness before age 21 decreased education on average by 1.4 years.

Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development in the early years, and early detection and intervention for disabilities can give children the best chances for healthy development. Prevention of infection, disease and injury prior to school enrolment are also critical to the early development of a quality learner. What is more, psychological experiences can



³ <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/Pages/AnthropometricStatusGrowth.aspx>

influence the brain development as well. “A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psychosocial development later in life”⁴.

All in all, a high level of quality in early childhood development programmes can be achieved when health and nutrition components are combined with structured psychosocial development in the pre-school years.

POLITICAL STATUS

War and other forms of interpersonal and group conflict clearly have an impact on children’s mental health and their ability to learn. Many young victims of violence suffer lasting physical, psychological, social-emotional and behavioral effects. Other than that, during political instability the school year is paused and so thousands of students remain illiterate without being able to apply for a job position, earn money and obtain a better quality of life. Illiteracy can cause the manipulation of the general public and as a result the existence of an antidemocratic political structure that does not respect the Human Rights.

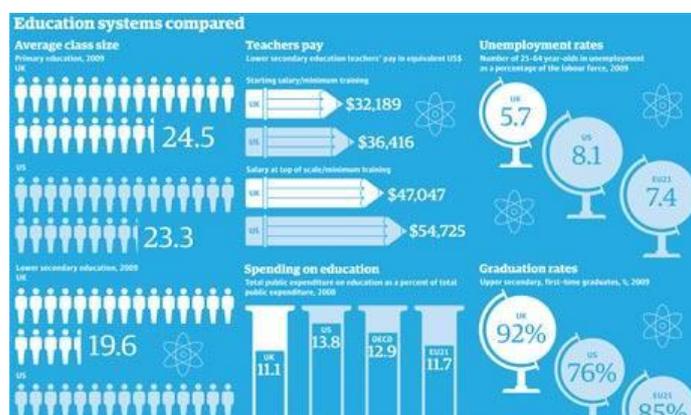
AIMS –GOALS

According to UNESCO’s “Law and Policy Review Guidelines” there are some minimum standards that are divided into 4 independent areas or else the “As” and they have to be met in every national educational system.

First, there is Availability, where educational institutions and facilities have to be available in sufficient quantity. Accessibility, where educational institutions should be open to everyone without discrimination. The form and substance of education have to be Acceptable to both students and parents: relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality and lastly, education has to be flexible, Adaptable to the needs of changing societies and responding to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings.

STATE OBLIGATIONS

According to General Comment No. 13 (21st Session, 1999) on the Right to Education (Article 13 of the CESCR) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, there are three types



⁴“Early Years Study” by McCain & Mustard

<http://www.pearlyyears.com/pdf/Research/Early%20Years/The%20Early%20Years%20Study.pdf>

of obligations on States: respect, protect and fulfill the right to education. States have the obligation to preserve the enjoyment of the right to education. This requires states to take measures so that they assist the community and the individual to never lose its right. These measures are to tackle some of the following occurring issues:

- ✓ Access to educational institutions on a nondiscriminatory basis
- ✓ Conformation with the international standarts
- ✓ Primary education for all
- ✓ Adopting an education stragedy that will coclude plans for fundamental, secondary and higher education
- ✓ Free choice of education

KEY TERMS

Out-of-school children: not attending school and therefore free to work⁵

Enrolment rate: “Enrolment rates are expressed as net enrolment rates, which are calculated by dividing the number of students of a particular age group enrolled in all levels of education by the size of the population of that age group”⁶

PISA: “Programme for International Student Assessment” by OECD

Unschooling: is an educational method and philosophy that advocates learner-chosen activities as a primary means for learning.

Gender Gap:

the differences between women and men, especially as reflected insocial, political, i ntellectual, cultural, or economic attainments orattitudes.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

COMPULSARY EDUCATION

Compulsory education was not unheard of in ancient times. However, instances are generally tied to royal, religious or military organization—substantially different from modern notions of compulsory education.

⁵ The Free Dictionary: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/out-of-school>

⁶ <https://data.oecd.org/eduatt/enrolment-rate.htm>

Antiquity

The first time the idea of compulsory education was thought, was credited to Plato, where the ideal citizens of an ideal city would have this ideal education. The popularization of his ideas started in Renaissance and culminated in the Enlightenment era. At the same time in Judea parents were obligated to educate their children at least informally.

Medieval Era

The Aztec Triple Alliance, which ruled from 1428 to 1521 in what is now central Mexico, is considered to be the first state to implement a system of universal compulsory education.

Early Modern Era

The Protestant Reformation prompted the establishment of compulsory education for boys and girls, first in regions that are now part of Germany and later in Europe and in the United States.

In 1559, the German Duchy Württemberg established a compulsory education system for boys. In 1592, the German Duchy Palatinate-Zweibrücken became the first territory in the world with compulsory education for girls and boys, followed in 1598 by Strasbourg

In the US IN 1647 required every town having more than 50 families to hire a teacher, and every town of more than 100 families to establish a school. Before that, educational institutions such as Harvard was founded and had risen rapidly.

In 1763 in Prussia it was implemented the first modern compulsory educational system according to which girls and boys from to 5 to 14 years old were provided with religion, singing, reading and writing learning based on a regulated, state-provided curriculum of text books.

Late Modern Era

Compulsory school attendance based on the Prussian model gradually spread to other countries.

The United Kingdom was slow to introduce compulsory education due to the upper class defending its educational privileges.[16] Attendance was made compulsory until age 10 in 1880. The Education Act of 1996 made it an obligation on parents to require children to have a full-time education from age 5 to 16. However, attendance at school itself is not compulsory

France was equally slow to introduce compulsory education, due to conflicts between the secular state and the Catholic Church. The first set of Jules Ferry Laws, passed in 1881, made primary education free for girls and boys; communes and

departments had the shared responsibility to fund it. In 1959, the upper age limit was further extended to 16.

In the US, Massachusetts was the first U.S. state to pass a contemporary universal public education law. (1852)

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

2015	- <u>Adoption of the Education 2030 Framework for Action</u> (Paris, France)
2015	- <u>Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals</u> (New York, United States)
2009	- <u>Sixth International Conference on Adult Education “Living and Learning for a Viable Future: the Power of Adult Learning”</u> (Belem, Brazil).
2008	- <u>48th International Conference on Education: “Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future”</u> (Geneva, Switzerland).
2002	- <u>Decade of Education for Sustainable Development</u> (2005-2014) declared with UNESCO as lead agency for its promotion
2000	- United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted to reach the the Millennium Development Goals
1999	- Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (Seoul, Republic of Korea).
1994-1995	- Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, ICE (Geneva, Switzerland).
1989	- Convention on the Rights of the Child (New York, United States).
1985	- Declaration on the Recognition of the Right to Learn (Paris, France).
1979	- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (New York, United States).
1960	- Convention against Discrimination in Education
1959	- Convention against Discrimination in Education
1952	- Creation of the UNESCO Institute for Education
1948	- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1945	- Constitution of UNESCO

COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

Equatorial Guinea

Guinea is the country with the lowest education expenditures relative to GDP, according to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook. Though the education system would be thought to be better in a country with such a high GDP, the government is often criticized for controversial spending practices and income inequality is quite high. Even though school attendance is compulsory for all children between 6 and 18 years old, the laws regarding compulsory education are not enforced by the government. The result is that more than a quarter of the enrolled children do not attend school. Problems with the funding still persist, and the expanding youth population is only increasing the burden.

Central African Republic

The government's expenditures for education are only 1.2% of GDP, which translates into a poor education system, with the closing of schools, teachers going unpaid, and students lacking educational materials occurring all too often. These factors have contributed to very low attendances rates among students as well.

Japan

According to the PISA survey: "Although high school is not compulsory enrolment is close to 98%. Students in Japan remain higher performers in mathematics, reading, and science. They even improved significantly in reading between 2009 and 2012. Among OECD countries, Japan is now ranked second in mathematics performance and first in both reading and science performance."

Finland

Finland has been and continues to be one of OECD's top PISA performers since 2000, with students performing in the top ranks in reading, science and mathematics between 2000 and 2009, and low impact of students' background on educational performance. Completion rates in upper secondary and tertiary are higher than the OECD average. Teaching is a highly appreciated profession, and teachers are required to have a master's degree that includes research and practice-based studies. Compared to workers with a tertiary education, their salary is slightly above the OECD average. The Finnish Government defines and sets educational priorities, while schools and day-care centers are principally maintained and supported by municipalities (local authorities), which have significant responsibility for organization of education, funding, curriculum and hiring personnel. Finland's high education performance is supported by system-level policies that encourage quality and equity. These can be continued and complemented with further focus on reducing recent inequities in specific groups: large performance gaps are seen

between boys and girls and between native students and students with immigrant background.

Nigeria

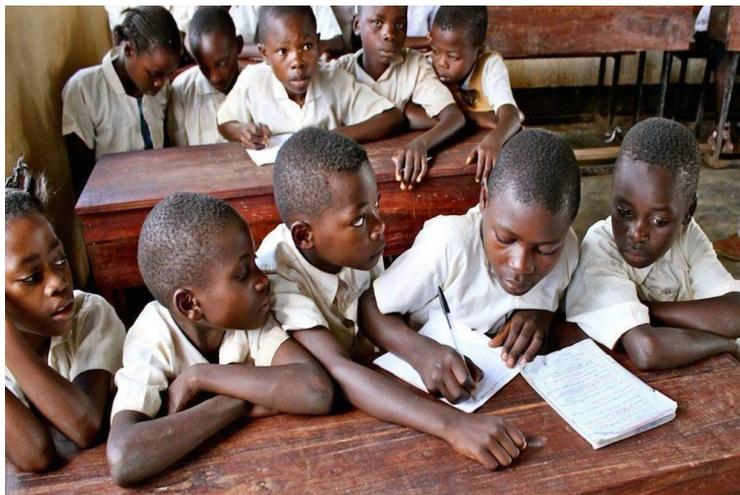
The growing population of Nigeria has put pressure on the country's resources, public services and infrastructure. 45% of children under 15 years olds of the 171 million population cause significant damages on education. Although primary school enrollment has increased over the years, net attendance is only 70%. Nigeria still has 10.5 million out-of-school, world's highest number. In addition, 60% of out-of-school children are girls.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. Despite that, the past five years the enrolment rate has increased by 15% and today 60.1% of school-aged children attend school. However, the overall state of education still remains a cause for concern.

Chad

Chad faces a daunting challenge in the case of teachers. The recruitment of teacher through parent-teacher associations cause a tremendous effect on the quality of education as the qualifications these community teachers have are limited. Needless to say, that they are paid lower salaries compared to public servant teachers. Furthermore 64% of primary school students are out of school. Nearly 70% of female youth of secondary school age are out of school compared to 49% of male youth the same age



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

For the implementation of domestic laws around the aspect of education the above minimum standards, state obligations, aims and goals of right guidelines should be taken into consideration. Aspects of discriminations, adequate facilities, qualified

teaching staff, safety, reflection of curricula to the society's needs, free and compulsory education, legislations about education during political tensions, monitoring the educational systems etc. would have to be taken into consideration in earnest. A possible solution to the problem could be the introduction of a framework protecting the dignity of the child from discriminatory behaviors. A monitoring system could be established, to oversee the compliance to the educational international standards as far as the curriculum is concerned. Furthermore, the introduction of measures ensuring that primary education is compulsory, available and free to all and the promotion of secondary and higher education could be two things proven vital for the solution of the issue. Ensuring the measures and frameworks for education standards are kept during periods of political turmoil is also a very important issue. Improvement of education infrastructure through government subsidies can improve the facilitation of educational procedures, thus helping the implementation of education laws. Last but not least, any measures taken should be efficiently monitored by the UN through specific monitoring systems, to ensure the correct use of resources and make sure that the issue is resolved.

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