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BACKGROUND PAPER

Topic: Securing Unbiased Education Material and Governance in
Developing Countries

UNESCO

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Committee Background



In 2021, UNESCO presented the "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", adopted by 193 countries. It emphasises human rights, transparency and equity in AI. The guidelines help address the impact of AI on data, environment, gender equality, education, research, medical care and social welfare. This is part of UNESCO's efforts to promote technology and innovation at the service of humanity.

UNESCO also produces a global monitoring report on gender equality in education and tracks gender gaps in education indicators between countries and between groups within countries in its Global Database on Inequality in Education (WIDE).

UNESCO has as its main priorities the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the improvement of people's well-being.

As an organization based on the exchange of knowledge, UNESCO publishes global data and reliable scientific information to help and guide the public policies of its Member States. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics develops a wide range of indicators in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and information.

UNESCO was born from the ashes of World War II when, in November 1945, a United Nations conference was held in London, just at the end of the war, to establish an educational and cultural organisation.

The event brought together representatives of 37 States - including Mexico - and, with the impetus of France and the United Kingdom (two nations heavily affected by the conflict), the delegates decided to create an organisation aimed at instituting a true culture of peace in order to strengthen the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity and prevent a new world war. At the end of the conference, the 37 States signed the Constitution that marked the origin of UNESCO. The document entered into force in November 1946, after being ratified by 20 signatory countries.

In 1958, the UNESCO Permanent Headquarters building was inaugurated in Paris, designed by architects Marcel Breuer (USA), Pier-Luigi Nervi (Italy) and Bernard Zehrfuss (France).

A peace based exclusively on political and economic agreements between governments is not enough to obtain the unanimous, sincere and lasting support of the peoples. Therefore, peace must be based on dialogue, mutual understanding and the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity.

Introduction of the Topic



The lack of resources in preschool education is a significant challenge that affects the quality of teaching. Various studies and research have addressed this problem from various perspectives. Early learning opportunities and initial education have been shown to be fundamental to children's development, since much of learning is built in the first years of life. The lack of didactic resources and adequate learning environments limits the quality of preschool education. Learning and teaching materials, such as textbooks, play a fundamental role in improving the quality of learning and student performance.

Developing countries, developing countries or intermediate developing countries are those countries whose economies are in full economic development starting from a state of underdevelopment or a transition economy. Although they have not yet reached the status of developed countries, they have made more progress than others that are still considered underdeveloped countries.

Introduction of the Topic



Developing countries are, according to some authors such as Walter Whitman Rostow, the countries in transition from multiple traditional ways of life to modern lifestyle since the industrial revolution in England in the 18th and 19th centuries.

A country in underdevelopment could be considered developing or even emerging:

- When it exceeds a certain level of human development, above 0.800 HDI (development index Human),
- It has a per capita income generally higher than \$8,000,
- It has a certain size of economy or economic deployment¹ despite not having HDI above 0,800 or high per capita income, as is the case of: China, India, Indonesia and others.

Underdeveloped countries have high population growth rates and unemployment rates, as well as market imperfections, among other factors, their average income is much lower than that of industrialised countries and most of them are in Africa, Asia and South America.



Evolution of the Topic



At the global level, education is considered a factor of production, since it allows to end many of the economic problems of a nation and acts as a regulatory instrument of social inequalities. Its primary functions are:

- Improve the levels of employability in the country.
- Affirm the values and cultural identity of societies.
- Diversify the fields of development for the young population.
- Strengthen democracy and the rule of law.
- Encourage scientific and technological innovation.

The landscape of education governance has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades. Educational decisions and policies are increasingly promoted in new global scenarios, and are influenced by non-state bodies, to such an extent that, without losing their importance, nation states and governments are now only one of several agents of education governance.

In this context, Education 2030 stands out as a recent example of the adoption of a global agenda in education. This initiative seeks an inclusive, equitable and quality education for all. However, it faces several governance challenges:

- Restriction of regulatory priorities: The diversity of objectives and approaches can hinder the effective implementation of educational policies.
- Responsibility and accountability of global actors: Coordinating efforts between governments, international organisations and other actors is crucial.
- Appropriation of the agenda: Ensure that policies are relevant and adapted to local realities.
- Harmonisation of multiple regulatory priorities: Integrate sustainable development goals and educational agendas.

Relevant Events



PANORAMA

Postmodernism

A period characterised by innovations and rapid changes in practically all productive sectors of society, is affecting the life of a significant contingent of the population - the one that has access to the goods produced by the trinomial science, technology and computing. On the other hand, it keeps the daily life of the majority of the world's population almost unchanged. We see that science, technology and computer science helped, and are helping, about a third of the population to live better, more comfortably and increase life expectancy; but we also see that every day two-thirds see that their basic living conditions have deteriorated and worsened. That phenomenon occurs in both industrialised and developing countries, but it is still a characteristic of the so-called third world countries.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the world's biggest economic crisis in more than 100 years. In 2020, activity decreased in 90% of countries, the world economy contracted by about 3% and poverty increased worldwide for the first time in a generation. Governments approved a rapid and comprehensive regulatory response that alleviated the worst immediate economic impacts of the crisis. However, these responses also emphasised a series of economic fragilities.

Increase in doubtful loans. By increasing transparency and reducing the proportion of dubious loans, financial institutions can remain stable, well capitalised and in a position to provide credit, especially to low-income households and small businesses.

Delay in the resolution of doubtful loans. Effective insolvency proceedings, including extrajudicial options, can reduce the social costs of generalised over-indebtedness, avoid the inadequate allocation of resources to unproductive "zombie companies" and limit the need for the Government to interfere in the resolution of debts.

External Actions



The brookings journal warns about AI in education and its biases:

In recent discussions led by the United Nations General Assembly, UNESCO, WISE (a think tank), and the Transformative Learning Technologies Lab at Teachers College, hosted by Columbia University, the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on education was a central theme. The potential automation of administrative tasks and customization of student curricula through AI pose opportunities but also significant challenges. The concern raised is that if not approached carefully, AI systems, developed largely by a predominantly white group of developers, might perpetuate biases, particularly affecting students from Black and Latino or Hispanic communities.

The recent conference emphasized the need for cautious deployment, exploring the potential for AI to exacerbate existing inequalities in education, especially those linked to racial biases. The discussion extends beyond the classroom, highlighting the importance of developers intentionally designing AI systems with a focus on racial equity to avoid replicating the flaws and biases present in our existing educational systems and society. The cautionary tale of biased algorithms in the legal system serves as a reminder of the consequences when technology is not intentionally developed through a lens of equity.

The history of standardized testing, initially heralded as a means to democratize education, provides valuable lessons on the need to consider societal inequalities in educational innovations. As the educational landscape continues to grapple with these challenges, the paper explores the intersection of AI, education, and equity, urging for more diligence and intentional exploration before widespread deployment.



Committee Focus

The UNESCO committee primarily focuses on addressing challenges and promoting improvements in the broader field of education. Its attention is centered on key issues such as equity in education, consideration of racial biases, and existing historical and contemporary inequalities. The main objective is to work towards practices and policies that foster equity, inclusion, and sustainable development in the education sector.

Conclusion



The dangers posed by biases in education perpetuated by political parties or extremist groups underscore the critical importance of maintaining impartiality in educational systems. When education becomes a tool for political or ideological agendas, it distorts truth, perpetuates stereotypes, and undermines the integrity of the educational process and democracy itself. It is imperative that education remains free from such influences to foster critical thinking, openness to diverse perspectives, and respect for differing opinions and cultures.

To uphold impartial education, it is essential to strengthen oversight mechanisms, promote diversity and inclusion in curricula, and ensure that educators are trained to deliver impartial and equitable instruction. Moreover, societal recognition of the significance of impartial education and commitment to defending this fundamental principle are essential for safeguarding education's role as a driver of progress, equality, and democracy in our societies.

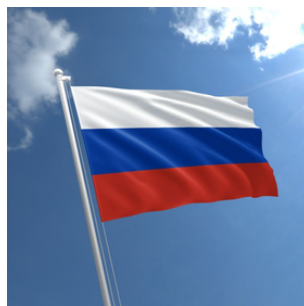
Participation List



China



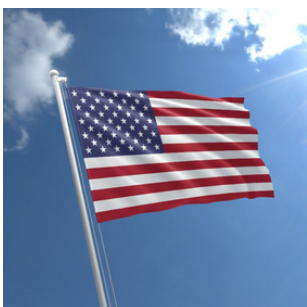
France



Russia



United Kingdom



United States



Honduras



Paraguay



Argentina



Algeria



Egypt



Turkey



Iran

Participation List



Sweden



Finland



Mexico



Canada



South Korea



Germany



Japan



Nigeria

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