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STUDENT OFFICER:	WooSeong Choi
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Introduction

Access to quality education is a fundamental right that empowers individuals, drives social and economic progress, and contributes to the overall development of a nation. In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 26, education has been identified as a fundamental human right. Article 26 states that “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available, and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

However, in less economically developed countries (LEDCs), the provision of quality education faces significant challenges due to limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and social disparities. Especially with the absence of quality education in the elementary stages, the young generations confront serious obstacles to employment and income later in life. These components lead citizens to endure greater health risks and discourage them from partaking in making social decisions that affect them.



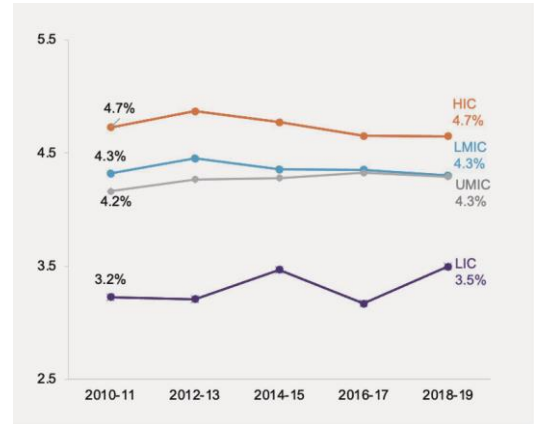
Poor education system in LEDCs

Furthermore, education is one of the most effective methods for stimulating economic growth. According to the World Economic Forum 2016 it describes education as “a critical component of a country’s human capital” that “increases the efficiency of each individual worker and helps economies to move up the value chain beyond manual tasks or simple production processes.” As the World Economic Forum conveys, it is obvious that this issue ought to be solved as it contributes to the economic growth of nations, possibly earning a chance of promotion to more economically developed countries (MEDC).

Background

Since the digital revolution that started around the 1980s, the difference in the level of education between MEDCs and LEDCs has increased exponentially. According to the World Bank, in 2018, high-income countries spent an average of 5.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, while low-income countries spent an average of 3.2%. As populations are much more concentrated in low- and middle-income countries, the amount of GDP allocated to education is deficient to fulfil the quality of education. This difference in spending is often interpreted as disparities in resources and infrastructure.

The huge differentiation in education spending as a portion of the GDP between MEDCs and LEDCs is not attributed to the differences in the prioritisation of education within the government budgets. Rather, it is primarily rooted in the share of government education spending in the GDP. Government education spending includes expenditure on public educational institutions such as schools, universities, and colleges from the government, and it is calculated by the product of the share of total government spending in GDP and the share of total government spending utilized for education. From 2018 to 2019, an example shows the opposing patterns of education spending between low-income and high-income countries. In LEDCs, education spending constituted 15% of the total government budget, while overall public spending as a share of the GDP accounted for 22%. Conversely, MEDCs allocated a marginally lower share of their budget to education for about 13%, yet their total public spending as a share of GDP was substantially greater, reaching 30%. To sum up, this instance demonstrates that the main difference between LEDCs and MEDCs comes from the distinction in overall public spending as a share of the GDP, not the difference in how they prioritize education. Furthermore, compared to low-income nations, high-income countries generate larger GDPs and have fewer youth generations, which enables them to allocate substantially more per capita spending on education.



Government education spending as % of GDP by income group

Problems Raised

Poverty

Poverty, deprivation of essential resources and opportunities for a decent standard of living, ensues because of a lack of quality education. Due to the adverse environment of LEDCs, the citizens are



missing the tools and means, which leads them to get trapped in the “cycle of poverty.” The cycle of poverty occurs when a child is born into a poor family, and poverty continues from one generation to the next. In this case, education precisely gives the capability of breaking the cycle as it increases future employment opportunities. However, it appears either completely absent or insufficient in LEDCs, thus inevitably bringing poverty.

Illegal Activities

The lack of access to quality education has led to various illegal activities such as child labor, drug trade, and human trafficking in LEDCs. The absence of quality education hampers awareness about the consequences of illegal acts, increasing the susceptibility of individuals to involvement in criminal networks. Without the necessary information and understanding, individuals may inadvertently find themselves entangled in these activities, lacking awareness of the potential consequences associated with their actions. In particular, child labor is considered earnest among illegal activities. According to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), nearly one in ten children are subjected to child labor worldwide, with some forced into hazardous work through trafficking. Limited access to quality education prevents children from acquiring fundamental knowledge for future job opportunities, which eventually leads children to have limited options other than entering the workforce at a young age.



Exploitative child labor in Africa

International Actions

A/HRC/41/L.26

The United Nations, an organization that serves to maintain international peace and security, has consistently made a tremendous effort to establish fundamental human rights. On 11th July 2019, numerous less economically developed countries gathered for this conference, such as Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Tunisia, along with other developed nations to combat the issue of promoting the right to education. As a result, the resolution was passed including various ways to solve this issue during the 41st session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations. Particularly, clause 12 concentrates on

improving the educational system as it stresses the importance of international cooperation, including the exchange of good practices, technical cooperation, capacity-building, and financial assistance.

Sustainable Development Goal 4

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is one of the 17 goals established by the United Nations as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. The goal aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all, recognizing education as a fundamental human right and a key factor for sustainable development by the United Nations. The governments of the United Nations have undertaken many different actions, especially the establishment of the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report). It was initiated in 2015 with the advent of SDG 4 by UNESCO as an annual publication to monitor progress in education worldwide and to pursue accountability in achieving educational goals. It primarily includes a set of data that provides an essence of educational views through worldwide communication channels, which will potentially serve to make recommendations that provoke enhancement in policymaking.



World seeks new vision for education - The Korea Times

Key Players

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, leads the global Education for All (EFA) movement, supporting LEDCs in implementing strategies to achieve EFA goals since 1990. The EFA initiative has contributed to not only increasing access to education but also enhancing quality education through prioritizing teacher training and reforming the curriculum with global trends. The organization advocates for increased investment in education and promotes partnerships among Member States and Associate Members every two years.



39th session of the general conference

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)



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Global Partnership for Education (GPE), an organization established in 2002, serves to foster universal access to quality education. Establishing the strategic framework called GPE 2025, covering from 2021 to 2025, they have outlined their primary mission to forge partnerships globally. GPE 2025 prioritizes children’s access to education and also advancement in learning infrastructure with gender equality. They advocate for increased funding for education and improved educational accountability of governments. Recognizing the significance of forming partnerships and collaboration, GPE works closely with partner country governments, international civil society organizations, donor development agencies, and many other associations.



*Global Partnership for Education
2025*

Possible Solutions

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness of the issue leads to increased support and engagement. Generally, quality education in LEDCs could be achieved through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. However, the apparent drawback with this solution is that citizens especially older generations who reside in LEDCs face difficulties in using social media platforms. Therefore, other methods, such as running a campaign will ensure the involvement of minority groups. Informing the seriousness of the issue to the citizens helps to reach a faster solution as the level of attention on the issue increases.

Teacher Recruitment

Teacher recruitment will potentially increase the quality of education by keeping the citizens updated with the latest teaching methods. A report from the University of Stellenbosch states that children in South Africa who attend public schools suffer from low-quality teaching mechanisms and a lack of resources. This aspect keeps children in poverty even though they receive education. Therefore, qualified teaching recruitment is essential to solve the issue. Although the poor environment of LEDCs may discourage teachers from the influx, which leads the promotion of teaching recruitment to be considerably limited, further incentives could be offered to overcome the downside: competitive salaries, career advancement opportunities, and housing support.

Glossary



Quality Education

An education that is well designed to provide the recipient with an all-round development of skills and potential to achieve success in their future endeavours in society.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The final value of the goods and services produced within the geographic boundaries of a country during a specified period of time, normally a year.

Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

Countries that have a lower gross domestic product (GDP) than developed countries, with a less mature and sophisticated economy.



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