DEUTSCHE SCHULE THESSALONIKI MODEL UNITED NATIONS | 2019

Committee: Youth Assembly

Issue: Improving Educational Systems

Student Officer: Mikaela Saridi / Maria Keperti

Position: Head / Co-Head

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Most esteemed Youth Assembly Delegates,

My name is Mikaela Saridi and it is both my utmost pleasure and honor to serve as the Head of the Youth Assembly Cabinet 1 in this year's DSTMUN conference. First and foremost, I would like to congratulate each and one of you for being selected to participate in one of the most intriguing, competitive and exciting conferences that the German School of Thessaloniki is hosting for the 2nd time.

DSTMUN is all about getting outside your comfort zone and in touch with important, concerning global issues that continue to affect the future of our nations. This MUN is a great motive for you to research, understand and tackle one of the world's most severe issues as the one of our committee's, which investigates the improvement of the educational systems. Apart from that, it is really important to view this year's conference experience as a great opportunity for you to enhance your leadership, diplomacy and negotiation skills. The most important in this simulation of the United Nations is the fact that no matter what country you represent, your performance could be decisive at the end. The most amazing parts of my MUN experience have been the unexpected and major changes that less economically developed countries have caused, turning the MUN world upside down.

Please take into consideration that this study guide is written to preliminary assist you and should not be your only source of information about the topic. It is important that you conduct your own research, always having in mind the position of the country you represent. Lastly, keep in mind that knowing the Rules of Procedure will make the flow of our committee better, since the committee will function following these rules at all times.

I hope that this year's DSTMUN will be a remarkable and unforgettable experience and I hope you will enjoy it as much as you can. Feel free to contact me any time via email at mikasaridi@gmail.com for any further information or questions that may arise regarding the topic. Devote and make the most out of it! Let's all wish that the 2nd DSTMUN will be a worth-remembering one!

Good luck and don't forget to enjoy it!

Dear Delegates,

My name is Maria Keperti and I will be serving as the Co-Head of the Youth Assembly Cabinet 2 in the 2nd DSTMUN. I started MUN two years ago and this conference is going to be my 5th and my first time as a member of the Students Officers Team.

First of all, I would also like to welcome you in this year's DSTMUN, an experience that will surely give you the opportunity to gain knowledge regarding worldwide issues and possible solutions for them. Moreover, through participating in the Youth Assembly. We hope that you will acknowledge the purpose of MUN and its functions.

The second topic of the Youth Assembly concerns the improvement of the educational system. In this study guide you will find all the basics and necessary information about the topic. However, you are highly encouraged to do your own research as well, in order to fully understand every single aspect of the topic with the purpose of concluding to original and realistic solutions.

If you need any clarifications about this study guide, please do not hesitate to contact me via my email address mkeperti@gmail.com at any time prior to the conference.

Best regards,

Mikaela Saridi & Maria Keperti

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Since the immemorial, education has been viewed as a powerful tool that will alleviate all the sufferings of the human race. Providing education is one of the most important functions of a government. It's vital not only for individuals but for the country as a whole. Without a well-educated workforce, a country cannot sustain a properly functioning economy since it faces the danger of falling behind the rest of the world, especially as the importance of technological innovation constantly and rapidly increases**.** The most important role of the educational systems is to build a brighter future for our nation's students as professionals and as citizens, which hinges on its ability to providing students with the skills to obtain well-paying, valued careers.

Tackling this issue is one of the main goals nations around the world are trying to achieve. To name a few, governments aim to reduce inequalities, create

more inclusive systems while maintaining systems that are to date and more. All these attainments will boost the economic growth of a nation, save children's lives, reduce poverty, foster peace, promote gender equality, increase income and make people healthier.

It should be underlined that the United Nations provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.

The 4th SDG concerns quality education. It ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning and opportunities for all. Despite the considerable progress on education access and participation over the past years, 262 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017, and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Rapid technological changes present opportunities and challenges, but the learning environment, the capacities of teachers and the quality of education have not kept pace. Refocused efforts are needed to improve learning outcomes for the full life cycle, especially for women, girls and marginalized people in vulnerable settings.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Education

Education is defined as organized and sustained communication designed to bring about learning. It should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies. Learning should also focus on the values, attitudes and behaviors which enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterized by diversity and pluralism.

Youth

Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence.

Disability

Disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. It is also defined as a disadvantage or handicap, especially one imposed or recognized by the law.

Educational System

Getting all children in school and learning takes strong education systems that are transparent and responsive to the communities they serve.

Youth Participation

Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities.

People with disabilities

People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The situation in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

Educational systems in LEDCs are facing many difficulties. Firstly, mainly in African countries, there are not many schools and children may live far away from them. This often results in children being unable to attend classes for practical reasons. Moreover, the schools that do exist are not equipped with the necessary facilities in order to cover the basic needs of the students. A great amount of schools in LEDCs don't have access to electricity, drinking water, sanitation facilities.

Furthermore, children living in such countries are not given equal opportunities compared to others living in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) as they face tremendous difficulties adapting to the rapid technological evolution. Unfortunately, even when countries that belong to the LEDCs note a great progress, they still face problems with the adaptation of a more developed model of an educational system. A typical example is the modernization of the education which incorporates computers and internet for pedagogical purposes.

Education and disability

The inability of the educational system to ensure quality education for children with disabilities is a matter that concerns all countries regardless of their economic status. The high importance of this situation should be underlined as this inability leads to children's exclusion from society and school. The challenges they

face in accessing education are composed from discriminative behaviors toward them, as well as a lack of resources to accommodate them.

The creation of suitably adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities in all schools could be the best solution for the issue. However, this is neither realistic or possible for the majority of schools worldwide.

Furthermore, racist and discriminatory behaviors should also be kept away from any educational facility as schools are responsible to assure that all students not only get educated but also form healthy personalities, habits and behaviors. The improvement of the educational system goes together with the improvement of the culture; thus, emphasis should be given to the spiritual cultivation of people on the basis of humanitarian values.[1]
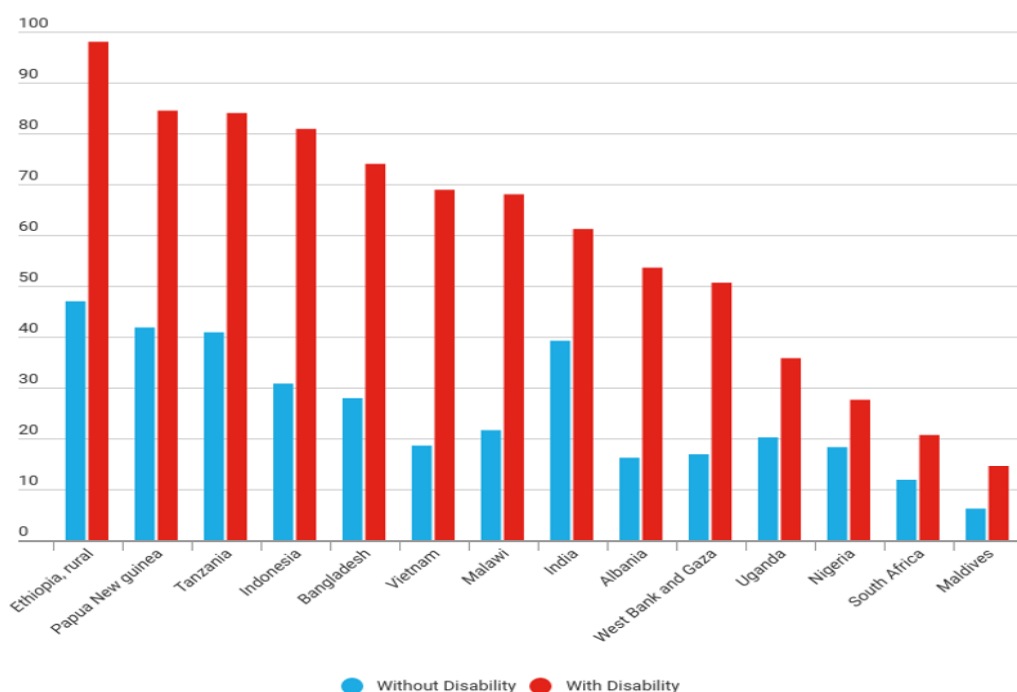
Out of School Children Rates Among Secondary-School Age Children

Free access to education

According to Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights "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

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[1] Progress in Measuring Global School Enrollment Gaps For Children with Disabilities
Suguru Mizunoya-Sarah Fuller-Juliana Zapata-Lucia Ferrone - https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/progress-in-measuring-global-school-enrollment-gaps-for-children-with-disabilities/.

be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit". [2] This way education is available without the need of any tuition and can be defined by an age range, a total of years, or a level of education during which children are required to go to school. Furthermore, elementary education shall be compulsory for all people to have access to it. In this case scenario it would be easier to accomplish the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.[3]

Knowledge for the future

One of the most obvious purposes of schools and education in general is for the young people to gain knowledge and be prepared for everything they might face in their lives as adults. Through school years, children are given different and better opportunities to work, discover talents, evolve as individuals and be updated about science and technology. School is the means in which the search of all these information is easier and more fruitful as it is done along with specialized teachers in such matters.

Young people will become, sooner or later, tomorrow's leaders. Therefore, their education in every possible field will prepare them for the hard tasks they will have to undertake in the future. Knowledge in history, language, science and in every single field school is trying to transmit it, is of great importance and is the necessary and fundamental knowledge everyone should obtain.

Personality Development

Moreover, education is crucial in the creation of children's personalities. In school, students learn through not only taking their mandatory courses but also experiencing having rights thy need to protect and responsibilities they need to remember. Hence, they are introduced to the way societies function so as to become responsible citizens. Since they will be aware that their voices can indeed be heard, the youth will also be encouraged to be more active in civil matters and personal protection and advocacy. This is why school is important for both the socialization and the correct emotional growth.

Through their socialization in school, young people interact with plenty of other people, leading to the enhancement of the social part of their characters and the improvement of their social skills. Through interaction with different personalities, an individual is exercised in the improvement of their speech and

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[2]"Welcome to the Human Rights E-Course." *United For Human Rights,* www.humanrights.com/course/lesson/articles-26-30/read-article-26.html.

[3] "UNICEF Publications." *UNICEF*, www.unicef.org/reports

arguments and they learn how to respect a different opinion as well as to defend theirs.

Technology

The adaptation of technology in every part of the teaching procedure will prepare the students for the 21st century workforce while provide modern technology skills and competencies. On the other side, the use of technology may also be beneficial for the educators giving them access to real-time feedback through digital formative and summative assessments and data. [4]

Furthermore, the effective use of technology in education keeps educational methods updated while it creates more educational opportunities. Both teachers and students have benefited from various educational technologies, as teachers have learned how to integrate technology in their classrooms and students are getting more interested in learning with technology. The use of technology in education has removed educational boundaries, both students and teachers can collaborate in real time using advanced educational technologies.[5]

MAJOR COUNTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United Kingdom

Every year an international comparison of education in industrialized countries is published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), providing a snapshot of trends. The UK pays the highest level of tuition fees in the industrialized world apart from the United States - driven by the cost of fees in England rather than other parts of the UK. The OECD annual report said, much of this will not be repaid and that a "well-developed system of financial support" has allowed rising numbers of students to go to university. The UK has seen a sharp fall in mature student numbers - and the average age for a graduate in the UK is now 23, the youngest in the OECD countries. Furthermore, the teaching workforce in the UK is among the youngest in the developed world and their starting salaries are below the OECD average. In terms of school funding, there have been campaigns over school funding shortages - but the figures for 2015 show that per pupil spending, averaged out across the UK, is above the OECD average at both primary and secondary level. The biggest difference, however, is at university level, where per student spending in the UK is significantly above the OECD average, most of which reflects the high level of fees. Moreover, the unqualified lose out in work is

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[4] "Use of Technology in Education for Learning and Teaching." *Intel*, www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/education/technology-in-education-for-learning-and-teaching.html.

[5] "The Use of Technology - In Education and Teaching Process." *Use of Technology*, 22 Sept. 2015, www.useoftechnology.com/the-use-of-technology-in-education/.

important and the strong link in the UK between education and employment - with graduates in the UK having among the lowest unemployment rates among OECD countries.

Sudan

The government of Sudan recognizes education as a right for every citizen and guarantees access to free basic education. Achieving the Education for All targets is considered a prerequisite for achieving socio-economic stability in Sudan. The vision of the Interim Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) is to create a distinctive education system based on science and values, with an emphasis on improving the access to school, the quality of the education being received, as well as a strengthening of the country's educational system. Furthermore, there are th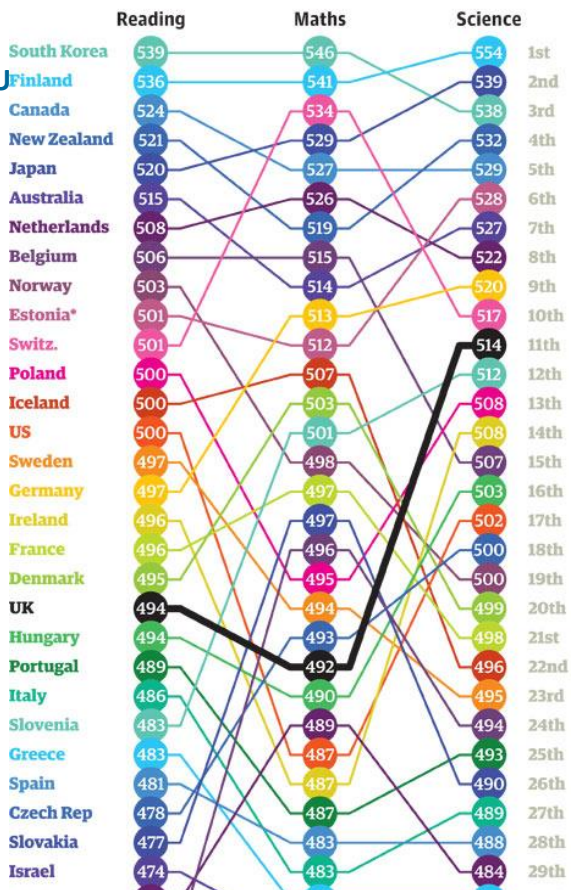ree strategic pillars Sudan has to achieve such as improving the access to schooling for all including pre-school, basic and secondary education, technical and vocational, and out-of-school youth and adults, improving quality of schooling at all levels and strengthening the institutional capacity of the education system through curriculum renewal, learning assessments, system, teacher, and school management, and school health and nutrition.

How the UK scored against other OECD countries

	Reading	Maths	Science	
South Korea	539	546	554	1st
Finland	536	541	539	2nd
Canada	524	534	538	3rd
New Zealand	521	529	532	4th
Japan	520	527	529	5th
Australia	515	526	528	6th
Netherlands	508	519	527	7th
Belgium	506	515	522	8th
Norway	503	514	520	9th
Estonia*	501	513	517	10th
Switz.	501	512	514	11th
Poland	500	507	512	12th
Iceland	500	503	508	13th
US	500	501	508	14th
Sweden	497	498	507	15th
Germany	497	497	503	16th
Ireland	496	497	502	17th
France	496	496	500	18th
Denmark	495	495	500	19th
UK	494	494	499	20th
Hungary	494	493	498	21st
Portugal	489	492	496	22nd
Italy	486	490	495	23rd
Slovenia	483	489	494	24th
Greece	483	487	493	25th
Spain	481	487	490	26th
Czech Rep	478	487	489	27th
Slovakia	477	483	488	28th
Israel	474	483	484	29th

Comparison of how the UK scored against other OECD countries

| Chile | 449 | 421 | 447 | 33rd |
| Mexico | 425 | 419 | 416 | 34th |

SOURCE: OECD PISA 2009 DATABASE. RANKING IS JUST WITHIN OECD COUNTRIES.   *MEMBERSHIP PENDING

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO believes that education is a human right for all throughout life and that access must be matched by quality. The Organization is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education. It has been entrusted to lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda through Sustainable Development Goal 4. UNESCO works in many centers all over the world such as the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) and the International Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC), it has an International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and its International Bureau of Education works in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

The Global Partnership for Education is the only global fund solely dedicated to education in developing countries to help them develop and implement quality

education sector plans. The GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries in order to dramatically increase the number of children who are in school and learning. This organization consists of some focus areas such as development effectiveness, early childhood care and education, girls' education and gender equality, knowledge and innovation exchange, out-of-school children as well as teaching and learning.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1945	Creation of UNESCO
1948	Recognition of education as a Human Right by UNSECO
1960	Convention against discrimination in Education
1985	International Youth Year
1995	World Programme of Action for Youth
2002	Adoption of Global Partnership for Education
2005-2014	UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
2015	Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goal 4
2015	Education for Democracy
2016-2020	Global Partnership for Education strategy for 2016-2020 Goal 1, Goal 2
2017	UN Resolution on the Right to Education

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Recognition of education as a Human Right

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, is the first international legal instrument that recognizes education as a human right. Article 26 states: 'Everyone has the right to education'. It is a non-legally binding instrument

but with a great political and moral force. Since its adoption, the right to education has been reaffirmed in numerous human rights treaties and declarations adopted by the United Nations. For each treaty listed below, key information is provided: article(s) that guarantee the right to education, entry into force, number of ratifications, interpretation of the right to education as guaranteed by the treaty, and the existence of monitoring and complaint mechanisms. A list of declarations related to the right to education is also provided.

Convention against discrimination in education

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Paris from 14 November to 15 December 1960, at its eleventh session. Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that every person has the right to education. Considering that discrimination in education is a violation of rights enunciated in that Declaration. Considering that, under the terms of its Constitution, UNESCO has the purpose of instituting collaboration among the nations with a view to furthering for all universal respect for human rights and equality of educational opportunity. Recognizing that, consequently, UNESCO, while respecting the diversity of national educational systems, has the duty not only to prescribe any form of discrimination in education but also to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all in education.

International Youth Year

International Youth Year (1985): In 1979 the UN adopted a resolution that declared 1985 as the first International Youth Year, whose theme was Participation, Development and Peace. In the framework of this initiative, the UN in cooperation with other organizations – including youth-led ones – organized activities that revolved around issues, such as but not limited to, implementation of new economic measures, world peace and the promotion of mutual cooperation between nations.

World Programme of Action for Youth

In 1995, ten years after the International Youth Year, the UN General Assembly adopted an international strategy called the World Programme of Action for Youth. This strategy provides guidelines on how to improve young people's situation in a national and international framework. The World Programme of Action for Youth mainly focuses on 15 sectors, one of which is "Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making".

Shaping the Future We Want - UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 2014) (DESD) aimed at integrating the principles and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, to encourage changes in knowledge, values and attitudes with the vision of enabling a more sustainable and just society for all. The mandate of the DESD has energized a vast number of stakeholders – across Member States, UN agencies, the education sector, the private sector and civil society – to work in partnership to reorient education systems towards sustainable development.

Education for Democracy

The General Assembly adopted a resolution called "Education for Democracy" encouraging relevant stakeholders to strengthen their efforts to promote peace, human rights, democracy, respect for religious and cultural diversity, and justice through education. Among other items, it also took action to fill vacancies in the Peacebuilding Commission. Also, strongly encouraged Member States to integrate education for democracy, along with civics and human rights into their education standards and to develop and strengthen programs and activities aimed at democratic values and governance. The resolution reaffirmed that democracy was a universal value based on the freely expressed desire of individuals to participate in all aspects of political and social life.

UN Resolution on the Right to Education

The Resolution reaffirms the importance of ensuring the human right to education as defined by international conventions, including notably UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education. The Resolution calls upon States to give full effect to the right to education, notably by "putting in place a regulatory framework for education providers guided by international human rights obligations", and to promote technical vocational education and training as a means of ensuring the realization of the right to education. The Resolution also encourages States to measure progress in the realization of the right to education, such as by developing national indicators, and to consider justiciability when determining the best way to give domestic legal effect to the right to education.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Human Rights Watch Safe Schools Declaration

The declaration is an international commitment to protect schools and universities from being attacked or used for military purposes in times of armed conflict. Human Rights Watch in order to avoid such situation calls on states to endorse the Declaration and this way to protect thousands of young children that might attend school during such an attack.[6]

Global Partnership for Education strategy for 2016-2020 Goal 1

This goal aims to improved and more equitable learning outcomes. Main purposes of this goal are to lead more children under 5 years developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, to have improved learning outcomes at primary level.[7]

Global Partnership for Education strategy for 2016-2020 Goal 2

The specific goal targets to increase equity, gender equality and inclusion. It calls for more inclusion, especially for the most marginalized children and not only for equality but draws attention to equity. Since 2002, there are 14 million fewer out-of-school children in GPE partner countries. [8]

Sustainable Development Goal 4

The theme of *inclusion* of all children in a country's education system is high on the SDG 4 agenda, and therefore on GPE's agenda too. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all are the main target of the certain goal.[9]

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

ASCD empowers educators to achieve excellence in learning, teaching, and leading. As a result, every child will be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and

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[6] *Protectingeducation.Org*, 2019, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/safe_schools_declaration-final.pdf.

[7] *Globalpartnership.Org*, 2019, https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2018-05-gpe-2020-strategic-plan.pdf.

[8] "3 Things To Know About Education As A Human Right". *Globalpartnership.Org*, 2019, https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/3-things-know-about-education-human-right.

[9] "SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive And Equitable Quality Education And Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities For All – SDG Compass". *Sdgcompass.Org*, 2019, https://sdgcompass.org/sdgs/sdg-4/.

challenged in the correct way in which children are the center of the educational process.[10]

Outcome-based education (OBE)

OBE is an educational theory that bases each part of an educational system around goals (outcomes). By the end of the educational experience, each student should have achieved the goal. The possible application of this theory could end to a beneficial result for each student. [11]

Erasmus+ program

Eurydice is a network of 42 national units based in 38 European countries. It publishes descriptions of national education systems, reports concerning specific topics, indicators and statistics news and articles related to the field of education. As a consequence, every national system acknowledges its flaws and takes actions to be improved.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Personal improvement

The process of familiarizing themselves with the idea of respect towards the already existing system and facilities eventually leads the children to try and learn from a wide variety of lessons, whether they like them or not. Taking advantage of the already existing opportunities of making the lesson more interactive, participating through dialogue, exchanging ideas and learning how to argue for their beliefs will surely have a great impact both on the quality and the quantity of the knowledge children gain.

Raising awareness

Through technology and social media, children have the opportunity to chase its wishes and desires for change. Expressing opinion through blogs or social media, getting in touch with different ideas leading to the formation of their own, suggesting that an alternative form of voting through the internet is created. Moreover, digital technologies may allow to children to explore topics that really

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[10] "The State Of Education In The Arab World". *Arabcenterdc.Org*, 2019, http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/the-state-of-education-in-the-arab-world/.
[11] "An Overview Of Outcome-Based Education". *Ascd.Org*, 2019, http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculum_handbook/413/chapters/An_Overview_of_Outcome-Based_Education.aspx.

matter to them and are compatible with the current developments in science and technology.

Advocating for change

The international community needs to raise awareness on the issue and motivate organizations and governments to take action. Such action could be activated through institutions or via campaigns or formal letters. The changes suggested can regard the set of a pilot week in which the lesson would be processed based on their wills and beliefs about a better educational system. This way, a different form of an educational system can be tested, while children will be given the chance to learn about issues that matter to them.

Outcome Based Education

OBE transforms education into personalized learning and enable education institutions to design instruction models tailored to learning preferences of students. Educational system could be improved if each student had access to personalized learning and was supported by qualified, caring adults. Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study, for employment and participation in the global community. [12]

Acknowledging and avoiding overcrowding

A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 14 percent of US schools exceed capacity. Overcrowded classrooms have been shown to be less effective as to prevent classes where teachers are spread thin, students don't get the attention or personalization they require, they lose interest, which plants the seeds for dropping out, and both feel increased stress. [13]

Specialized facilities

Children with disabilities have to be able to go to school, although the percentage of them do so in the developing world is extremely low about 10%. Lastly, in order to move toward equity their classrooms, teachers and learning materials must be adapted to their needs in order to be able to progress.

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[12] "15 Ways To Improve Education Quality With Outcome-Based Education". *Creatrixcampus.Com*, 2019, https://www.creatrixcampus.com/blog/15-ways-to-improve-education-quality-and-student-achievement-with-outcome-based-education.
[13] "5 Ways Policy Makers Can Improve The Quality Of Education". *Soeonline.American.Edu*, 2019, https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/5-ways-policy-makers-can-improve-the-quality-of-education.

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