

Sophie Jones
Year 11
China

Quality education

Education is what allows this world to run; it unlocks the capability inside everyone and is essential to function in a so-called modern society.

That is of course if you have access to it.

If we were a genuine modern world that was thriving economically and socially, we would not have 260 million children never even having entered a classroom before. We would not be neglecting 260 million brilliant minds and ignoring all their potential.

There are multiple reasons why so many children miss out on the most important experience in their life, but the common theme is neglect. Every year 150 million children miss out on education due to being victims of child labour. Every year 12 million girls miss out on education due to being victims of forced marriages. Every year 37 million children miss out on education due to environmental threats such as typhoons or hurricanes. Every year 48.5 million children miss out on education due to conflict or war. 130 million girls are out of education due to the fact that simply they are girls.

We can see the reoccurring theme of neglect: parents neglecting their children into marriages; employers neglecting their morals through child labour; humans neglecting our world causing more drastic weather events; world leaders neglecting peace and seeking violence; the world neglecting a whole gender, half of our population.

The year is 2021, so why are we still not realising the significance of education and how crucial it is that every child has access to it, or are our leaders, who we look up to, all aware of the significance but choose to dismiss it?

Children all over the world are affected by the lack of education as they are neglected by their governments and are not given the opportunities for the schooling they deserve. But what people may not realise is that it is not only those children are affected by this immense lack of education. Our whole future, and generations to come will suffer the consequences of the millions of children which were denied their right to learn.

These children who miss out on education, do not just miss out on the fundamental arithmetic and literacy skills, they also miss out on learning about the wider issues in the world such as equality, climate, war, peace, etc. They could have created a product to deal with ocean plastics, or have been the next environmental activist like Greta Thunberg, or the next equality activist like Rosa Parks. The more people we have who receive a quality education provides humanity with more innovative thinkers and candidates for world leaders who care about our world.

Increasing the number of children we have educated from a young age is also a steppingstone in the mission to decrease poverty and increase the general standard living. Education acts as the door to jobs, opportunities, and the escape route of extreme poverty. By adults living in extreme poverty, it is much more likely their children will not go to school and therefore inherently live in extreme poverty. This is a sinister cycle that sets up future generations for failure, and it is a cycle we need to immediately break.

The lack of education is spread amongst the whole world like a plague but is most prominent in Somalia, where only an appalling 10% attends primary school, then even fewer attending secondary school. This is because Somalia has been facing two decades of conflict and violence causing children to be forced out of their homes, schools ruined, and supplies/ resources stretched thin.

Sophie Jones
Year 11
China

Sophie Jones
Year 11
China

Lack of education is the tip of the iceberg, many people may 'receive' an education, but the quality of it is shocking, all children across the world deserve an education, and an excellent one. Sadly, we are nowhere near this reality. Classrooms are overcrowded drowning out the students' voices, no sufficient hygiene facilities, nowhere near enough school books or stationary, not enough trained teachers to pass on their knowledge.

Globally, only 85% of teachers are trained to do their jobs, that means 15% of children may be attending schooling but they are not receiving an education from a qualified teacher, questioning the validity of the education at all. This spread of untrained teachers is vastly prominent in certain areas, as in UK 96% of secondary school teachers are qualified, whereas in sub-Saharan countries only 50% of secondary school teachers are qualified. Or even training teachers drop out frequently due to being underpaid and the workload is too much for one teacher, due to the school being understaffed, worsening the situation further. Also, in countries where conflict is prevalent, teachers and schools are targets of attacks due to their significance for a functioning society.

We still have a lack of education, quality education, in today's society because of countless reasons. Many children start life with an immediate setback and disadvantage through having parents without an education; they start life living in extreme poverty, halving their chance of going to school. According to UNESCO if all students in low-income countries possessed simply basic reading skills, an incredible 171 million people would escape extreme poverty. There is a clear link between poverty and quality education, and a link between education and hundreds of other consequences in peoples' lives, we need to take action and we need to take it now.

Things we can do to try tackle this grave issue facing our whole world are acknowledge and address classroom overcrowding, prioritise school funding, raise our treatment of teachers-increase pay etc., place curriculum building and classroom running decisions in hands of community. Without taking urgent action, in a decade, half of all young people in the world will not have the basic skills (literacy and numeracy) needed for jobs, that is 825 million people who we are setting up for failure if we do not act now.

Before we can increase the quality of education, we need to ensure everyone even has access to the education. If you cannot act to help increase the quality and access of education: educate yourself on education.

Sophie Jones
Year 11
China