



**YSDC 2020**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE: NO POVERTY COMMITTEE**

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# **BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR: AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

*An Imbalance between the Rich and the Poor is the Oldest and most Fatal Ailment of all Republic*  
*-Plutarch, Greek Historian*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Today, education remains an inaccessible right for millions of children around the world. More than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate and do not have the awareness necessary to improve both their living conditions and those of their children<sup>1</sup>. The reason is simple: when any child fails to acquire the basic skills needed to function as a productive, responsible member of society, society as a whole, not to mention the individual child, loses. The cost of educating children is far outweighed by the cost of not educating them. Adults who lack basic skills have greater difficulty finding well-paying jobs and escaping poverty. Education offers some of the best policy options available for tackling long-term poverty, and is the single best means of preventing children from inheriting their parents' poverty. At the same time, children from chronically poor families are typically among the hardest to reach and to teach. The policy concerns of education and chronic poverty overlap at several key stages in the life cycle, and a growing body of evidence shows how, why, and where action at these strategic points succeed.<sup>2</sup>

Eradicating poverty is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity and the extent of its urgency makes it the first goal in the Sustainable Development Goals for the Agenda 2030. Poverty, widely understood to be the deprivation of basic human needs, has been set internationally to be anyone living below \$1.90 per day and although statistics show that the number of people living in extreme poverty has dropped by half between 1990 and 2015, too many are still struggling for these basic needs. Poverty is not solely an economic issue but rather, a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a lack of both income and the basic capability to live in dignity.<sup>3</sup>

Causes of poverty have been known to include unemployment, poor governmental policy or poor governance, lack of education and high illiteracy population are some of the primary causes of

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<sup>1</sup> Right to Education: Situation around the world - Humanium

<sup>2</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/getWSDoc.php?id=1527>

<sup>3</sup> UN: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

poverty. There is a vicious cycle of poverty with lack of education being the starting point this is so as Lack of education leads to unemployment, thereby reducing the possibility of a source of livelihood and illiteracy overpopulation in a certain region especially sub-Saharan African countries reduces the general overlook of total revenue produced in that region. With cases of the rate of illiteracy higher than the education and employment, the gap is wider and the wedge of inequality is greater. Children from the poorest household are four times more likely to be out of school than those of the richest households, leaving distinctive differences between rural and urban areas very high<sup>4</sup> especially as it relates to social security. many children from disadvantaged backgrounds are forced to abandon their education due to health problems related to malnutrition or in order to work and provide support for the family.

The importance of education alongside other practicable solutions, with good governmental policies in eradicating poverty cannot be overemphasized, as poverty and education are inextricably linked. To reduce or completely remove the gap between the rich and the poor when creating some form of equality between them, there must be an inclusive education system. The growing inequality is a disadvantage to economic growth and undermines social cohesion, increasing political and social tensions. A system that supports the provision of an education opportunity that meets differing circumstances and needs of children as determined by gender, culture, social class and ability level is the definition of an inclusive education system.<sup>5</sup> It is a system that accommodates diversity and is flexible. Although an all-round inclusive education system is necessary, focus would be on the aspect of social class, as this guide is based on reducing poverty and increasing the equality between the rural and urban areas. The gap between the rich and the poor is reduced as equal opportunities are created for all learners and there is a positive feedback as illiteracy and unemployment are in turn reduced, if not completely eliminated.

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<sup>4</sup> SD Goal 4: Quality education – ‘Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education, Guyana: Developing an Inclusive Education System

## 2. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK.

The bulk of the world's poor live in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. School enrollment in these regions mirrors their economic performance<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, the global education community and countries are mobilizing to invest more in education quality and content because of the importance it has in the eradication of poverty. An inclusive quality education addresses education's role in fighting poverty, creating jobs and fostering business development. Nine out of ten children in the world now go to school. This is an unprecedented percentage and achievement resulting from joint efforts since 2000, but the progress has stagnated and the remaining out-of-school children are harder to reach. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to leave no one behind and to reach those farthest behind and its main reference "ensuring significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, to implement programs and policies in order to end poverty in all its dimensions".<sup>7</sup>

The World Bank has recognized some countries efforts made to tackle the eradication of poverty hand in hand with education. Balochistan, a province embroiled in conflict in Pakistan,, had one of the worst education indicators and later designed an education project to address a complex set of challenges arising from ethnic conflict, community disengagement, political interference and weak governance in the educational sector. From 2015 to 2018, the project has helped to enroll 53,000 previously out of school children and has helped build or renovate buildings in over 700 schools<sup>8</sup> (World Bank, 2019) also, countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Croatia, Republic of Serbia, and Vietnam show where economic diversity and gaps exist within a country, and has helped policymakers target better policies and programs to reach and benefit the poor. Norwegian White paper 25 on Education for Development which was created by the Norwegian government in line with the SDGs and development is based on strategies and policies already put or to be put in place to ensure economic growth and stabilization.

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<sup>6</sup> Arye L. Hillman & Eva Jenkner , 2004, *Educating Children in Poor Countries* pg 6

<sup>7</sup> UN Shaping our future together: Ending Poverty

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank: Understanding Poverty; Poverty Overview

It is important to remember that improvements in one area, benefits several others, and we need to constantly look for the most effective synergies<sup>9</sup>. For a country like Nigeria with about 90 million people living in extreme poverty, according to estimates from World Data Lab's Poverty Clock, in June 2018, Nigeria replaced India, a country with seven times its population, at the bottom of the table. Recently published paper by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Shows that education is critical to escape poverty and to prevent transmission between generations. The new analysis on education's impact on poverty by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report based on the average effects of education on growth and poverty reduction in developing countries from 1965-2010<sup>10</sup>. It shows that nearly 60 million people could escape poverty if all adults had completed their education.

### **3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TOPIC**

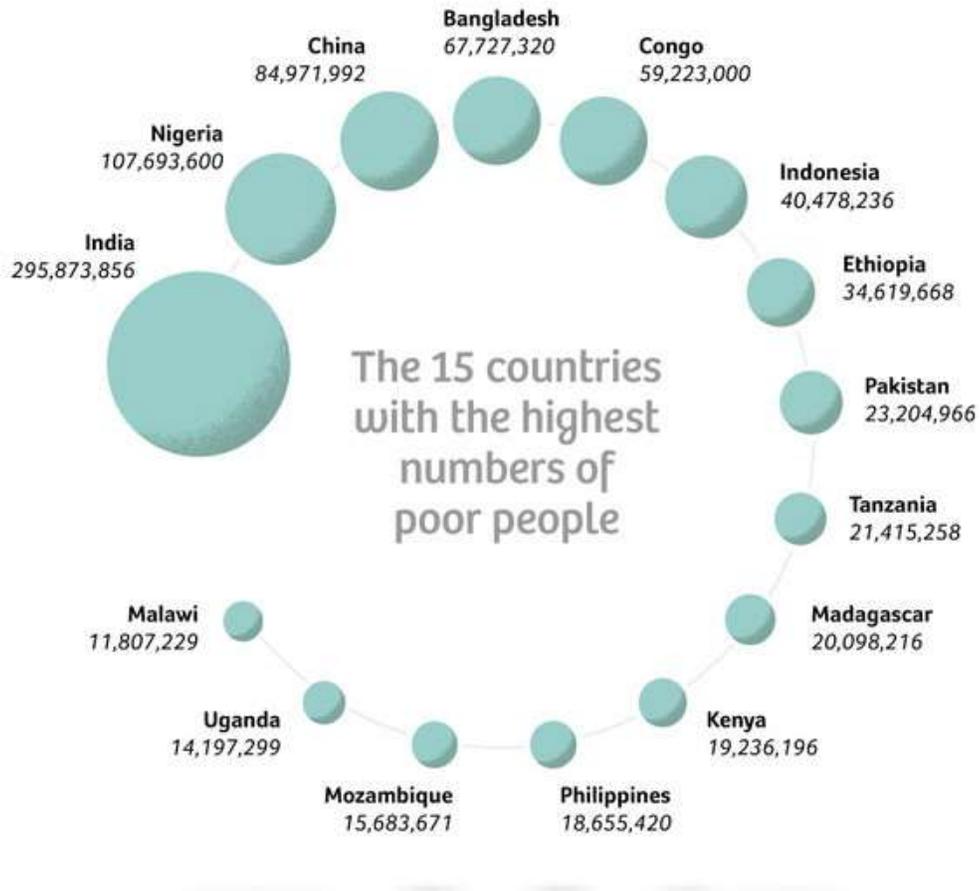
In 1990, there were still 1.95 billion people in extreme poverty. In 2012, the figure stood at 896 million. According to the recent estimates, in 2015, 10% of the world's population (735 million people), lived on less than US\$1.90 a day, compared to the 11 percent in 2013. That's down from nearly 36% in 1990<sup>11</sup>. The huge global decrease in extreme poverty over the last 30 years is largely due to the economic growth of China. China alone was responsible for almost 70% of the worldwide decrease in extreme poverty between 1981 and 2011. Extreme poverty is now mainly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa as it has both highest rate of children living in extreme poverty at 49% and the largest share of the world's extremely poor children at 51%.

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<sup>9</sup> NORAD: Role of Education in Ending Extreme poverty – Taking the Global Lead.

<sup>10</sup> UN High Level Political Forum: Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education.

<sup>11</sup> The World Bank: Understanding Poverty



Marginalized families are in the lowest income bracket, they have lower rates of life expectancy, a higher incidence of health problems, including high maternal mortality rates, and they are poorly nourished as the rest of the population. Education can prevent the transmission of poverty between generations. An inclusive education that targets the marginalized and poor populations will bring change to many of the systemic factors that have contributed to the delay in poor communities' development.



#### 4. SUB TOPICS

##### **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SCHEME**

Inclusive education is when all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn and participate in all aspects of the life of the school, regardless of challenges, social class, gender or disabilities, without any discrimination or separation. Girls in poor countries continue to face particular steep barriers to education, therefore, there is need for inclusive education scheme, making it an approach that ensures the presence and participation of all students in education<sup>12</sup>.

Multiple people face multiple barriers to receiving an education including inaccessible schools, inaccessible teaching materials, prejudice and discrimination from teachers and bullying from peers. Marginalizing children on the basis of social class and status creates an increased gap as

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<sup>12</sup> European Centre for Research Training and Development UK: Determination of Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education at the Basic Education Level in Nigeria

they get different levels of teaching experience, if there is any academic experience at all for the children from poor homes. It is clear that growing up with this divide between both classes continues to transfer poverty from one generation to another, leaving the less developed areas worse with continued deterioration. Children from poor homes are only exposed to poor **quality** education. What does poor quality education mean in practice? One example comes from the recent Early Grade Reading Assessment in Northern Nigeria, which found that after three years of school, most students did not have the basic reading skills necessary for later learning. Statistics have further revealed that:

- More than half of pupils in Bauchi state and nearly three quarters of pupils in Sokoto state in Northern Nigeria could not identify a single letter sound;
- On average, pupils could correctly identify the initial sound of 1 out of 10 words, and more than 80% scored 0;
- More than 70% of pupils in both states could not correctly read any syllables;
- Seven out of 10 pupils in Bauchi and more than 8 pupils out of 10 in Sokoto could not read any word correctly in one minute<sup>13</sup>. These stark findings indicate that by the end of primary, a large majority of children in the Northern region will be unable to read, and therefore progress with their learning. This demonstrates clearly that failure in the early years sets children up for failure in later years, and highlights the limited value of additional years of schooling in contexts where learning is so limited.

Inclusive education is important because it shows the younger generation the diversity in a community and that no one is necessarily better than the other. Ensuring social protection for all children and other vulnerable groups is critical to reduce poverty. Policymakers seeking inspiration for how to balance education quality reforms with equity increasingly look to Brazil. Brazil is still one of the most unequal countries in the world, measured by income inequality, but here, as elsewhere in the region, inequality is finally starting to decline. The best explanations for this include gains in education for poor people among other factors. Half of the Brazilian population was illiterate in the 1950s and a quarter in 1980. The 1988 Constitution committed

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<sup>13</sup> USAID (2011). Nigeria Northern Education Initiative (NEI): Results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in Hausa

states and municipalities to spending at least 25% and the federal government at least 18% of their revenues on education, and by 1995, 90% of all children were enrolled at age seven. Even then, only half completed eighth grade and nearly 14% of adults were still illiterate as late as 2000. Brazil was then the poorest performing country in the PISA<sup>14</sup> tests of 15-year-old students. Its scores remain well below the OECD<sup>15</sup> average, but are improving relatively fast making it a good case of reform balancing quality with equity and making the educational system inclusive.

All learners have the access to quality education that meets basic learning needs and obstacles identified to increase national development<sup>16</sup>. Children with disabilities form one of the largest groups that are still outside the fold of the general education system<sup>17</sup>. The incidence, depth, duration and timing of poverty all influence a child's educational attainment, along with community characteristic and social networks as they are one of the key areas influenced by the family incomes.<sup>18</sup> Together with this, persistent socioeconomic disadvantage also affects the cognitive development of the child. All these contribute to reasons for incessant dropouts from schools and incomplete education and in the future, suffering from material hardship although they may live above the poverty line<sup>19</sup>. It may seem that quality education is a sure guarantee to a decent living, but it has been noted that in 2018, 8% of employed workers and their families worldwide lived in extreme poverty.<sup>20</sup> Inclusive education has clear and strong potential to impact positively on each of the dimensions of poverty: through increasing skills for better jobs and livelihoods, reducing vulnerability to ill-health and malnutrition, eliminating stigma, combating discrimination and empowering people to claim rights, increasing resilience to shocks and conflict and, reducing the prevalence of violence.

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<sup>14</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment

<sup>15</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> NCIB; Paediatrics Child Health: The Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes for Children (HB Ferguson, PhD, S Bovaird, MPH, and MP Mueller, PhD)

<sup>19</sup> 20 Gershoff ET, Aber JL, Raver CC, Lennon MC. Child Dev.2007;78:70-95

<sup>20</sup> UN; Sustainable Development Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.

## **AWARENESS AS A FORM OF EDUCATION**

An all-inclusive education goes beyond what takes place within the four walls of the classroom and continues for all age grades. Education has been divided into three namely: formal, informal and non-formal. Formal education is the basic type education which is in a properly organized manner within a specific period of time usually likened to the activities within the educational institutions. Informal education is incidental and unlike the formal, not pre-planned or prescribed by a time-table or curriculum. The last form of education, non-formal education, although deliberate, is usually organized for a particular group of people serving the need of an identified group.<sup>21</sup>

Awareness is a non-formal education where a group of people ignorant on certain issues, are brought together to be enlightened on these matters, outside the realm of formal education. It is better described as any organized, systematic education activity, carried outside the framework of the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broad activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles learning objectives. Awareness as a form of combatting poverty creates a forum of enlightenment in improving the capacity of people, with trainings and programs to teach skills and handwork for the purpose of alleviating poverty organized for a homogenous group. Awareness as an inclusive education system creates an avenue where all persons are availed the opportunity of learning or being trained in any interested aspect to be able to work even without formal education. Education for entrepreneurship and business management is important to enable the young adult develop their own businesses and promote agricultural knowledge, innovation and efficiency with increased productivity in this sector<sup>22</sup>. With the help from the government, public awareness in all job respects, agriculture and able jobs empowering the public would not only provide basic human needs for a specific period but will provide a source of earning to live above the poverty line.

Public education explicitly cultivates awareness by enforcing clearer policies that appropriately address the distinctive needs of individuals. The inclusive education should be made for all the poor, male or female, with literacy campaigns providing unbiased and equal access to services. Educating the public, although greatly moved and promoted by the government, needs the support

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<sup>21</sup> Notes on the Types of education: Formal, Informal, Non-formal. (Article by Gauri Dushi)

<sup>22</sup>Ibid

of non-governmental organizations to assist States, at their requests, in organizing national activities for the eradication of poverty, paying attention to the specific problems of the destitute<sup>23</sup>

## **5. Relating the topic to the theme of the conference**

The theme for the 2020 conference, Youth at the Centre of the Achievement and Implementation of the SDGs, which has been set to encourage and inform the youth on their participation for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The goals which are 17 in number, with the No Poverty agenda leading the list, have been strategically set by the United Nations in continuity of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The topic is set on finding ways to achieve the eradication of poverty in all its forms, which is the target of Goal 1, is positioned to solve this problem with education. The topic also creates a linkage with Goal 4, which is Quality Education and shows the achievement of these two goals with the use of education. With the knowledge that there is more to be done, even with the inclusion of these points, efforts and emphasis has been placed on creating and promoting equality between the rich and the poor as steep tilt in favor of the rich is violating the human rights of the poor because of the less than decent lifestyle expected of a human being, being allotted to them.

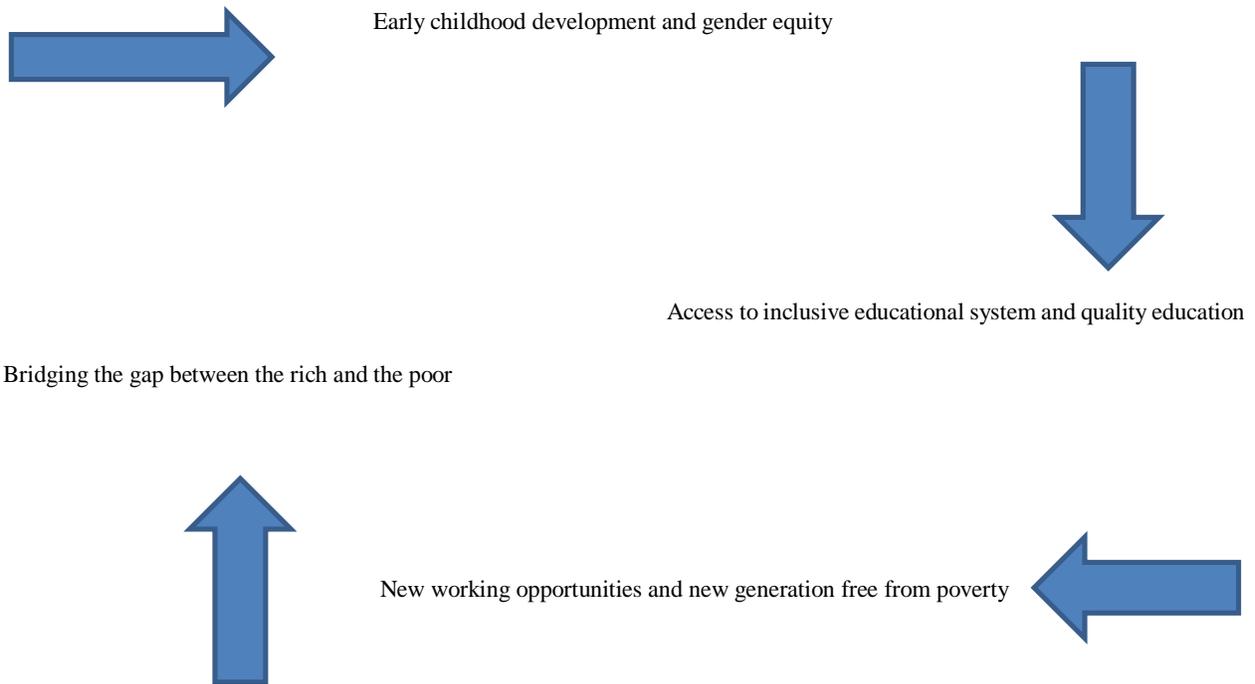
## **6. CONCLUSION**

Educational policy interventions are among the best means of tackling poverty, particularly if they interrupt the transmission of poverty across generations. It is without doubt the importance of education in abating poverty and finally eradicating it in all its forms as according to the “No Poverty Agenda”. The topic chosen goes further to show education at the formal setting, to the kind learnt outside an organized system of academia institutions. In bridging the gap between and the poor, it is basically eradicating poverty in all its forms. Education has shown the possibility to

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<sup>23</sup> UN General Assembly, 47<sup>th</sup> Session, Second Committee /resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992 making 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty adopted on the 31 March 1993

reduce poverty levels to the minimum, with the help of non-governmental organization and also inclusive strategic governmental policies potentially leading to a cyclical liberation of the poor<sup>24</sup>



### Further research

On an average, do children from poorer families perform worse academically than children from families with higher income? What is the distinction between the female and the male when it comes to poverty and illiteracy? What policies can the government put in place to create an inclusive educational system? After a thorough understanding of the topic and the theme, what other goal, can education tackle? How have countries approached the Goal 1 and what materials have a few countries put in place towards striving for its achievement? What other thing can be done by the youths towards achieving the Goal 1?

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<sup>24</sup> Global Poverty Solution



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