

# Research Report

## General Assembly 2



***Addressing the issue of education disruption and exacerbation of pre-existing education disparities by reduction of education opportunities created by COVID-19 pandemic.***

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## Introduction

As a result of the pandemic and the need to practice “social distancing”, 186 countries have closed down all schools and universities. According to UNESCO, over 1.2 billion students are affected by nationwide and localized school closures, representing around 73% of the total of enrolled students worldwide. Unfortunately, as schools shut down and classes moved online, social and economic inequalities are exacerbated. While the transition to online education has been rather smooth in developed countries, which largely benefit from the necessary infrastructure and technology to ensure academic continuity, this is far from true in developing countries with education systems that are lagging behind. In addition, in both low-income countries (LIC) and high-income countries (HIC), many students suffer from the so-called “digital divide”, as they lack the essential technological equipment and adequate Internet connectivity to pursue their studies at home. Overall, underprivileged individuals are more likely to be disproportionately affected in their studies during the pandemic. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education has been quite overlooked in political and public discourse since the start of the crisis.

## The Committee

General Assembly 2 is a fairly ordinary committee, meaning there are no special Rules of Procedure specific to this committee. In MUNA, General Assembly 2 deals with issues on human rights, which can include an immense amount of topics. In this General Assembly, nations come together to discuss one’s (individual) rights and find solutions in a peaceful and respectful manner.

When debating on different solutions, it is important to note money is not an issue as nations can call upon the UN’s unlimited funds. Hence, a delegate should never vote or speak against a resolution because of financial reasons.

An important fact to note is that the real Second Committee deals with economic and financial issues and that the Human Rights Council would actually discuss the issues we do in this committee. Due to restrictions in space, human rights are being dealt with in General Assembly 2.

## Keywords

LIC = a low-income country, a developing country.

HIC = a high-income country, a developed country.

Infrastructure = the basic systems and services, such as transport and power supplies, that a country or organization uses in order to work effectively. Now mainly focussing on the online supplies.

Inequality = the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, money, etc. than other people.

Sustainable development = developing in a way that will last.

## Overview

A whole generation, and thus the future, is affected by the lack of education. The United Nations needs to come together and protect education during this crisis. Education is at the very heart of the global recovery effort and the battle against poverty.

One must consider the differences between the online infrastructure in HICs and LICs. The developing countries do not have the means to teach online. These governments often do not have the ability to invest in education. They need the means to break the cycle of poverty. The lack of organizational structure that is required to run a school system hamper all efforts.

Whereas in the HICs the problem is mainly on the educational disadvantage, the standards for education are not met.

Often in developing aid, education is one of the main issues the organizations try to solve. Save the children, UNICEF and UNESCO are a few of the organizations focussing on education. They also try to stimulate the local initiatives.

There is a shared interest in solving this problem, if the education could be fixed, poverty could be solved and the cycle of underprivileged children are stuck in could be broken.

## Arguments

While school closures are a necessary measure to halt the spread of COVID-19, it must be remembered that education is a human right, and States should employ all necessary measures to ensure its continuity in times of crisis. Planning and reforming education systems to anticipate the risk of disruptions to education is therefore essential. As the world continues to experience its greatest disruption to education since the Second World War, lessons must be drawn from this unprecedented challenge. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights underlined that education is an empowerment right, a tool for all individuals to fully participate in and contribute to society. Let us not forget that the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, and that these leaders will in turn need to respond to perhaps even greater crises than the one facing humanity today.

Others also state that most girls will not have the opportunity to return to school due to the economic stress the pandemic has brought upon the country's economy.

Not everyone has access to online lessons, as the infrastructure will not allow this.

The HICs might not want to invest in the LICs as education costs are high and it takes a lot of time to see results.

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## Timeline of Events

2019, *December* – first COVID-19 case in Wuhan, China. Wuhan goes in complete lockdown

2020, *March* – large parts of Europe go into lockdown

2020, *February* – large part of the world goes into lockdown

2020, *June* – temporary re-opening of schools

2020, *November* – another almost worldwide lockdown

2021, *February* – some countries are re-opening schools based on successful vaccination programs

Some of these dates are different for different countries, since every country could decide on their restrictions themselves. Therefore, please keep in mind that these do not apply to all countries!

## Resolution

When composing a resolution, a delegate should carefully consider their country's perspective and opinion on the matter. Having read this research report is a good starting point for your research. Try to think of ways that offer a solution for all countries involved to reduce the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. Remember to focus on the issue concerning the lesser-developed countries but do not forget to include the developed countries as well. Make sure the measures are realistic and achievable. Additionally, you should keep in mind that different countries have different policies, and keep the global differences in mind. These differences might be economic, however, they are also largely cultural. Make sure to research your country in detail, and keep in mind that you are speaking as if representing that nation. Therefore, make sure to have done some research about your country's policies before joining the conference.

## Links and Sources

Save the Children:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/save-our-education-report/>

The WHO:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-schools>

[https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/interactive-timeline?gclid=Cj0KCQiAst2BBhDJARIsAGo2ldXm8qKmWi1G0LbtiTNbcx0Z0tUM9awNIGJDdbxpmdXcd\\_MaQ5fOWSAaAoV5EALw\\_wcB#!](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/interactive-timeline?gclid=Cj0KCQiAst2BBhDJARIsAGo2ldXm8qKmWi1G0LbtiTNbcx0Z0tUM9awNIGJDdbxpmdXcd_MaQ5fOWSAaAoV5EALw_wcB#!)

Leiden University Law blog

<https://leidenlawblog.nl/articles/ensuring-the-right-to-education-in-times-of-covid-19>

