

**Forum:** Human Rights Council (HRC)

**Issue:** Promoting Education in Rural Areas in LEDCs

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## Introduction

As of the last 4 years, only a miniscule amount of 16.6% of rural Australians and 21% of rural Americans are educated. That's estimated to be approximately 10 million people who remain uneducated in the rural areas of these two countries alone. Lacking fundamental literacy skills, it is nearly impossible for most citizens to pursue diverse opportunities and improve their quality of life. Most people living in rural areas are limited to occupations such as being a farmer or a welder, which often leads to an unstable or insufficient income. This is not because they don't have the interest to reach for better opportunities but because they never received the education necessary to work in their fields of interest. According to Save the Children, a non-governmental organization, "without a quality basic education, children are less likely to escape the cycle of poverty and may never have the opportunity to fulfill their potential". What rural residents lack is not intelligence or creativity, but a community that is willing to provide them with resources so that they can get started and contribute valuable benefits and knowledge to the world.

The Covid pandemic plays a huge role in challenges within the education received by rural communities. Namely, many rural areas face significantly lower internet accessibility in comparison to that of suburban areas. During this epidemic, many schools were forced to go online for a long period of time, meaning most schools were reliant on stable wireless fidelity as well as having durable devices, both being things that citizens of urban areas do not typically have access to. The past 4 years of unstable educational systems have resulted in a 25% decline in students who were able to pass the baseline level of proficiency needed for effective and productive participation in society today.

Contrariwise, due to the lack of education as well as social economic development, it is nearly impossible for these rural areas to enhance and catch up with the rest of the world regarding innovations to technological advancements. By promoting adequate educational systems, we can assist these

communities to increase productivity, employment rate, income rate, and most importantly, their quality of life.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Corruption

Corruption refers to dishonesty; especially in terms of bribery. The main issue in promoting education in LEDCs is the corrupt officials who are often connected to the education industry. The presence of corrupt government officials often leads to an unstable government commonly causing further issues such as the misuse of funds.

### Poverty

Poverty refers to the state of financial struggle; and insufficiency of daily necessities. Although economic standards have increased within the last century, many LEDCs continue to experience the effects of poverty, especially in conjunction with a rising population and unequal distribution of wealth.

### MEDCs

MEDCs are more economically developed countries. MEDCs can aid LEDCs by providing education resources or ensuring that young children of LEDCs are guaranteed quality education. The term applies to places that have a strong economy where the majority of the population endorses a high standard in life that consists of education and job opportunities.

### LEDCs

LEDCs are less economically developed countries. LEDCs often struggle with promoting education in rural areas because of an unstable economy. Often the population struggles with poverty and has low incomes meaning they are unable to have necessities. As a result of this, it can mean that citizens of LEDCs often struggle to pay for education fees or rarely have opportunities to enroll their children in schools.

### SDG4

SDG4 is a sustainable development goal that aims to promote quality education. SDG4 is the commitment to ensure “quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities.” (“Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)”)

## Background Information

### Overview

For many LEDCs, the development of key educational institutions is still hindered by corruption within the government. Issues such as mismanagement of finances, unequal resource diversion, and embezzlement by government officials lead to the underfunding of schools. Due to a lack of resources, students in lower-income areas lack the basic infrastructure, school materials, and qualified faculty necessary for an education that prepares them to become functioning members of society. Since governments don't have the means to provide the necessary resources to fund respective schools to improve and diversify the curriculum, younger generations in LEDCs still face severe hurdles in their path to economic freedom and higher standards of living.

### Government Corruption

Firstly, corrupt officials siphon off government revenue intended for education, using it to fund lavish lifestyles while the rest of the nation remains under the poverty line. Less money is available for investing in school facilities, teachers, and resources.

Secondly, due to personal connections from corrupt government officials and private companies, the capitalistic need to derive profit off of these infrastructure projects results in corruption that can lead to inefficiencies in the education funds. For example, contracts for building school facilities may be awarded to companies with connections to corrupt officials, rather than to the most qualified and cost-effective bidders. This can result in substandard facilities and resources, and ultimately lower quality education for students.

Finally, as a result of corruption, public confidence and distrust within the government becomes an issue. While increasing the possibility of political upheaval which sets off a vicious cycle of government abuse and civil disobedience, it also has more serious implications on policy passage and overall accountability of the government.

### *Instability of Government*

The instability of a government is often because of frequent changes in the government which can cause disruptions in the legislative process leading to delays or abandonment of policy initiatives. With the lack of a stable government, there is a possibility of insufficient political will or

consensus among policymakers to implement certain policies. Ultimately, instability leads to corruption and misuse of power, which can further hinder the passage of policies that aim to address common issues in today's world such as inequality, poverty, and essentially education.

## Relevant issues and obstacles

### *Social Mobility*

Lack of educational opportunities increases the likelihood that students in rural regions may either stop attending school altogether or drop out. This may restrict their career options and make it more difficult for them to raise their financial standing. Furthermore, people are less likely to acquire the skills required to pursue higher-paying employment or progress in their professions if they do not have access to education. This may reduce the possibility of social mobility and prolong the cycle of poverty. In addition, a lack of education might restrict a person's capacity to take part in civic life and make decisions, which can have wider effects on the social and political systems in rural regions.

More life-threatening areas of concern will be unable to be addressed with government policies because of the stagnation that is created in the respective parliament.

### *Improving the quality of education*

It is essential to promote education in LEDCs, especially as SDG4 states quality education. A lack of educational opportunities increases the likelihood that students in rural regions may either stop attending school altogether or drop out. This may restrict their career options and make it more difficult for them to raise their financial standing. Furthermore, people are less likely to acquire the skills necessary to pursue higher-paying employment or progress in their professions if they do not have access to education. This may reduce the possibility of social mobility and prolong the cycle of poverty. In addition, a lack of education might restrict a person's capacity to take part in civic life and make decisions, which can have wider effects on the social and political systems in rural regions.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### **Australia**

The Australian Aid (AusAID) programme at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides Humanitarian assistance and aid to combat poverty all across the globe. According to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, the Australian Government has budgeted

4.77 billion to provide for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Fund. AusAID mainly focuses on providing aid to its nearest neighbors in South and Southeast Asia, and also to countries in the Middle East and Africa. The AusAID programme is consistent with the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) and is guided by five core principles of “saving lives, opportunities for all, sustainable economic development, effective governance, and humanitarian and disaster response”(AusAID).

## Canada

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was formed in 1968 to handle most Canadian international development cooperation programs and ODA funds. One of the main areas of work of CIDA is “Securing the future of children and youth” with 3 statements of objectives, one of which states “improving the equitable access of children and youth to quality education and learning opportunities, with a special emphasis on girls” (CIDA). With this program, CIDA aims to improve the quality and accessibility of education to all youth, specifically as a basis to reduce poverty and increase social development and economic growth.

## Ireland

The Irish Aid programme at the Department of Foreign Affairs partners with multiple organizations and long-term programmes across the globe to help bring positive change to the world. This programme has many goals to promote a more sustainable and equitable future, one of which is the promotion of education in rural areas. Between the years of 2019 and 2024, Irish Aid pledged over 250 million Euro to improve education all across the globe. Irish Aid believes that education is a fundamental human right and is essential in increasing empowerment and equality in our society.

## Japan

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is a branch under the Japanese government that aims to provide assistance for many thematic issues from around the world. One of these thematic issues includes human resource development through education. JICA assists with the organization of many activities relating to the promotion of education such as the Education Summit 2016 and the School for All movie. JICA also has multiple Education Cooperation brochures titled “The Joy of Learning for Everyone” where JICA’s accomplishments in assisting with rural education are listed and presented. JICA aims to work with 100+ countries to achieve SDG4 by 2030.

## United Kingdom (UK)

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), which was previously the Department for International Development, is a branch under the UK government aiming to combat poverty across the globe with aid from the British people. FCDO aims to increase funding and improve global education quality, specifically for girls’ education. FCDO also helps to ensure education on

cross-cutting topics such as Economic Livelihoods, Sexual Harassment, Cultural Practices, Nutrition, etc. FCDO has also helped to host many education projects in countries such as Zimbabwe, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, etc. to promote better education, increase accessibility, and provide aid for all youth in rural areas within these countries.

### **United States (US)**

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works to increase global stability by addressing the roots of existing problems. The strategy of the U.S. government is to promote International Basic Education and increase the accessibility of quality education in rural regions. Furthermore, USAID aims to allow youth in LEDCs to gain social and emotional skills needed to thrive in life, also partnering with higher education facilities to establish centers for education development for these youth. In 2020 alone, USAID provided over 24 million youth from LEDCs with access to basic education and trained over 300 thousand educators.

### **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the world's largest fund dedicated to transforming and promoting education in LEDCs. GPE works to deliver funds and investments to lower-income countries to improve and build quality education for all children and youth within these countries. GPE partners with both LEDCs and MEDCs, NGOs and IGOs, and the general society to bring a more accessible and equitable education system and foundation to LEDCs. GPE's statistics show that the number of children without access to proper education has decreased over the past year. GPE's plans and implementations also align with and address SDG4.

### **Save the Children**

The Save the Children organization aims to combat problems of disadvantages in life for children. The primary focus of Save the Children is the protection and education of children everywhere. Many children are robbed of an opportunity to fulfill their potential due to their backgrounds, which leads to them having a lack of proper access to education. Save the Children ensures children receive the support, care, and safety needed before, during, and after they start their education. In 2022, Save the Children was able to help over 9 million children regain or gain their education through their education programs.

### **United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works to help children fight for their rights, defend their lives, and maximize their potential in over 190 nations across the globe. One of UNICEF's main areas of focus is the Children's Right to Education. UNICEF focuses on providing equitable access, quality learning, education in emergencies, and relevant funding to children and youth in over 147

countries. This is as without quality education, children may face many barriers later in life. Therefore, UNICEF works to ensure that children in countries that are facing extreme poverty can be allowed access to proper basic education.

### United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

One of the main focuses of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is to promote education globally through building peace, eradicating poverty, and driving sustainable development. UNESCO is the only branch of the United Nations (UN) that covers all aspects of education promotion, prioritizing the right to education for all youth. The UN believes that education is an essential human right and a powerful tool that can help children thrive in life. Therefore, UNESCO works to provide education for children in developing countries to also help raise children out of poverty and develop new standards for global education.

### Timeline of Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of event</b>
March, 1990	During the 1990 UNESCO conference, delegations voted to launch the Education for All (EFA) initiative to reduce illiteracy by universalizing primary education. EFA aims to promote basic education for all children and youth.
2002	The EFA Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) was launched, which established a partnership between donors and LEDCs, allowing for direct communication between countries and donors.
1 March, 2011	The <i>2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report: The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education: Gender Overview</i> was published emphasizing both the successes of the original initiative and the problems that still exist.
2015	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with SDG4 being to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”
17 June 2017	The World Bank launches its Rural Education project, promoting higher and more accessible education and partnering with LEDCs to provide funds for improved education materials, environment, and opportunity.

## Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948
- Resolution on the Right to Education, 18 June 2008 (A/HRC/RES/8/4)
- Follow-up on the Resolution on the Right to Education, 17 June 2009 (A/HRC/RES/11/6)
- Follow-up on the Resolution on the Right to Education, 5 October 2010 (A/HRC/RES/15/4)
- Follow-up on the Resolution on the Right to Education, 6 July 2011 (A/HRC/RES/17/3)
- World Programme for Human Rights Education, 28 September 2017 (A/HRC/RES/31/12)
- Resolution on International Day of Education, 3 December 2018 (A/RES/73/25)

## Possible Solutions

### **Promoting higher levels of education in rural areas through the integration of technology.**

Lack of access to educational resources in rural areas could be seen as a big limitation to education. While it is hard to incentivize a wide range of educators to conduct in-person lessons with the citizens of rural areas, there are multiple ways to alleviate this issue. One crucial step to promoting higher levels of education within rural areas is the integration of technology, which can be done through the implementation of digital subscriber lines (DSL), an affordable and accessible internet route. Concurrently, the UN could partner with tech companies such as Microsoft and Google, to provide basic technologies for these citizens as well as teach them about internet safety. Moreover, it is highly recommended that the E-Library systems are created. By granting all a cost-effective way to access a wider range of resources, people would be more motivated to self-study at their own pace. Most importantly, having the UN collaborate with non-governmental organizations as well as voluntary organizations to establish digital learning platforms that include a variety of learning styles, such as lesson, projects, quizzes, and multimedia content that is easy to set up and access by everyone will hopefully, increase the literacy rate of rural areas drastically. Disadvantages include, sustainability of maintaining and updating technology infrastructures. Despite the potential obstacles, establishing internet access within rural areas is still a beneficial way to motivate citizens to increase their knowledge from the comfort of their homes, fostering equal educational opportunities and serving as a practical first step in promoting education in these regions.

**Encourage willing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and member nations to provide or create educational services for adults in rural areas.** While it is crucial for children and young adults to establish a strong education foundation, the significance of adult education cannot be overlooked. As seen in rural areas, adult education is often neglected as people tend to live off of occupations such as farming, or simply because of the limited resources that restricts them from even choosing to pursue higher levels of education. One way to combat this issue is by



providing accessible education programs, including drop in lectures and workshops, allowing those attending the flexibility to still fully commit to other aspects of their life. This can be done through collaborating with NGOs, namely, the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES), which focuses on increasing literacy rates and raising awareness on prominent current affairs. In addition, as gender inequality is still highly prominent, women also tend to receive less educational opportunities in comparison to men. Through partnering with organizations such as the Bunyad Foundation, who have already made over 1 million women in rural areas literate, we can significantly expand opportunities for women. Furthermore, promoting education on practical life skills will undoubtedly add more practical value to adult education, enabling individuals to be more integrated into society and be able to live a more comfortable life.

**Urge nations to support students of rural areas to reach higher levels of expertise by making testing processes more accessible.** Talented students from rural areas often do not get opportunities to express themselves to the public. By making testing systems such as taking the Scholastic Assessment Testing (SAT) and other standardized testing available for all, students would be able to obtain better opportunities to get into their desired field of study, reach a higher level of expertise, and ultimately be able to bring benefit to the world.

## Questions for Further Research

1. What are some of the biggest challenges facing the promotion of education in rural areas in LEDCs?
2. How can we ensure that children in rural areas have access to quality education, regardless of their socioeconomic status?
3. What role can technology play in promoting education in rural areas in LEDCs?
4. How can we engage parents and local communities to support education initiatives in rural areas?
5. What are some effective strategies for training and retaining teachers in rural areas in LEDCs?
6. How can we address the issue of gender inequality in education in rural areas?
7. What are some innovative approaches to financing education in rural areas in LEDCs?
8. How can we measure the impact of education initiatives in rural areas in LEDCs?

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