

**Forum:** United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

**Issue:** The question of Gender Disparities and Promoting Gender Equality in Education

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## Introduction

Education is vital for every human no matter their race or gender. Education is a central element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is a necessary step in order to support gender equality in education.

Gender inequality is a social phenomenon that occurs when a man and a women are not treated equally. In many societies women are not treated equally and education of women is not a priority. The education of women leads to a plethora of progressive outcomes. One example focuses on maritable maturity; educated women are more likely to get married and have children later in life, which results in healthier pregnancy and the reduced risk of domestic violence. Women who are educated have better nutrition and are likely to be aware of their human rights and healthcare facilities.. According to the UN's Commission on the Status of Women Reports that an extra year of primary school can increase a woman's wage by an estimated 10% to 20%. Quality education for women reduces gender inequality in many aspects by increasing the representation of women in economical and political fields.

A statement in the 2015 Incheon declaration states “no education goal is met unless it is met by all”(UNESCO2016). For UN member states education consists of high standards that must be met in every member state. While all UN member states try to meet these high education standards not all member states are able to meet these standards which causes gender inequality to still be prevalent in society today. Statistics show that only 62 countries have been successful in acheiving gender equality in

education which is why it is important to reduce gender inequality by taking action on a global scale. All in all reducing gender inequality in education is a vital aspect of achieving global peace and sustainability as education is a human right that should be easily accessible to all no matter their gender or race.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Disparities**

A noticeable and usually significant difference or dissimilarity

### **Gender equality**

Gender equality means that women and men and girls and boys all enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections.

### **Education**

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. UNESCO believes that education is a human right for all throughout life and that access must be matched by quality.

### **MEDC'S**

More Economically Developing Countries

### **LEDC'S**

Lesser Economically Developing Countries.

### **UNICEF**

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

### **UNESCO**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

### **Corruption**

The abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis.

## NGO'S

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a non-profit group that functions independently of any government.

### Aid

The term foreign aid refers to any type of assistance that one country voluntarily transfers to another, which can take the form of a gift, grant, or loan. Most people tend to think of foreign aid as capital, but it can also be food, supplies, and services such as humanitarian aid and military assistance.

### Non State Actors

an individual or organization that has significant political influence but is not allied to any particular country or state.

## Key Issues

### Non State Actors

Over the last few decades [Non State Actors](#) have increased their presence on a global scale. Many Non State Actor groups violate women's rights and take away basic education from them. This results in women having to depend on someone economically and it also results in women not being able to achieve their dreams and goals. This has inexplicably affected many women in many different nations and has had a lasting impact till date. Often these Non State Actors replace education with a unifying ideology which can lead to more people joining these groups.

### Taliban

The Taliban emerged in the 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Today the Taliban are a prevalent Non State Actor group that are primarily present in south east asia in nations such

as Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Taliban have succeeded in taking over Afghanistan twice, once in 1996 and once in 2021. Their reign soon ended in 2001 after US troops pushed them out of Afghanistan. During those five years women were expected to follow strict rules and they did not have access to education. The only way a woman could get education was if she went to a hidden underground school where if they were caught they would be executed. The Taliban did this as their ideology supported the fact that women should get married and stay home to take care of the family. In Taliban controlled Afghanistan women of the ages 14 or above were forced into marriage. Apart from being in total control of Afghanistan the Taliban previously were prevalent in Pakistan and exposed their ideology to the people of Pakistan as well.

## ISIS

ISIS emerged in 1999 in Iraq as a response to the US invasion in 2003. Today ISIS are not as prevalent as they used to be a decade ago. For women this meant that marriage and motherhood were considered better than college degrees and careers. According to ISIS rules at the time it was considered legitimate for a woman to be married by the age of 9. Apart from education many other women's rights were violated such as freedom, many women were forced to stay at home instead of going ahead in their career. This leads to women being economically and socially dependent on men. A woman was not allowed to leave her house without being fully covered or without the accompaniment of a man. Today many territories that ISIS previously controlled are back to normal, but there are still places in Iraq and Syria that are being controlled by ISIS.

## Impact Of Inequality In Education

Education is connotated with a bright future and a good career which is why education is vital for all humans no matter the race or gender. All UN member states must provide education for everyone as it is a human right, but more often than not women are discriminated against and are forced into child marriage or housework rather than getting

educated and building a bright future. This has had major impacts on women all across the world.

### Economic

Education is vital for children as it allows children to be educated enough to start a career that contributes to their financial situation. This allows for children to be free economically and it ensures that they do not have to depend on anyone to support them when they grow older. Often being dependent can mean that the person that provides finances could use this to take advantage of someone. Being dependent on someone for finances could also mean that people can't do what they desire to do without permission from their partner. Data obtained by the world bank proved that gender inequality within education directly affects a nation's economic growth as if fewer people work the average human capital in a nation reduces therefore the economic growth also reduces. Education inequality has a negative effect on the economy of the nation and on women.

### Social

Education inequality can also have major negative effects on women socially. This is because not being educated means that women will likely not be able to have a career and achieve their dreams and goals, this could lead to women being unhappy or even depressed. Studies show that educated humans in general are happier and more satisfied than their non-educated counterparts. Education can also improve social relationships such as marriage. Studies show that women who have a bachelors degree have an 8/10 chance of having a long lasting marriage, on the other hand women who have been educated till high school or less have a 4/10 chance of a long lasting marriage. Research also show that educated women have a lower chance of experiencing domestic violence as they can tell when they are being mislead and educated women generally are more

involved in the families decision making and report making more decisions in a similar time period.

## Cultural Norms

Overtime cultures have become more prevalent in civilization today it is common to see many different cultures in the same society. Culture plays a big role in gender inequality in education, this is because many cultures haven't evolved which could lead to people being superannuated in the way they treat a women's education and well being. This occurs because people think of men as people that must provide for the family, on the other hand they think of women as people who have to start a family and take care of the home. Statistics show that worldwide 129 million girls are out of school for reasons such as child marriage, gender based violence and poverty. Poor families typically tend to invest in their sons education rather than their daughters as they believe that the son has a higher chance of getting a good job and providing for the family.

## Primitive regions

There are many primitive regions across sub saharan africa where women do not have access to education at all. One example of this is South Sudan, nearly 3 quarters of girls in South Sudan do not attend primary or secondary school. This is because in South Sudan there are a limited amount of schools, boy get prioritized to attend these schools as girls are forced into child marriage or forced to do housework instead of getting an education. This is normal in communities as communities have adopted such a culture where only men have access to education while women don't. One more place where this occurs daily is Afghanistan, Afghanistan is a nation that has not been stable for the last 4 decades which means that it is very hard for children to get an education. Since there is limited education only boys are sent to school while women are forced to stay at home or forced into child marriage as young as 9 years of age. One more reason it has hard for women in Afghanistan to get an education is because of Taliban and

their culture. The Taliban believe that women should not get educated instead they should produce kids and bear a husband and in territories that are controlled by the Taliban, women getting educated could get abused or forced into marrying a man.

## Religion

Religion plays an important role in women's education. While no religion states that a woman should not get educated, many religions do state that a woman's primary role in life is to produce children and to get married. This causes many different communities and cultures to make girls stay at home and learn the house work rather than going and getting an education. While this is less common now UNESCO reports that only 49% of countries have achieved equality in education. Since many religions state that women should be focused on producing a family, women are often forced into marriage with the hopes of having a child. Women are also expected to cook for the men in family by many religions which is why many people force women to stay at home and learn these skills rather than getting educated and getting a job.

## Child/Domestic Labour

In many parts of the world child labour is a big part of many children's life, data obtained shows that there are over 168 million child labourers all across the world. Out of this many of these child labourers are women who are forced into housework or even agricultural work. Many families that run farms do not send their daughters to school as they believe that she will get married to a man so there is no point in educating her, instead they make her do the farm work of growing the plants and managing livestock. Statistics show that girls can be forced to work as early as when they are 5 years of age.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **China**

China has stated that enhancing women's education is a foundation for achieving the world's goals of sustainability and justice. In 1990, the state council created the National Working Committee on Children and Women in order to support the development of women and children through education. China has made its education program compulsory for all which has completely eliminated the gender gap in primary education and had greatly reduced the gender gap in higher levels of education such as highschool and university. (TheState Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

### **European Union**

The European Union strongly supports promoting gender equality in all aspects of life. The EU hopes to put up an emphasis on any obstacles that prevent gender equality such as legislation, social bias and gender stereotyping. The European Union states that gender equality is an essential step towards inclusive and sustainable development (European Commission, 2018).

### **Latin America/ Caribbean**

In Latin america initiatives to enhance women's education have been made with the main goal of expanding and improving the workforce by equipping women with all the education needed in order to contribute to the global work force.The region is working to create flexible job options for educated women with existing obligations of childcare and other household responsibilities (Azevedo, & Cord,2012). On top of this Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress by using technology in order to



enhance education. However the region still faces issues in increasing the quality of their education program for women and preventing violence against women.

### **North Africa- Middle East**

North Africa and the Middle East region (MENA) have received aid from the World Bank Group in order to facilitate education. The 22 ministers of education in the region have all adopted the Doha Declaration of equality in 2010 and as a part of this combat against inequality partnered with the World Bank Group to create the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARIEQ). The MENA region still face challenges in combatting violence against women and the social barriers such as child marriage and child labour that prevent womens education.

### **Russia**

Russia has made successful efforts to close the gender gap. As of 2017 the Russian Federation achieved equal enrollment in primary education for both males and females and is continuing to reduce the gender gap in secondary and post school education. As of now there are more females than males in tertiary education. The Russian Federation has created policies that help reduce the gender gap within The Russian Federation. Data obtained also shows that 37% of women in Russia have higher education, while only 27% of men have any higher education. Russia overall has managed to reduce the gender gap immensely in the past few decades by making new policies and laws.

### **Sub Saharan Africa**

Sub Saharan Africa has faced difficulties in extending educational opportunities to women and girls mainly due to the bias shown towards boys and men in school environments. Poor conditions in schools and a major financial crisis results in parents giving their sons preference to go to school over their daughters. The African Technical department released a report that analyses and provides possible solutions to these issues that women face in their daily life. The primary concerns of governments and schools in the Sub Saharan region is reducing the cost of enrollment for children and reducing the

monthly school fees. The sub saharan region is also looking for a way to reduce the price of supplies or find new alternative supplies that are economically efficient ( World Bank 1996).

### **The United States Of America**

The United States has combated the gender gap in primary, secondary and post secondary school. Now the US is taking action to reduce the gender gap globally by implementing programs created under the 2009 Obama administration. In 2009 the United States government launched tech women in order to provide leaders in technology from North Africa and the Middle East with mentorship from the United States of America. The United States aims to encourage girls all around the world to participate in STEM fields and provide women with equal opportunity for education (Verveer 2011). All in all the United States has been one of the most successful nations when it comes to resolving the global issue of gender inequality.

### **The Malala Fund**

The Malala Fund was founded in 2013 by Malala and Ziauddin Yousafzai in order to combat gender inequality within education. The Malala Fund believes that all girls across the globes are entitled to 12 years of free, safe quality education. Now the Malala Fund takes action in order to provide education for girls across the globe, this is done by investing in education advocates and activists who are challenging policies and practices that prohibit girls from going to schools in their local communities.

### **UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

UNESCO is an organization that was created in 1945 in order to restore peace after world war 2 and more importantly ensure that the rule of law, respect for human rights, and freedom of expression would be strengthened through international cooperation. UNESCO believes that education is a human right for all throughout life and it has been entrusted to lead the global education 2030 agenda. Additionally UNESCO is the only

United Nations organization that has a mandate that covers all aspects of education. UNESCO reduces inequality by forming a global mandate that all member states must follow and enforce in their nations.

### **UNHCR:United Nations Human Rights Council**

The UNHRC was founded in 2006 in order to promote and protect human rights across the globe. The UNHRC was made by the United Nations as a replacement for the UNHCR (United Nations Commission on Human Rights). The UNHRC believes that education is a human right for everyone across the globe which is why the UNHRC takes strong action in order to ensure that the basic human right of education is provided for all. The UNHRC acts as a governing body for member states and creates goals and resolutions that member states must follow in order to reduce the violation of human rights such as education.

### **Development of Issue/Timeline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>21/06/1946</b>	<b>The UN Commision On The Status Of Women was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(ii).</b>	<b>The UN Commision On The Status Of Women was primarily created to ensure that gender equality. The commision is the principle</b>

		<p><b>global organization exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. Since the commission was made it has increased women leadership and women participation to peace and security and humanitarian response.</b></p>
<b>5/03/1990</b>	<p><b>The Education For All program was launched internationally on this date with the help of five other organizations.</b></p>	<p><b>The EFA has led to many policies being created such as the Incheon Declaration and the Muscat Declaration.</b></p>
<b>27/4/2000</b>	<p><b>The United Nations Girl Education Initiative was launched at the Dakar World Education Forum.</b></p>	<p><b>The Outcome of the creation of this initiative was that Education For All (EFA) had a partner.UNGEI provides a platform for action and mobilizes stakeholders' efforts to get females into education.</b></p>

<p><b>21/11/2000</b></p>	<p><b>The Muscat Agreement was established at the Muscat World Education Forum.</b></p>	<p><b>The Muscat Agreement led to world leaders implementing measures to accomplish all seven targets of the Muscat Agreement by 2030.</b></p>
<p><b>09/10/2009</b></p>	<p><b>Malala Yousafazi was shot in the head by a Taliban Gunman while she was on route home from school.</b></p>	<p><b>Malala survived the attack and was flown to england for surgery in the head. The incident caused protests all across the world. The UN</b></p>

		<p>special envoy for global education (Gordon Brown) created a petition that called all children to be back in school by 2015. The shooting also led to the creation of a 10 million dollar education fund by the Pakistani President at the time ( Asif Ali Zardari). Soon later the Malala fund was created by Vital Voices Global Partnership to support education for all girls around the world.</p>
21/5/2015	<p>The Incheon Declaration was adopted on may 21st 2015 at the World Education Forum(WEF) held in korea.</p>	<p>“The Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment of the education community to SDG4-Education 2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development. “ (UNESCO)</p>

<b>15/08/2021</b>	<b>Kabul was invaded by Taliban and the Taliban successfully captured kabul.</b>	<b>This resulted in the president of Afghanistan fleeing the country and it also resulted in a number of concerns on women's rights. Shortly after the capture there were and still are many protests going on to ensure that women can have access to education and other basic rights.</b>
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## **Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

### **The Incheon Declaration**

The Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 was introduced and adopted by 184 of the UNESCO Member states Enhancing Gender Equality in Global Education in November, 2015. The Incheon Declaration calls upon member states for the support of the development of education for women around the world. This is done in the form of financial and political support from all member states. The Incheon Declaration strongly urges member states to allocate 4-6% of their GDP (gross domestic production) or at least 15 –20% of total public expenditure to education. (UNESCO, 2016). Additionally the declaration urges developed countries to make efforts to reach the 0.7% of GNP (Gross National Product) for official development and assistance to developing countries. The declaration's primary goal is to ensure that there is education for all by the year 2030. Signatories to the Incheon Declaration must commit to ensure the provisions of 12 years of free publicly funded primary and secondary education. The declaration also supports the implementation of the Global Action Program On Education For Sustainable

Development, this was launched in 2014 at the UNESCO world conference. It highlights the importance of human rights education and training in order to achieve the post 2015 sustainability goals. The year that the Incheon Declaration for established the world bank also announced that the funding for children's education would be increased by 5 billion dollars.

### **United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI)**

The United Nations Girls Education Initiative of UNGEI is a leading partner with Education For All (EFA). The UNGEI was launched in 2000 at the Dakar World Education Forum by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. The main aim of the UNGEI is to reduce the gender gap in education and to ensure that there are an equal number of girls in all levels of education. UNGEI, the EFA (Education for All) flagship for girls' education, is a collaboration involving the UN system, governments, donor nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the commercial sector, and communities and families. UNGEI provides a platform for action and mobilizes stakeholders' efforts to get females into education. Expanding the quality of education for all people around the world, ensuring equal access to education, and focusing on gender-responsive education are just a few of the initiative's core principles. According to the idea, girls' education must be mainstreamed into a country's educational system.

### **The Muscat Agreement**

The Muscat Agreement is a result of the 2014 Global Education For All meeting in Muscat, Oman acknowledged the probability of the completion of the EFA and MDG goals the by 2015 deadline and assured that educational development priorities would be reevaluated to reflect the current economic and political situation. The Muscat agreement emphasizes on the use of education as a tool for reducing poverty and discrimination by generating opportunities to create economically and socially inclusive society. It further emphasized the post 2015



development goals for education and promoted further resolutions by influencing the path of the 2015 Incheon Declaration.

The Muscat agreement outlined 7 main targets to be met by the 2030 deadline that would ultimately “Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030” (UNGEI, 2008). The first target was; By 2030, at least x percent of girls and boys have received quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with a focus on gender equality and the most marginalized. The second target was; By 2030, all girls and boys will have completed at least 9 years of free and compulsory basic education and will have achieved relevant learning outcomes, with a focus on gender equality and the most marginalized. The third target was; By 2030, all kids and at least x percent of adults will have attained a level of reading and numeracy that allows them to fully engage in society, with a special focus on girls and women, as well as the most marginalized. The fourth target was; Through technical and vocational, upper secondary, and tertiary education and training, at least x percent of youth and y percent of adults acquire the knowledge and skills for decent work and life by 2030, with special focus to gender equality and the most marginalized. The fifth target was; By 2030, all learners will have acquired the information, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to build sustainable and peaceful communities, especially through global citizenship and sustainable development education. The sixth target was; All governments must ensure that all students are taught by qualified, properly educated, motivated, and well-supported teachers by 2030. The 7th and final target was; By 2030, all nations should devote at least 4-6 percent of their GDP or at least 15-20 percent of their public spending to education, with a focus on the most

vulnerable populations; and expand financial cooperation for education, with a focus on the most vulnerable countries.

### **World Declaration On Education For All**

In 1990 the World Declaration On Education For All was established by 5 intergovernmental organizations; (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank), as well as various foundations, international and non-governmental organizations and the mass media. The International Consultative Forum on Education for All, with its secretariat located at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, was established as an interagency organization to guide and monitor follow ups from nations at the world conference at Jomtien. The ultimate goal for Education For All (EFA) would be that all of the basic learning needs are met for all children around the world. “Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.” (Article 1 EFA). The EFA will use learning tools such as; literacy, oral expression, numeracy, problem solving skills and they will use the basic skills required to learn content such as; knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in order to meet children's needs. The EFA has been a major development as nations have made multiple agreements at the Education For All Forum one example of this is the Incheon Declaration which was made at the 2015 EFA forum in the Republic of Korea.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Educating People On Gender Based Discrimination**

Across the world gender based discrimination starts in the classroom, a female student may be denied something a boy isn't which is why it is important to have fair teachers who aren't prejudice towards anyone. To ensure that teachers won't be prejudice towards anyone all teachers across the world should be required to do a course that educates teachers on gender based discrimination and how to handle gender based discrimination between students themselves. Schools should also ensure that the teachers they hire are fair to everyone no matter the race or gender. Additionally children can be denied an education by their parents which isn't legal but is still a common occurrence. In order to combat this all parents should be educated on how it is equally important for a girl to get education than it is for a boy and they should be educated on the pros of having an education. Educating parents is vital especially in primitive regions as many families are old fashioned and they must be educated on schooling. Overall education could change the way many families think about sending their daughters to school and this could increase the number of girls going to school.

### **Investing In Education**

One major reason that children cannot get educated is the lack of finances. Many developing nations have bad public schools which can't support the nation's population. This causes families to go to the private sector which can often be too expensive, because of this families prioritize their sons going to school rather than their daughter as they can't afford schooling for their daughters. One way this issue can be solved is if nations start investing more money in education so that they can provide a larger number of students education. Statistics show that schools that are underfunded also perform worse academically which is why it is important for LEDC'S to focus more of their GDP on education. Some countries face major problems with corruption which could cause money to be misused which is why it is also important for countries to ensure that the

money they provide for education is being used for education only. Corruption can cause schools to not have the correct resources to support their students and staff, corruption can also lead to nepotism which could cause bad unqualified teachers to be in class. All in all investing in schools will not only reduce inequality but it will also improve schooling as a whole. For countries that do not have this wealth they should implement systems where the wealthy are taxed at a higher rate in order to receive enough money for public school funding.

Investing in education is very important as When there is aid money involved the main aspect is normally control. Donor governments (MEDC'S) want to ensure that education is up to their standards, eliminate [corruption](#), eliminate double standards for boys and girls, and ensure there is equal access to education to all. This helps fight gender inequality as donors provide aid money with the thought that it will be put to good use and be used fairly. On the other hand recipient governments want to use this aid to increase their sovereign power within the nation, and serve their own purpose such as providing rewards to their supporters. This causes the result to be a stalemate, which is why donors are hesitant to provide aid and recipients are hesitant to take this aid. Aid is also provided by non governmental organizations such as the World Bank and other [NGOs](#) which means even these NGOs are prone to quarrel with recipients.

Additionally more all girl schools should be created. Creating more all girl schools will mean that there is more space for girls to be educated and fulfill their dreams and aspirations. In many LEDC'S girls are very commonly denied an education so more schools to foster them means that they get to fulfill their right of receiving an education. Additionally in many LEDC'S families decide to go against the law and not educate their daughters due to safety concerns in co-ed schools, however in all girl schools many of these safety concerns will be resolved which will help in more girls receiving education across the globe.

Furthermore

### **Make Legal repercussions more severe**

Currently there are only 5 nations (Bhutan, Oman, Papa New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vatican City) in the world where education is not mandatory by the law. For all other nations education is mandatory for every child but not all countries are able to enforce this due to factors such as corruption and non severe legal repercussions. All countries should make more severe legislation that prevents parents from not sending their children to school. Punishments should include a fine, jail time or even taking away guardianship of the child from the parents. In order to ensure offenders are met with these consequences the government must ensure that police officers are not corrupt and will enforce the consequence on the offender. Currently many countries have different consequences for child truancy, in the UK parents can face fines of up to 2500 pounds or even 3 months imprisonment for child truancy. On the other hand in the United States there is no law where a parent can face imprisonment for child truancy however if parents do not pay the fines they could face jailtime in the United States. Additionally while there are many laws across the world that prevent child marriage in many countries children especially girls are illegally married and then they are prevented from getting an education. Statistics show that 12 million girls are married underage and this causes parents to deny them an education as girls are then made to focus on other tasks deemed more important than receiving an education. Some countries have severe laws while other countries don't which is why it is vital that legal repercussions should be severe and consequences should be enforced on parents who do not let their children get an education.

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