

EDUCATION ACROSS ALL BORDERS

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Education is a necessity and a right that all must be given. It should be accessible to everyone, child, young and old, man or woman, across race, ethnicity, and socio-economic standing. It should be an equal ground where everyone is free to learn and acquire knowledge and development. As such, no one should be left behind. However, throughout recent years, the daunting reality that access to quality education is especially elusive to some has become clearer than ever.

It is a well-known fact those living in poverty has little to no access to quality education and the opportunities it comes with. But apart from those marginalized, the needs of a certain group of learners are falling into deaf ears. Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners refer to students who suffer from disadvantages in physical, behavioral, intellectual, emotional, and social capacities (UNESCO). These children require a lot more assistance and close monitoring to ensure that they are able to meet the set educational standards and competencies. However, there is a global shortage of qualified special needs educators on top of policymakers failing to address related concerns. Educators who specialize in dealing with special needs children, like those of the autistic spectrum, require far more intensive training, longer patience and understanding, and creative education facilitation abilities. They are key figures in ensuring that millions of these children have an equal chance to thrive and succeed in education.

Studies also revealed that more than half of school districts suffer from the lack of educational needs teachers in the United States alone. This shortage is felt in a greater magnitude by high-poverty schools, especially in developing countries. Low-income and

smaller rural schools find it especially hard to hire qualified SEN teachers due to a lack of funding, equipment, learning materials, and specialized educational policies. There is also the concern of job mismatch due to hiring underprepared educators brought by band-aid solutions of provisional and alternative programs.

This scarcity should be addressed and treated as a priority by policymakers, governments, and education stakeholders. Educational systems and plans should consider the needs of SEN learners and educators and be geared towards long-term solutions to the problems. Educational equity should be ensured without compromising the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the learning opportunities of every student.

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