



Chair Report

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Chair: Tiffany Bui

The primary role of UNESCO is to pursue international peace through promoting educational, scientific, and cultural development.

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REPORT: Harnessing Technologies for Quality Education

Introduction

In recent years, technology has advanced and has contributed to increased productivity, higher quality education, and easier communication. In developed countries, new technology in the form of tablets, laptops, and cellular devices have contributed to better learning environments in education settings. These devices establish a connection to a world of sources and access to information.

UNESCO has been committed to improving education throughout the world in developed and developing countries, but many areas still lag behind in this process. Quality education has become dependent upon access to technology, and developing countries without internet access are being hindered from their full potential. With improvements in increasing this access, the quality of education can improve in those countries and around the world.

General Overview

Despite massive developments in the world of technology, impoverished areas have yet to reach their potential in terms of the upgrades necessary to improve education. This is especially true for countries in conflict zones, where instability has often prevented education and access to information.



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In 2016, the United Nations declared Internet access to be a human right, and decried online censorship as a detriment to human expression and fair access to information. In many developed countries, the rise of the Internet has allowed for information to reach schools and universities at unprecedented speed and very low cost. However, the developing and underdeveloped nations of the world struggle with accessibility and affordability for most citizens. In many of Sub-Saharan Africa's poorest countries, for example, GDP per capita often falls below \$1000. In these cases, most of the population will focus on finding enough food and water for survival as opposed to education, and those who attend even basic institutions often struggle to pay for books, uniforms, and supplies and fund low teacher salaries. If more technology was to be employed in developing regions of the world for educational purposes, the cost of educating children would likely decline and efficiency would improve. However, this would come with the challenge of finding the funds to overhaul the education system, ensuring the lasting quality of infrastructure, and ensuring equitable access to technology for both wealthy and poor students.

Major Parties Involved

The United States and China make up 50% of global spending on the "Internet of Things" (IoT), more than 75% of the cloud computing market, and as much as 90% percent of the market capitalization value of the world's 70 largest digital platform companies.

Yet, Latin American and African countries substantially lack basic access to the internet, inhibiting education and exposure to the myriad of information found on the internet. A significant barrier that developing countries face in implementing technology inside classrooms is a lack of funding and affordable technologies that can be widely implemented.

Examples of Past Initiatives

United States - In order to bridge the education inequality gap in Sub-Saharan Africa, the United States launched the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) project in several African countries in 2005, which aimed to equip schools with laptop computers at low cost. The initiative faced criticism that the poorest areas in Africa would not have the financial ability to afford laptops and maintenance costs for children.



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Kenya - The CFSK (Computer for School in Kenya) project was started in 2002 with the aim of distributing computers to almost 9,000 schools. The project, valued at \$600 million USD was abandoned in 2016, and Kenya moved to implement computer labs inside schools.

Nigeria and Zambia - Nigeria and Zambia are creating computer labs in schools in a bid to create a critical mass of youths with ICT skills in order to narrow the digital divide between Africa, America, and Europe.

Timeline of Key Events

(1993) The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development is established to oversee increasing access to technology across the globe.

(2003) World Summit on the Information Society

(2005) One Laptop per Child (OLPC) project, launched in several African countries, aimed to equip schools with laptop computers at a low cost.

(2010) Costa Rica, Finland, and France pass laws recognizing the Internet as a universal right.

(2011) The United Nations declares internet access a basic human right.

(June 10, 2019) The United Nations released a report by the High-Level Panel of Digital Cooperation that declared digital interdependence and that the digital future must be safer as well as more inclusive. The High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation co-chairs are Jack Ma and Melinda Gates.

Past Attempts at Resolving This Issue

2003 - WSIS Declaration of Principles reaffirms the importance of the Information Society, where everyone can create, access, and share information on the internet, to maintaining and strengthening human rights.

2011 - UN Special Rapporteur report declares that access the internet is a human right. The report affirms that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for global education, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress.



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2016 - UN Resolution: The United Nations Human Rights Council releases a non-binding resolution condemning intentional disruption of internet access by governments.

2016 - The UN makes an addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under Article 19, the right to freedom of opinion and expression includes unrestricted access to content regardless of media.

Suggested Websites

- <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2016/apr/04/technology-bridge-learning-gap-africa>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2018/01/worlds-vulnerable-countries-track-achieve-universal-internet-access-2020-un-report/>
- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1045572>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2016/11/07/the-internet-as-a-human-right/>
- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2012/11/425252-advancing-internet-access-developing-countries-can-help-achieve-sustainable>
- <http://www.unesco.org/education/lwf/doc/portfolio/opinion3.htm>
- <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231867>
- <http://uis.unesco.org/>