BROKEN CHALK

Submission to the United Nations OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

CALL FOR INPUT | OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Promoting Human rights impact of business enterprises in the occupied Input for a report on promoting human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals through transparent, accountable and efficient public service delivery.

Submitting Organization: BROKEN CHALK

November 2023

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Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 that monitors and minimises worldwide human rights violations in education. We aim to promote universal and equal access to education for all.

We encourage and support achieving societal peace with our international sponsors and partners by advocating for intercultural tolerance, preventing radicalism and polarisation, and tackling educational inequalities.

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1. What are the main challenges identified in your country/region about public service delivery? Please address both institutional and practical barriers in your response.

India

- The main challenges with regards to education as a public service delivery include marginalisation of communities, funding in schools, public-private partnership model, capacity within educational institutions, quality standards, student-teacher ratio and lack of infrastructure are commonly encountered.
- Marginalised groups include those that face caste-based discrimination. This is experienced by students, faculty members and other workers in the educational sector. There is a high suicide rate among those who belong to marginalised communities in higher educational institutions. Rohith Vemula's death is one such case. A Dalit PhD scholar who committed suicide as a result of caste-based discrimination.[1] In a statement made by Dharmendra Pradhan[2], Union Minister of Education, 122 students from higher education institutions committed suicide between 2014 and 2021. All of these students belonged to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes(OBCs) communities.
- The Indian legal system does protect against caste-based discrimination through four central legislations – the Constitution of India, Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and its Rules and Prohibition of Employment as a Manual Scavenger and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. Despite the legal remedies that are available to victims of caste-based discrimination, the effects of caste continue to persist. There only seems to be a superficial understanding of the caste hegemony.
- The pandemic further highlights the issues faced by the student population in India. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 does not consider a concrete framework for marginalised communities. Those who live in poor or rural areas, refugees, girls, and persons with disabilities have to bear the brunt of the pandemic and drop out of school. The National Education Policy does mention implementing a holistic learning process through digital learning, especially for marginalised communities. However, it is critical to realise that marginalised communities face many issues, such as uninterrupted electricity supply and poor access to digital devices and technology.[3] In a study[4] that was conducted, it was estimated that 95.5% of the participants did not have access to a laptop for online classes, 16% did not have smartphones, and a total of 19.5% of the participant students did not have access to internet services. These problems were

[1] Engage | Economic & Political Weekly. "Rohith Vemula: Foregrounding Caste Oppression in Indian Higher Education Institutions." *Engage | Economic & Political Weekly.* September 7, 2021. https://www.epw.in/engage/article/rohith-vemula-foregrounding-caste-oppression

[2] Mungekar, Dr. Bhalchandra. "Data on caste-related deaths at educational institutions is telling." *Hindustan Times.* March 9, 2023. https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/data-on-caste-related-deaths-at-educational-institutes-is-telling-101678303267238.html

[3] Child Rights and You (CRY). "A Review of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*." Child Rights and You (CRY).* August 28, 2023. https://www.cry.org/blog/a-review-of-the-national-education-policy-nep-2020/

[4] Rannaware, A., Shaikh, U., Gaidhane, A., Choudhari, S. G., & Zilate, S. (2022). Challenges and Barriers for Accessing Online Education Amongst School Children in an Urban Slum Area of Pune, India. *Cureus*, *14*(9), e29419. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.29419, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9586493/

widespread among students from urban slum areas and those belonging to lower socioeconomic classes. In the absence of this, the essential purpose of universal education, as promised by the government through the National Education Policy, is absent. The NEP is silent on a timeline for the concerned authorities to carry out these plans.

Netherlands

- The first challenge is the teacher shortage, causing a practical barrier to the equal delivery of quality education. In the academic year of 2021-2022, primary education experienced a lack of 9.2%, specialised primary education a shortage of 15.6%, secondary education a deficit of 23.1% and specialised secondary education a need of 9.7%. Compared to the preceding year, the scarcity was exacerbated except for technical secondary education.[5] The insufficiency has repercussions for learning opportunities through class disruptions, employment of inadequately qualified instructors, and discontinuing of certain subjects.[6] This impacts students disparately: schools in larger cities with a more complex student population face higher shortages than the average percentage.[7]
- Second, disparities stemming from varying socio-economic backgrounds, prejudices, and discriminatory practices continue to have an impact on equal learning opportunities for students. Existing policies have proven insufficient in addressing root causes and effects, implying an institutional barrier hinders addressing this complex problem with practical consequences for students.[8] COVID-19 uncovered existing inequalities: some students lacked essential resources for online education, such as a laptop or a quiet study room, while others could not receive support from their caregivers with their schoolwork.[9] Students with a migrant background or with caregivers from lower-income groups experienced difficulties. After COVID-19, inequity continues. For example, the graduation rate of students with a non-Western migration background is 10% lower in the two higher levels of secondary education (i.e., *havo* and *vwo*) than the rest of the student population. It is also important to note that asylum-seeking children newly arrived in the Netherlands are on the waiting list, meaning students are not able to start

[5] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 30-31. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[6] Onderwijsraad. (2023). Schaarste schuurt. Onderwijsraad. 7. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/06/29/schaarste-schuurt

[7] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 30. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[8] Nederlands Jeugdinstituut. (n.d.). Kansengelijkheid in het Onderwijs. NJI. https://www.nji.nl/kansengelijkheid-in-het-onderwijs/wat-is-kansenongelijkheid-in-het-onderwijs

[9] Nederlands Jeugdinstituut. (n.d.). Kansengelijkheid in het Onderwijs. NJI. https://www.nji.nl/kansengelijkheid-in-het-onderwijs/wat-is-kansenongelijkheid-in-het-onderwijs

school within the first three months after arrival.[10] According to experts, the teacher shortage combined with growth in new students hinders access.[11]

- A third practical challenge revolves around the mental well-being of students, which interferes with their education. Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, mental health deteriorated. Other contributing factors include stress, difficult school work, high expectations and concerns about the future. Students, especially female students, have reported more emotional, behavioural, and focus problems. In tertiary education, between 20 and 25% of students reported having poor mental health, while 44% of students contend with psychological disorders.[12]
- Finally, the Caribbean Netherlands encounter specific practical challenges. The delivery of quality education is affected by multilingualism: the instruction language is not always students' or teachers' native language. Attempts have been made to address this: St. Eustatius, for example, switched to teaching in the native language of students in 2014.[13] However, this reinforces another problem on the islands: Caribbean Dutch students' proficiency in the Dutch language is often insufficient to access tertiary education in the European Netherlands.[14] Moreover, the Caribbean Netherlands confronts challenges concerning the delivery of special education services. Scale issues and a lack of awareness regarding the diverse needs of students underlie this.[15]

New Zealand

- The main challenges to education as a public service delivery include intercultural education, indigenous communities and its educational policies, child poverty, COVID-19 educational implications and challenges in disability education initiatives.
- New Zealand had a bicultural educational system in place. However, non-European migrants have been predominantly overlooked when drafting this bicultural system. Reports by Education Counts and other platforms within the country are relatively silent about minority communities. Most policies, notices and publications published by the Ministry of Education solely focused on the issues of the Māori and Pasifika communities. It is relatively silent on the other ethnic communities present within New

[10] Van Nuland, Merijn. (2023). Schakelklassen voor gevluchte jongeren vrijwel allemaal vol. Trouw. https://www.trouw.nl/onderwijs/schakelklassen-voor-gevluchte-jongeren-vrijwel-allemaal-vol~ba4da307/

[11] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 23-25. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[12] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 19. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[13] Caribisch Netwerk. (2014). Engels als instructietaal 'ingrijpend'. Caribisch Netwerk. https://caribischnetwerk.ntr.nl/2014/06/19/engels-als-instructietaal-statia-ingrijpend/

[14] Buys, Marga, 2021. "Evaluatie Tweede Onderwijsagenda Caribisch Nederland 2017-2020). Eerste Kamer. 20. https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20210708/evaluatie_tweede_onderwijsagenda/document3/f=/vlkch545eltd_opgemaakt.pdf

[15] De Kinderombudsman. 2021. Als je het ons vraagt: Kinderen op de BES-eilanden. Kinderombudsman. 10-11. https://www.kinderombudsman.nl/system/files/publications/2021-Publicatie%20aanmaken/Rapport-Als-je-het-ons-vraagt-onderzoek-kinderen-op-de-BES.pdf

Zealand.[16] The absence of a top-down diversity approach indicates a diminished effort for inclusivity of the rather minority populations and targets only a limited number of ethnocultural groups in all aspects, including education.

- In addition to this, the majority of indigenous communities face their own set of challenges. The New Zealand Education Review Office reported[17] that despite guidelines in place, there were few schools to establish a positive relationship between the Māori and Pasifika communities. Rigorous analysis of achievement data strategic targets to increase and improve achievements of the Māori community was not conducted within many schools.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has set deadlines, which are a new requirement. Still, universities are reluctant to set deadlines as there is a chance these Māori and Pacific students may not be successful. In 2022, the overall course pass rate in universities for Pākehā students was 88%, Māori students was 80% and 69% for Pasifika students.[18] University persons have also mentioned that the TEC needs to enforce the targets they have drafted and provide the universities with the required funding. Disparities continue to be present because of the absence of funding, poor implementation and lack of inclusion of these communities, leading to the downfall of progress. Professionals within the universities continue to be unsure of the regularity of receiving funds, which leads to the possibility of being unable to ensure parity among these disadvantaged groups.[19]

Venezuela

- Venezuela's enduring economic crisis has left an indelible mark on its educational system. Characterised by hyperinflation, currency devaluation, and a scarcity of resources, this crisis has taken a toll on schools. Beyond crumbling infrastructure, students often attend classes without desks or chairs due to severe funding shortages. The scarcity of textbooks, school supplies, and even necessities like paper and pencils has become the norm, significantly compromising the quality of education provided to the students.
- Additionally, Venezuela has suffered from a "brain drain," with professionals and academics seeking better prospects abroad. This exodus has resulted in a shortage of educators, forcing schools to hire inexperienced or unqualified individuals. The loss of capable educators and scholars has had a detrimental impact on the country's ability to conduct research and contribute to global knowledge. During the three years leading up to 2021, a study conducted by the prestigious Andrés Bello Catholic University (Ucab) in Caracas, the country's top higher education institution, revealed that 166,000

[16] Salahshour, Neda. "A Critique of New Zealand's Exclusive Approach to Intercultural Education." New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies vol. 56,1 (2021): 111–128. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-020-00179-9

[17] Salahshour, Neda. "A Critique of New Zealand's Exclusive Approach to Intercultural Education." *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* vol. 56,1 (2021): 111–128. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-020-00179-9

[18] Gerritsen, John. "Universities reluctant to set deadlines to ensure parity for Māori and Pasifika students." *New Zealand Herald.* August 31, 2023. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/universities-reluctant-to-set-deadlines-to-ensure-parity-for-maori-and-pacific-students/FNZX3ANE6ZAUZOQDKQTKGGXHF4/

[19] Gerritsen, John. "Universities reluctant to set deadlines to ensure parity for Māori and Pasifika students." *New Zealand Herald.* August 31, 2023. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/universities-reluctant-to-set-deadlines-to-ensure-parity-for-maori-and-pacific-students/FNZX3ANE6ZAUZOQDKQTKGGXHF4/

teachers, constituting 25 per cent of the total and 1.2 million students, accounting for 15 per cent of the enrolled population at the time, left the education system.

- Political interference in the educational system has also been a pressing concern. The government's influence over the curriculum, textbooks, and instructional materials has led to the dissemination of ideologically motivated content, stifling academic freedom and critical thinking. Professors critical of the government have faced intimidation, persecution, and even termination, further eroding the quality of education.

- Declining educational quality is evident through decreasing test scores and high dropout rates, reflecting an overall deterioration in the education system. Students' performance on international assessments like the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has steadily declined due to inadequate monitoring, review, and evaluation procedures
- Inequality and limited access to quality education persist, with rural areas and lower socioeconomic groups facing barriers to educational opportunities. Marginalised communities, including indigenous populations, confront additional challenges in accessing education due to geographical and cultural factors (World Education Blog, 2020; The Wilson Center, 2019).
- Furthermore, corruption within the education system has garnered significant media attention. Cases of financial mismanagement, bribery, and embezzlement by administrators and educational officials have further eroded public trust. In the years leading up to 2022, there were reports of widespread financial mismanagement and corruption within the Venezuelan education system. One notable case involved allegations of bribery and embezzlement by a high-ranking education official accused of diverting funds meant for school infrastructure improvements into their accounts.

2. What are the examples of good practices and approaches to overcoming identified challenges to providing public services?

India

- The Government of India has unique practices and approaches regarding education as a public service delivery.
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) https://www.nios.ac.in – NIOS is an educational organisation which imparts education by focusing on open and distance learning modes. It conducts examinations for the grant of certificates up to the pre-degree level, which is on par with other National Boards in the country. It is recognised as the most extensive open schooling system in the world.
- SWAYAM https://swayam.gov.in – This is an initiative taken up by the Government of India. It focuses on access, equity and quality. It ensures that teaching and learning resources are accessible to all, including disadvantaged groups. To break the digital divide among students of various communities so that these students, too, may be included in the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

Netherlands

- One of the good practices identified to overcome challenges is the Education Agendas (i.e., *de Onderwijsagenda's*), policy programs addressing challenges in the Caribbean Netherlands. Over the past 12 years, the Dutch central government, local island governments, and educational institutions on the islands have collaborated to craft policies that address the region's specific problems and to create context-specific solutions for the islands. These efforts aim to ensure that Caribbean Dutch students enjoy the same educational opportunities as their European Dutch peers. This approach has been beneficial as the quality of education reached the basic level for all schools on the islands. Nevertheless, issues such as multilingualism and special education persist, prompting the development of a third Education Agenda.[20] Unlike the first two agendas, this policy program will address each island individually, signifying a more profound commitment to context-sensitive policy-making.[21]
- To address the teacher shortage, monitoring and policies to increase the number of teachers have been common practice. Examples include offering the same wage to primary and secondary school teachers as primary teachers used to receive lower salaries and lateral entry into teachers' courses.[22] However, the policies have not yielded sufficient positive results. As the teacher shortage is expected to be structural and further increase after 2030, possibilities to go beyond standard solutions are being researched. The proposals are not yet transformed into new policy agendas and laws but include options such as changing the school curriculum and deploying other professionals in schools.[23] This research shows a commitment to research-based and long-term policy-making.[24]
- To increase equality of opportunities, one of the good practices of the Dutch government is the Equal Opportunities Alliance (i.e., *Gelijke Kansen Alliantie*). This is a cooperation between the Ministry of Education, other ministries, municipalities, schools, homes and the environment to tackle inequality of opportunities. In this holistic approach, education has been assigned a central role.[25] For example, attention is given to the professional development of teachers working in schools with a complex student population.[26] There is also attention to the specificity of local contexts: local

[20] Buys, Marga, 2021. "Evaluatie Tweede Onderwijsagenda Caribisch Nederland 2017-2020). Eerste Kamer. 20. https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20210708/evaluatie_tweede_onderwijsagenda/document3/f=/vlkch545eltd_opgemaakt.pdf

[21] Redactie. 2023. Bonaire en Saba ondertekenen Onderwijsagenda met Nederland. Bonaire. https://bonaire.nu/2023/07/06/bonaire-en-saba-ondertekenen-onderwijsagenda-met-nederland/

[22] Onderwijsraad. (2023). Schaarste schuurt. Onderwijsraad. 16. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/06/29/schaarste-schuurt

[23] Onderwijsraad. (2023). Schaarste schuurt. Onderwijsraad. 38-42. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/06/29/schaarste-schuurt

[24] Onderwijsraad. (2023). Schaarste schuurt. Onderwijsraad. 13. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/06/29/schaarste-schuurt

[25] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Over het programma Gelijke Kansen. Gelijke Kansen. https://www.gelijke-kansen.nl/over-gelijke-kansen

[26] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Beleid kansengelijkheid. Gelijke Kansen. https://www.gelijke-kansen.nl/over-gelijke-kansen/beleid

governments are involved in developing policies to address specific problems of their municipalities.[27]

New Zealand

- New Zealand is the first country to implement two national curricula. This is a massive recognition and acknowledgement of the indigenous communities in New Zealand. It is also noteworthy that the curricula are not a mere translation of each other but consider the stakeholders' needs and aspirations. Te Whāriki curriculum framework has two pathways. *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo* is an indigenous approach which is deeply rooted in te reo Māori for Te Kōhanga Reo. *Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum* is a bicultural framework for early childhood services. Both frameworks are distinct and hold equal significance in their respective contexts.[28]
- In the Māori medium of education, students are taught at least 51% of the education in Māori language. In English-medium schools, students learn te reo Māori as a language subject. The Māori language is also used in English-medium schools for teaching curriculum subjects up to 50% of the time. The English-medium schools follow the New Zealand Curriculum, whereas the Māori-medium schools follow a curriculum based on Māori philosophies.[29]

Venezuela

- **Education Law (LOE):** Enacted in 2009, the Education Law (Ley Orgánica de Educación, LOE) was introduced to promote inclusive and equitable education. It strongly emphasised providing free and mandatory education to all children and young people up to the age of eighteen, underscoring the government's commitment to universal education.
- **Bolivarian Mission for the Transformation of Education (MBT):** Established in 2003, the Misión Bolivariana de Transformación de la Educación (MBT) aimed to enhance educational quality, expand access, and offer free education at all levels. It also included provisions for scholarships in higher education and adult education.
- **Educational Content Guidelines:** Educational Content Guidelines: The government has established guidelines for educational content to ensure alignment with its political philosophy. These guidelines aim to promote a specific worldview and uphold academic standards that support the values and priorities of the government.
- **Higher Education Law (LOES):** Enacted in 2010, the Higher Education Law (Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior, LOES) regulated the Venezuelan higher education system, providing a legal framework for establishing new universities and managing existing ones.

[27] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Over het programma Gelijke Kansen. Gelijke Kansen. https://www.gelijke-kansen.nl/over-gelijke-kansen
[28] Te Whāriki Online. "Te Whāriki Online". https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz
[29] Ministry of Education. "Education in New Zealand." https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/our-role-and-our-people/education-in-nz/#Early

- Social Missions for Education: The government initiated various social missions to address educational challenges, offering meals, school materials, and support to vulnerable students. One notable example is the "Bolivarian Schools" program, which provides underprivileged students with free textbooks, uniforms, and daily meals, alleviating the financial burdens on their families and ensuring that students have access to essential educational resources.
- University Scholarships: The government provided university scholarships, particularly to students from underprivileged backgrounds, to enhance access to higher education. One notable example is the "Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Scholarship" program, which offers financial assistance to poor students, covering tuition fees, books, and living expenses.

3. To what extent does corruption play a role in excluding individuals and households from accessing public services? How does corruption affect the delivery of public services to population groups in your country?

India

- As per the Global Corruption Barometer Asia[30], 2020, published by Transparency International, India has the highest bribery rate (39%) in Asia. The complicated bureaucratic process, unnecessary red tape, and regulatory frameworks with unclear processes force Indian citizens to resort to other means. 50% said the bribe was paid because the services would only be provided to them. The additional 32% used personal connections to secure services they would not have otherwise received.
- The National Education Policy has acknowledged the critical challenges faced by girls in the field of education. In response, the “Gender Inclusion Fund” sought to provide equitable quality education for all girls and transgender students. However, there is an absence of any clear direction provided in the policy regarding implementing the fund.[31] Allocation of the funds between the Centre and the concerned states requires clear mechanisms; otherwise, it could lead to the misappropriation of the funds.
- The Jharkhand Scholarship Scam[32] is a typical example of misappropriation of funds. This centrally funded pre-matric scholarship scheme aims to help minority families. However, through a probe conducted by the Minority Affairs Ministry, it was alleged that a nexus of intermediaries, banks, schools and, most importantly, state employees diverted the funds.
- A lack of streamlining of the processes coupled with bribery and nepotism does not allow different population groups to access the services. Lack of preventive measures makes these essential public services ineffective, and as seen from the examples mentioned, it is minority communities that tend to be impacted the most.

[30] Vrushi, Jon. “Global Corruption Barometer Asia 2020. *“Transparency International”*. November 2020. https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/GCB_Asia_2020_Report_Web_final.pdf

[31] Child Rights and You (CRY). “A Review of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.*” Child Rights and You (CRY)*. August 28, 2023. https://www.cry.org/blog/a-review-of-the-national-education-policy-nep-2020/

[32] The Wire. “Pre-Matric Scholarship Scam: Jharkhand Govt Suspends Key Official”. The Wire. January 19, 2021. https://thewire.in/government/jharkhand-dhanbad-district-welfare-official-pre-matric-scholarship-scam

Netherlands

- The Caribbean population of the Netherlands has endured significant and persistent financial hardship and disadvantages. While the Education Agendas have been identified as a positive practice, poverty remains a pressing issue in the Caribbean Netherlands. An alarming 30% of the population in the Caribbean Netherlands lives below the poverty line, a stark contrast to poverty levels in the European Netherlands.[33] As poverty affects children and their education, it is essential to analyse this problem further and uncover the root causes.
- A root cause is Dutch policy-making. Residents of the Caribbean Netherlands face lower minimum wages, even though the region's cost of living is higher. Furthermore, inhabitants of the Caribbean Netherlands do not have access to the same financial help available to European Dutch individuals because living expenses in the Caribbean are significantly underestimated. This situation is not found in the European Netherlands, where the Subsidy Law (i.e., *Toeslagenwet*) ensures that financial help is adjusted to the actual cost of living.[34]
- In 2021, this injustice has been addressed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. These disparities were acknowledged between the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands as deplorable, calling for action against discrimination and the pursuit of equality. Furthermore, it is against Article 20 of the Dutch constitution – the Dutch government shall guarantee social security – and Article 11 of the ICESCR.[35]
- Finally, poverty levels affect children and their education. Children in poverty can have difficulty in schooling because of caregivers' stress levels and the effects of this on their mental health. Furthermore, poverty means children might not have access to healthy food, books, a laptop, or a quiet place to study, affecting school success. Additionally, caregivers might be less able to support their children, affecting their education. [36]

New Zealand

- As stated earlier, university employees are hesitant to implement activities for those from marginalised communities. This is mainly because of the lack of efficient education measures being implemented by the concerned government authorities.[37] Despite the

[33] NOS Nieuws. (2023). Derde van Caribisch Nederland onder armoedegrens, pleidooi voor hoger minimumloon. NOS. https://nos.nl/artikel/2493122-derde-van-caribisch-nederland-onder-armoedegrens-pleidooi-voor-hoger-minimumloon

[34] Haringsma, Phaedra. (2022). Zo wordt ongelijkheid tussen Europees en Caribisch Nederland al jaren in stand gehouden. De Correspondent. https://decorrespondent.nl/13713/zo-wordt-ongelijkheid-tussen-europees-en-caribisch-nederland-al-jaren-in-stand-gehouden/2f84b44f-db88-0d7c-029d-9c1d00ae02b3

[35] Haringsma, Phaedra. (2022). Zo wordt ongelijkheid tussen Europees en Caribisch Nederland al jaren in stand gehouden. De Correspondent. https://decorrespondent.nl/13713/zo-wordt-ongelijkheid-tussen-europees-en-caribisch-nederland-al-jaren-in-stand-gehouden/2f84b44f-db88-0d7c-029d-9c1d00ae02b3

[36] Nederlands Jeugdinstituut. (N.d). De invloed van armoede op schoolprestaties. NJI. https://www.nji.nl/armoede/invloed-op-schoolprestatiesde

[37] Gerritsen, John. "Universities reluctant to set deadlines to ensure parity for Māori and Pasifika students." *New Zealand Herald.* August 31, 2023. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/universities-reluctant-to-set-deadlines-to-ensure-parity-for-maori-and-pacific-students/FNZX3ANE6ZAUZOQDKQTKGGXHF4/

many promises, laws and policies put forth by the government authorities, the irregularity of the funds being received by the universities makes essential public service delivery such as education inaccessible for the underprivileged groups.

Venezuela

- Corruption involving the misallocation of funds for internet access has hindered the expansion of internet connectivity, particularly in areas with predominantly minority populations. Despite government promises to provide online education resources, embezzlement and mismanagement have led to an unequal distribution of funds, severely impacting minority students. In 2020, officials within the education system were embroiled in a corruption scandal, diverting funds intended for internet access into personal accounts depriving students from low-income and minority backgrounds of essential online learning tools (Transparency International - "Corruption in the Education Sector").
- Corruption within the education system and a lack of government investment have resulted in inadequate internet infrastructure in remote indigenous and rural areas. The misappropriation of resources has hindered government policies to improve infrastructure in underserved regions. Indigenous students in remote areas, including those from minority backgrounds, have grappled with significant educational setbacks during the pandemic due to a lack of internet infrastructure stemming from corruption and resource misallocation, widening the academic gap (Human Rights Watch - "Indigenous Peoples").
- Corruption within the education system perpetuates disparities by affecting the allocation of resources for internet access and digital learning. Minority students, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, face a double burden, lacking both access to resources and enforcement of policies meant to bridge the digital divide. Ethnic minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, already confronting barriers to quality education, are further disadvantaged when corruption obstructs access to online learning, with reports of resources intended for digital inclusion initiatives being misused. One notable policy that was in place during this time was the "Digital Inclusion for All" program, which aimed to provide underprivileged communities with access to digital resources and online education. However, instances of corruption hindered the effective implementation of this policy (Global Witness - "Venezuela's Dark Days: Energy, Human Rights, and Integrity").
- Corruption within the education system often results in the unequal distribution of resources for online learning, causing minority students to lack essential technology. Discrimination within resource allocation hampers their access to the internet and digital devices. Corruption and mismanagement lead to discriminatory resource allocation for online learning, denying minority students access to essential online educational resources. There have been cases where resources designated for underprivileged students were redirected for personal gain (Amnesty International - "The Case of Venezuela: Attacks on the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas")

- Vulnerable children, particularly those from minority backgrounds, face numerous challenges in accessing internet services and digital devices for online education.

Vulnerable children from minority backgrounds, including those with disabilities or living in remote areas, often lack access to the internet and necessary digital devices, preventing them from fully participating in online learning. (United Nations - "Human Rights Council Discusses Human Rights in Venezuela and Yemen").

4. What percentage of eligible individuals and households do not claim and benefit from public services in your country (non-take up)? What barriers hinder them from accessing public services to which they are entitled? How can non-take-up be reduced?

India

- In a study[38] that was conducted, it was estimated that 95.5% of the participants did not have access to a laptop for online classes, 16% did not have smartphones, and 19.5% of the participant students did not have access to internet services. The Government of India appears to lack resonance with the prevailing socioeconomic and humanitarian issues that marginalised communities face. Issues such as uninterrupted electricity supply and poor access to digital devices and technology are common problems within the community.[39]
- While India has implemented government programs such as SWAYAM[40] to focus on access, equity and quality, the problems the target groups face are yet to be addressed entirely. This makes the benefits provided to them inaccessible.

Netherlands

- In the Netherlands, education is compulsory for individuals aged five until 16. These legal requirements safeguard the right to education and help monitor access, enrolment, and attendance.
- Despite this, during the academic year of 2021-2022, 10,240 individuals within this age group were not enrolled in an educational institution – almost doubling compared to 2020-2021.[41] Out of this group, over 3,181 individuals remained unenrolled for three months. While percentages are not provided, the five to 16-year-old population included 2,235,252 individuals on January 1, 2022.[42] Using this figure, it can be deduced that approximately 0.46% of the compulsory education age group experienced a period of non-enrolment.
- The main reason for the enormous increase during this academic year is the influx of Ukrainian refugees, including approximately 20,000 children. Municipalities did not have

[38] Rannaware, A., Shaikh, U., Gaidhane, A., Choudhari, S. G., & Zilate, S. (2022). Challenges and Barriers for Accessing Online Education Amongst School Children in an Urban Slum Area of Pune, India. *Cureus*, *14*(9), e29419. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.29419, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9586493/

[39] Child Rights and You (CRY). "A Review of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020." *Child Rights and You (CRY)*. August 28, 2023. https://www.cry.org/blog/a-review-of-the-national-education-policy-nep-2020/

[40] https://swayam.gov.in

[41] Wiersma, Dennis. (2023). Bijlage 9 Verzuimcijfers schooljaar 2021/2022. Rijksoverheid. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/03/31/bijlage-9-verzuimcijfers-schooljaar-2021-2022

[42] CBS. (2023). Bevolking op 1 januari end gemiddeld; geslacht, leeftijd en regio. Open Data. https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/nl/dataset/03759ned/table?dl=39E0B

the resources to educate all children, and caregivers sometimes lacked the necessary information to enrol their children in schools.[43] In such cases, non-take-up can be reduced by ensuring sufficient education and adequate information to caregivers.

- Moreover, at the start of the 2021 school year, 7,839 children, constituting approximately 0.33%, received exemptions from compulsory education under Article 5 of the Compulsory Education Law (i.e., *Leerplichtwet*). This number increases every year. The main reasons for exemptions are psychological problems, instances of bullying, placement on waiting lists for special education, lack of attention to students' concerns by school, and familial issues.[44] While certain exemptions are in the child's best interest, research indicates that some children are being away from school against their own interests. These children become invisible to monitoring, and it is unclear what type of education they receive. This might harm their right to education.[45]
- For individuals older than 16, specific statistics for non-enrolment or exemption appear to be unavailable. Nevertheless, students in vocational secondary schools do not experience equal opportunities. There is a positive correlation between caregivers' income and educational levels and the success of students' academic trajectory.[46] A significant majority of students starting tertiary education have caregivers who have pursued higher forms of education or possess high incomes. Data represents this: in higher professional education, 32.9% of students had parents in the top 20% income bracket, while in university education, this figure was 49.5%. In higher professional education, 48.5% of students had at least one parent with higher education, compared to 74% in university education.[47] Background forms a structural barrier to success in education and access to tertiary education.[48]

New Zealand

- During COVID-19, it was observed that disabled people were not given appropriate treatment. Disabled people felt that they were not included in the decision-making process. Those persons chosen to represent these communities handled including them as an afterthought and were merely consultative. It has also been noted that disability

[43] Wiersma, Dennis. (2023). Bijlage 9 Verzuimcijfers schooljaar 2021/2022. Rijksoverheid. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/03/31/bijlage-9-verzuimcijfers-schooljaar-2021-2022

[44] Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport. (n.d.). Vrijstelling van leerplicht. Regelhulp. https://www.regelhulp.nl/onderwerpen/onderwijs-en-zorg/leerplicht-en-leerrecht/leerplichtontheffing

[45] Redactie. (2023). Steeds meer ouders hebben vrijstelling waardoor hun kind niet naar school hoeft. NU. https://www.nu.nl/binnenland/6260431/steeds-meer-ouders-hebben-vrijstelling-waardoor-hun-kind-niet-naar-school-hoeft.html

[46] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 129. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[47] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 157. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[48] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 153. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

data collection during COVID-19 was not a routine practice.[49] This is a crucial step as it helps the government prepare to implement public service delivery for future humanitarian emergencies properly.

- Furthermore, New Zealand is a signatory to the Disability Convention, which affirms under Article 24 equitable, quality and inclusive education to disabled people. However, during Alert Levels 3 and 4, it was noted that fair access and quality education were not provided to disabled people despite the many policies in place.[50] This, in turn, exacerbates other difficulties in a later stage, especially concerning employment opportunities where disabled people already face the issue of underrepresentation in the workforce.

Venezuela

- In Venezuelan public education, many qualified people and households do not use or receive assistance from these programs. This is primarily due to the nation's social problems, economic disasters, and political instability, which have created barriers to accessing high-quality education.
- The continuous political unrest in Venezuela has resulted in a failing educational system, limiting a large segment of the population's access to quality education. This issue is underscored by actual cases and credible sources that highlight the challenges faced by the education sector in the country.
- To address these multifaceted challenges, Venezuela can consider a comprehensive approach encompassing anti-corruption measures, effective resource allocation, streamlined identification processes, economic reforms, alignment with international standards, establishing social safety nets, and implementing education access initiatives. These strategies can help improve education access and address associated issues concerning necessities.

1. Corruption has significantly affected the education sector in Venezuela, leading to the misallocation of resources and funds meant for public services, including education. Venezuela can consider implementing and enforcing anti-corruption laws and policies involving transparent budget allocation, strict oversight, and accountability mechanisms to combat this issue.
2. Privatizing essential resources in Venezuela, such as water and utilities, has led to inaccessibility, affecting education and access to clean water, food, and shelter. Existing legislation allows for the nationalisation of key sectors to enhance public accessibility, and Venezuela must strengthen the enforcement of nationalisation laws.
3. Complex identification and documentation processes can hinder individuals from accessing public services, especially marginalised communities. Streamlining these processes will simplify access and improve access to various services, including education.

[49] Ombudsman New Zealand. "Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic." *Ombudsman.parliament.nz.* January, 2021. https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Making%20Disability%20Rights%20Real%20in%20a%20Pandemic%202020.pdf

[50] Ombudsman New Zealand. "Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic." *Ombudsman.parliament.nz.* January, 2021. https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Making%20Disability%20Rights%20Real%20in%20a%20Pandemic%202020.pdf

4. Addressing Venezuela's economic crisis is pivotal to improving public service provision, including education, access to food, and shelter. The country needs to stabilise its economy and allocate resources effectively to promote investment in education.
5. Venezuela must align its laws and policies with international standards, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4 (Quality Education), to promote inclusivity, equity, and human rights.
6. Establishing social safety nets, such as food, water, and shelter programs, is crucial to encourage vulnerable communities to access public services, including education. Strengthening the enforcement of these laws will help establish social safety nets to support vulnerable students.
7. Beyond traditional education, Venezuela can implement community-based programs, mobile education units, and distance learning options to reach individuals facing barriers to accessing conventional education services. Prioritising the effective implementation of these laws and policies will facilitate education access initiatives.

Broken Chalk suggests the following ways in which on-take-up can be reduced within the countries.

1. Systemically monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce the learning gap and make necessary adjustments to ensure success.
2. Provide communities impacted by educational disadvantages with effective remedies and concrete measures to safeguard their educational rights.
3. The Ministry of Education should work on strategies to improve the access and quality of home-based learning for disadvantaged communities.
4. Establish systematic monetary assistance for universities and schools to carry out initiatives to guarantee equality.

5. Please refer to challenges and good practices of public service delivery to persons belonging to groups in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation, including persons living in poverty, women and girls; children and youth; ethnic, national and linguistic minorities; persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples; migrants; and older persons.

India

- The Government of India has unique practices and approaches regarding education as a public service delivery.
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) https://www.nios.ac.in – NIOS is an educational organisation which imparts education by focusing on open and distance learning modes. It conducts examinations for the grant of certificates up to the pre-degree level, which is on par with other National Boards in the country. It is recognised as the most extensive open schooling system in the world.
- SWAYAM https://swayam.gov.in – This initiative taken up by the Government of India primarily focuses on access, equity and educational quality. The initiative aims at making

teaching-learning resources accessible to all, including disadvantaged groups. This is done to break the digital divide among students of various communities. This endeavour seeks to integrate students into the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

- The practices mentioned above are provided to persons belonging to groups in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation, including persons living in poverty, women and girls; children and youth; ethnic, national and linguistic minorities; persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples; migrants; and older persons.
- These practices have a set of unique challenges. The most important is the accessibility to uninterrupted internet. Limited alignment is seen on the part of the Government of India regarding the prevailing socioeconomic and humanitarian concerns, especially concerning marginalised communities. Predominant issues within these communities encompass the availability of uninterrupted electricity supply and inadequate access to technology.[51]
- In addition to this, a report filed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council found that government colleges were rated poorly in their quality indicators, including learning, research, infrastructure, learning resources, student support and healthy practices. Further, there is an emergence of private higher educational institutions. However, this is inaccessible to those from poor-income households due to their high fees, and public higher educational institutions are broadly accessible. Still, it is in poor condition and does not offer quality education[52]. This proves detrimental to those from disadvantaged groups.

Netherlands

- As identified in the previous question, students with a less favourable socio-economic background are more vulnerable to performing poorly in schools or not accessing tertiary education than their peers from better socio-economic backgrounds. This vulnerability and inequality is further exacerbated through educational offers by private actors: students from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not have the resources to profit while their peers do.
- Another challenge contributing to inequality is the practice of providing early advice at the age of 12 for the appropriate level of schooling in secondary education, which is often strongly influenced by the student's socio-economic background. [53] Data shows, for example, that students with a migration background often receive lower initial advice from their teachers than the final test they do: this is the case for 40.2% of second-

[51] Child Rights and You (CRY). "A Review of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020." *Child Rights and You (CRY)*. August 28, 2023. https://www.cry.org/blog/a-review-of-the-national-education-policy-nep-2020/

[52] Vasanthakumar, Vishal. "Modern Challenges to the Dravidian Movement: The Question of Access and Quality of Higher Education in Tamil Nadu." *Engage | |Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 58, Issue No.29, 22 July, 2023. https://www.epw.in/engage/article/modern-challenges-dravidian-movement-question

[53] Universiteit van Amsterdam. (2022). Kansengelijkheid in het Nederlandse onderwijs. UvA. https://www.uva.nl/shared-content/faculteiten/nl/faculteit-der-maatschappij-en-gedragswetenschappen/nieuws/2022/05/kansengelijkheid-in-het-nederlandse-onderwijs.html?cb

generation migrant students and 46.6% of first-generation migrant students. For students without a migration background, this number is 36.6.[54]

- Good practices to fight inequality stemming from socio-economic backgrounds can also be identified, such as financing pre-primary and primary schools where children have a relatively high chance of falling behind in their education. These chances are estimated based on the socio-economic background of the students of each school. Schools are individually evaluated every year. [55]
- Other vulnerable groups include asylum-seeking children. The Netherlands offers education to all children within their jurisdiction, which is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the Netherlands ratified in 1995. However, information on how to access education and appropriate resources to provide this education is lacking. This is shown by the increase in non-enrolment rates of 2021-2022. Also, in emergency shelters for asylum-seekers, there are difficulties in providing education. Children have to move around between different shelters, hindering the organisation of continuing provision of education. Schools surrounding the shelters also often cannot teach the children. [56]
- Students facing mental health issues are another vulnerable group. Poor mental health is one of the reasons why students miss out on school.[57] This disproportionately affects female students. The psychological care for youth is insufficient, and waiting lists for adequate care are a prevailing concern. Since 2021, attempts have been made to reform mental health care for children, but municipalities, care facilities and the responsible ministry thus far have been unable to propose an appropriate solution.[58]
- Two other vulnerable groups can be identified in the Caribbean. First, children with special needs and children living in poverty. Students with special needs do not always have access to appropriate education, and costs might be too high if access is available.[59] This causes children to stay at home. Second, 30% of the population lives below the poverty line in the Caribbean Netherlands.[60] In question 3, it is highlighted how this vulnerability manifests itself.

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[54] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 22-25. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[55] Rijksoverheid. (n.d). Financiering aanpak onderwijsachterstanden. Rijksoverheid. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/voorschoolse-en-vroegschoolse-educatie/financiering-onderwijsachterstanden#:~:text=De%20Rijksoverheid%20geeft%20gemeenten%20geld,een%20gemeente%20is%20%E2%82%AC%2064.000.

[56] Moerland, Sophie and Ellen Kamphorst. (2022). Onderwijs voor kinderen crisisnoodopvang steeds lastiger te organiseren. NOS. https://nos.nl/artikel/2455336-onderwijs-voor-kinderen-crisisnoodopvang-steeds-lastiger-te-organiseren

[57] Ingrado. (2023). Duiding van en de noodzaak tot een aanpassing van de leerplichttelling. Open Overheid. https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-13c7513422a00709ef88b117b03844081cbf3418/pdf

[58] Nieuwsuur. (2023). Jeugdzorg faalt al sinds vorige eeuw, maar het gesprek verandert niet. NOS. https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2466309-jeugdzorg-faalt-al-sinds-vorige-eeuw-maar-het-gesprek-verandert-niet

[59] De Kinderombudsman. 2021. Als je het ons vraagt: Kinderen op de BES-eilanden. Kinderombudsman. 10-11. https://www.kinderombudsman.nl/system/files/publications/2021-Publicatie%20aanmaken/Rapport-Als-je-het-ons-vraagt-onderzoek-kinderen-op-de-BES.pdf

[60] NOS Nieuws. 2023. Derde van Caribisch Nederland onder armoedegrens, pleidooi voor hoger minimumloon. NOS. https://nos.nl/artikel/2493122-derde-van-caribisch-nederland-onder-armoedegrens-pleidooi-voor-hoger-minimumloon

New Zealand

- New Zealand has achieved a significant milestone as the first country to implement two distinct national curricula. This is a massive recognition and acknowledgement of the indigenous communities in New Zealand. It is also noteworthy that the curricula are not a mere translation of each other but consider the stakeholders' needs and aspirations. Te Whāriki curriculum framework has two pathways. *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo* is an indigenous approach which is deeply rooted in te reo Māori for Te Kōhanga Reo. *Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum* is a bicultural framework for early childhood services. Both frameworks are distinct and hold equal significance in their respective contexts.[61]
- In the Māori medium of education, students are taught at least 51% of the education in Māori language. In English-medium schools, students learn te reo Māori as a language subject. The Māori language is also used in English-medium schools for teaching curriculum subjects up to 50% of the time. The English-medium schools follow the New Zealand Curriculum, whereas the Māori-medium schools follow a curriculum based on Māori philosophies.[62]
- Employees within universities are reluctant to undertake initiatives targeted at marginalised communities. This predominantly stems from the absence of adequate educational measures enforced by the relevant government authorities.[63] The inconsistent allocation of funds to universities, despite numerous commitments, statutory regulations and policies put forth by government bodies, results in the unavailability of crucial public services delivery, notably in the realm of education for disadvantaged groups.
- It is noted that COVID-19 has led to long-term impacts on education, particularly in the case of attendance. Data clearly shows attendance has only improved to 51% by the end of 2022; in Term 2 of 2022, it was as low as 40% despite the many initiatives undertaken by the concerned authorities.[64]

Venezuela

- Poverty plays a significant role in limiting educational opportunities, as economic instability has resulted in hyperinflation and currency devaluation, making it difficult for families to afford school supplies, uniforms, and transportation. In 2021, 65.2% of the country's inhabitants lived in poverty, according to the study produced by the social investigations unit of the Universidad Catolica Andres Bello (UCAB).

[61] Te Whāriki Online. "Te Whāriki Online". https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz

[62] Ministry of Education. "Education in New Zealand." https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/our-role-and-our-people/education-in-nz/#Early

[63] Gerritsen, John. "Universities reluctant to set deadlines to ensure parity for Māori and Pasifika students." *New Zealand Herald.* August 31, 2023. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/universities-reluctant-to-set-deadlines-to-ensure-parity-for-maori-and-pacific-students/FNZX3ANE6ZAUZOQDKQTKGGXHF4/

[64] Education Review Office. " Long Covid: Ongoing Impacts of Covid-19 On Schools and Learning - Summary." *Ero.govt.nz.* June 22, 2023. https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/long-covid-ongoing-impacts-of-covid-19-on-schools-and-learning-summary

- Gender-based discrimination, affecting women and girls, further compounds the issue. Societal norms and stereotypes may limit their educational opportunities and career choices. Early pregnancies, which are relatively common in Venezuela due to a lack of comprehensive sex education and family planning resources, lead to school dropouts among young girls. According to the latest United Nations world population report, Venezuela's adolescent pregnancy rate stands at approximately 85.3 per 1,000 young individuals between the ages of 15 and 19. Additionally, many girls face challenges related to menstrual hygiene management, as a lack of sanitary facilities, hygiene products, and education about menstrual health can result in missed school days.

- Children and youth in Venezuela experience high dropout rates due to the economic crisis, forcing many of them to contribute to their family's income. Insufficient resources, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of qualified teachers have resulted in inadequate access to quality education. Since 2017, the share of households living under the poverty line in Venezuela has been surpassing 90%. In addition, more than six out of every ten families (67.97%) lived in extreme poverty in 2021.

- Ethnic, national, and linguistic minorities face discrimination in Venezuelan society, which extends to education, resulting in unequal access to quality schools and educational opportunities. Language diversity among indigenous communities can be a significant barrier to education, as educational materials and teachers may not be available in their native languages. Geographical isolation further exacerbates the challenges faced by indigenous and minority communities located in remote areas.

- Persons with disabilities encounter accessibility challenges in Venezuelan schools, as physical infrastructure is often not equipped to accommodate them. Specialised teachers and support services are often lacking, limiting their educational opportunities, and access to assistive technologies and resources is limited.

- Indigenous communities often have limited access to quality education, with schools in these areas lacking necessary resources, including trained teachers and educational materials. Indigenous students may also face cultural biases and a lack of respect for their cultural heritage in the education system. At the same time, the absence of bilingual and culturally relevant educational materials can hinder their learning experiences.
- Venezuelan migrants, internally displaced persons, and refugees often have a transient status, making it difficult for them to establish continuity in education. In host countries, they may face discrimination and obstacles to accessing education, including language barriers and a lack of recognition of their prior educational achievements.

- Older individuals in Venezuela may need to work to support their families, leaving them limited time and opportunities for continuing education. Access to adult education programs and resources may be limited, preventing them from improving their skills and knowledge.

- Several good practices, laws, and programs are in place to protect minority groups' rights to education in Venezuela. The 1999 Constitution emphasises the equal right to education for all and provides a foundation for nondiscrimination and inclusive education. The Organic Education Law of 2009 legislated special education for people with disabilities and aimed to give all citizens, regardless of background, access to quality education.
- Mission Robinson sought to eradicate illiteracy in the country, focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as indigenous communities and those with little access to formal education. Mission Sucre aimed to provide marginalised and minority groups, including isolated and indigenous villages, with access to higher education. Mission Robinson employed an innovative and community-based strategy to eradicate illiteracy, leveraging a network of volunteer educators known as "facilitators" who resided within the communities they served. These facilitators were pivotal in identifying illiterate individuals, establishing literacy circles, and delivering personalised instruction. This approach ensured that education reached those with limited formal schooling and allowed tailored learning experiences.
- Mission Sucre took an adaptable approach to grant marginalised and minority groups, including isolated indigenous villages, access to higher education. It offered programs in various formats, including distance education and evening classes, eliminating the need for students in remote areas to relocate. Beyond these accessibility measures, the mission implemented scholarship programs. It provided financial aid to alleviate the financial burdens for low-income students, fostering a more inclusive approach to higher education. Efforts were made to teach in indigenous communities and incorporate their languages into the curriculum.
- The National Council for Persons with Disabilities (CONAPI) advocated for protecting and advancing people with disabilities' rights, particularly their access to education, leading to various policies to improve accessibility and inclusivity in education for individuals with disabilities.

6. Are public services digitalised in your country? Please provide details, including challenges and good practices in digitalising public services, ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in delivering public services.

India

- There was a boost in digitalisation in India with the onset of the pandemic. However, despite good practices such as SWAYAM and the National Institute of Open Schooling, the situation for women in India did not improve. There were much more deepened gender inequality issues experienced by them.
- With the shift to online education, it was noted that only 35% of Indian women had internet access, only 3% of India's poorest 20% households have access to a computer, and 9% have internet connectivity; the difficulties faced by the poor had only increased multifold.

Netherlands

- COVID-19 has been an accelerator in the digitalisation of education: the pandemic forced primary, secondary and tertiary schools to offer online education. Digitalisation provides opportunities, but the pandemic also uncovered issues.[65] In 2021, 99.2% of 12 to 25-year-olds had access to the internet, 82.4% to a laptop, and 39.3% to a tablet.[66] Despite this high access, some students were still hindered from following their classes; a frequently recurring issue was that students did not have a personal device and had to share a laptop with siblings or other family members. Furthermore, children with caregivers with low levels of education (i.e., maximum completion of primary and first years of secondary education) or with a migration background were less prepared for digital education as their digital skills were lower than their peers' skills. This indicates a digital gap: some students can profit from digitalisation because of acquired digital skills, while others cannot because of a lack of skills. Students who lack skills fell behind during COVID-19.[67]
- In 2023, similar problems continue. While access to the internet and devices increased to 99.5% of 12 to 25-year-olds having internet access, 85.5% to a laptop, and 33.4% to a tablet, it remains unclear how many 12 to 25-year-olds have no access to a personal or any device.[68] Also, primary school students are not accounted for. Furthermore, the Netherlands continue to deal with a digital gap. In education, there is an increasing use of online teaching materials. Students lacking digital skills have lower access to learning opportunities. While schools offer instruction in digital skills, students' digital skills depend on their school. Furthermore, not all schools have the financial means to acquire hardware and software.[69] Further concerns about digitalisation include students' privacy, teachers' autonomy because of algorithms, and class social cohesion.[70]
- A good practice is that the possible positive and negative effects are being researched, for example, in the report by the Rathenau Institute, which is taken into consideration by the Dutch government.[71] Such statements ensure transparency about further digitalisation and signify the Dutch government's awareness of possible adverse effects and positive developments that might increase the efficiency of education.

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[65] Karstens et al. (2022). Naar hoogwaardig digitaal onderwijs. Rathenau Instituut. 15-20. https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/digitalisering/digitaal-onderwijs-veel-kansen-maar-ook-zorgen-over-schermtijd-privacy-en?utm_medium=email,15-20

[66] CBS. (2023). Internettoeggang en internetactiviteiten; persoonskenmerken. Open Data. https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/nl/dataset/84888NED/table?searchKeywords=internet%20toegang

[67] Lebouille, Masja. (2020). Hardnekkige digitale kloof. Didactief Online. https://didactiefonline.nl/artikel/hardnekkige-digitale-kloof

[68] CBS. (2023). Internettoeggang en internetactiviteiten; persoonskenmerken. Open Data. https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/nl/dataset/84888NED/table?searchKeywords=internet%20toegang

[69] Karstens et al. (2022). Naar hoogwaardig digitaal onderwijs. Rathenau Instituut. 19-20. https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/digitalisering/digitaal-onderwijs-veel-kansen-maar-ook-zorgen-over-schermtijd-privacy-en?utm_medium=email,15-20

[70] Karstens et al. (2022). Naar hoogwaardig digitaal onderwijs. Rathenau Instituut. 107. https://www.rathenau.nl/nl/digitalisering/digitaal-onderwijs-veel-kansen-maar-ook-zorgen-over-schermtijd-privacy-en?utm_medium=email,15-20

[71] Digitale Overheid. (2022). Digitaal onderwijs: voordelen en ook risico's. Digitale Overheid. https://www.digitaleoverheid.nl/nieuws/digitaal-onderwijs-voordelen-en-ook-risicos/

New Zealand

- In New Zealand, with the onset of the pandemic, there was a heavy reliance on the digitalisation of education.
- However, COVID-19 has led to increased repercussions on education. Empirical data unequivocally demonstrates that attendance rates had only improved to 51% by the conclusion of 2022. During Term 2 of the same year, attendance had plummeted to as low as 40% despite the concerted efforts and initiatives undertaken by the pertinent authorities.[72]

Venezuela

- The nation's deteriorating infrastructure presents a significant hurdle: unreliable internet access, frequent power outages, and limited access to vital equipment such as computers and tablets. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous students in remote areas encountered difficulties accessing online classes due to inadequate internet connectivity, and recurring power disruptions disrupted virtual learning sessions, making it arduous for students to maintain consistent participation.
- Compounding these issues are severe financial constraints resulting from the economic crisis, which have curtailed the government's capacity to invest in essential technology and educational resources. This shortage has left schools and students with outdated hardware and software, rendering them ill-equipped for digital learning. It has consequently hindered the ability of many institutions to provide the necessary devices for students.
- The persistent political turmoil within Venezuela has disrupted the implementation and continuity of educational policies and programs, as shifting government priorities and a lack of long-term planning have hindered the sustained development of digital education initiatives. This political instability has also bred uncertainty within the education system, adversely affecting teachers and students.

1. Cl@se: Cl@se (Class) is an initiative launched by the Venezuelan government to provide online educational content for primary and secondary school students. It aimed to expand access to educational resources through digital means, including textbooks and educational videos.
2. CANTV's ABA Internet Plan: The state-owned telecommunications company CANTV offered the ABA Internet Plan, which provided affordable internet access to low-income families, helping to bridge the digital divide and improve access to online education.
3. Plan Canaima Educativo: The Plan Canaima Educativo aimed to distribute laptops and tablets to students, focusing on providing these devices to low-income and underserved communities. These devices were intended to support digital learning and improve access to educational resources.

[72] Education Review Office. " Long Covid: Ongoing Impacts of Covid-19 On Schools and Learning - Summary." *Ero.govt.nz.* June 22, 2023. https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/long-covid-ongoing-impacts-of-covid-19-on-schools-and-learning-summary

4. Infocentros: Infocentros were community centres equipped with computers and internet access, providing a place for students and the general public to access digital resources and the internet. These centres played a role in expanding digital access, including for educational purposes.
5. Digital Education Platform: The Venezuelan government had plans to develop a digital education platform that would provide online courses, educational materials, and resources to students and teachers. The forum was intended to support distance learning initiatives.

7. How is the participation of private actors in public service delivery regulated and monitored in your country/region? Please share challenges and good practices.

India

- This regulation was essential with the onset of the pandemic increase of remote learning and online education.
- India has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- In furtherance to this, the Supreme Court and High Courts have played a monumental role and censured education commercialisation.[73]
- Indian courts have held that establishing and funding education is not sufficient. Still, one must follow the regulations to ensure schools cater to the needs of people, particularly the weaker sections of society and ensure improvement in educational facilities.[74]

Netherlands

- For a century, private and public actors have cooperated in education delivery in the Netherlands. For example, the Dutch government financially supports schools held by private actors offering education based on religious or philosophical convictions, and private companies often develop teaching materials. However, in the past decades, there has been a substantial growth in the private education offer and an entanglement of private and public offers.[75] Presently, approximately 25% of primary and secondary education students have used private tutoring, and public schools increasingly offer extra programs for which caregivers need to pay.[76]
- The Education Council (i.e., *de Onderwijsraad*) has monitored challenges and advised the Dutch government. Challenges include a tension between the interest of public education and private education and unequal access to private services, which might

[73] Modern School v. Union of India, AIR 2004 SC 2236
[74] K. Krishnamacharyulu v. Sri Venkateswara Hindu College of Engineering, AIR 1998 SC 295.
[75] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 7. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop
[76] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 8. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop

further exacerbate inequality.[77] However, private actors are also involved in increase access and equality opportunities. For example, private actors start initiatives to help children with fewer opportunities by providing free tutoring classes for children with fewer opportunities and free laptops to children who do not have one at home.[78]

- To ensure the positive effects of private actors prevail over the negative effects, the Education Council notes that school boards of public educational facilities need to be more aware of the challenges and concerns.[79] A concrete example: caretakers should not have to pay for extra services offered within public schools if their child participates in these activities.[80]

New Zealand

- Their independent boards govern private education in New Zealand. These schools registered under the Ministry of Education under section 214 of the Education and Training Act receive government funding and the budget you get from fees. Schools are required to comply with the Building Act 2004 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.[81]
- This ensures that premises, equipment and curriculum suit the enrolled students. It requires the schools to have practical tuition standards and provide physically and emotionally safe student places.[82]
- However, it has been noted that a good majority of Māori students are enrolled in the mainstream state schooling system, and there is no clarity or accountability for Māori students. In addition, high school students have failed to reach the minimum level the OECD states is necessary for success in learning, work and life.[83]
- The New Zealand Education Review Office reported that despite guidelines in place for these two communities, there were a minimal number of schools to establish a positive relationship between the Māori and Pasifika communities. Rigorous analysis of achievement data strategic targets to increase and improve achievements of the Māori community were not conducted within many schools.[84]

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[77] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 8, 17, 32. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop

[78] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 17. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop

[79] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 51-57. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop

[80] Onderwijsraad. (2021). Publiek Karakter Voorop. Onderwijsraad. 51-57. https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2021/12/07/publiek-karakter-voorop

[81] Ministry of Education. "Private schools' registration and management." https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/roles/private-schools/#:~:text=Private%20schools%20are%20governed%20by,funding%20you%20get%20from%20fees.

[82] Education Review Office. "Private and independent schools". https://ero.govt.nz/how-ero-reviews/schoolskura-english-medium/private-and-independent-schools

[83] Trafford, Will. "Labour failing Māori students – Potaka" *Te Ao Māori News.* June 21, 2023. https://www.teaonews.co.nz/2023/06/21/labour-failing-maori-students-potaka/

[84] Salahshour, Neda. "A Critique of New Zealand's Exclusive Approach to Intercultural Education." *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* vol. 56,1 (2021): 111–128. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-020-00179-9

Venezuela

- Venezuela had specific laws and policies governing the participation of private actors in education. The Organic Education Law of 2009 outlined the regulatory framework for private educational institutions. This law prescribed specific academic standards and curriculum guidelines that private schools were required to follow. It set expectations for the quality of education provided by private actors.
- Private educational institutions were expected to align their curriculum with the national academic standards established by the government.
- The government monitored the qualifications of teachers in private schools to ensure that they met the required standards.
- The government had established mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating private educational institutions. Regular inspections and reviews were conducted to assess various aspects, including the curriculum, facilities, and teacher qualifications.
- In Venezuela, private schools may have selective admission criteria and higher tuition fees, making them less accessible to lower-income families. Teacher qualifications may also vary, with private schools potentially having more qualified and experienced educators due to better compensation and working conditions.
- While regulations aimed to maintain educational standards, private education could still be expensive, limiting access to quality education for some families.
- Enforcing regulations and conducting effective oversight, especially in economic and political instability, presented challenges. For instance, specific instances of these challenges can be exemplified by recurring difficulties in ensuring the transparent allocation of educational resources, as previously noted in the example where resources designated for underprivileged students were redirected for personal gain.
- Ensuring that access to quality education was equitable, particularly for marginalised and disadvantaged populations, remained challenging.
- In Venezuela, several organisations actively advocate for the right to education, aiming to ensure that every child has access to quality learning opportunities. Dedicated organisations that play a crucial role in supporting and advancing educational initiatives in the country include -
- South America Initiative (https://sai.ngo) Project Name: Help Venezuelan Orphans: Food, Medicine, Education - This project is designed to help more than 400 orphans a day with a diet that provides all the necessary nutrients for the healthy development of each child. By providing a daily balanced fresh meal to each of these kids, the children can be well educated and become productive members of the future Venezuelan society.
- Autismo en Voz Alta (http://www.autismoenvozalta.com/) Project Name: Let's Educate and Empower - Children/Teens Autism - Autism en Voz continues to operate, provide, and introduce educational services to address the developmental needs of those with autism, with access to need-based financial support. They are committed to moving forward, learning, and improving. They seek to develop the skills of children/teens with autism and their families to facilitate their effective integration into society. For many children with autism, they are the only educational alternative in Venezuela.

- The Salesian Women Association (http://www.americadevelopingsmiles.org/ Project Name: EDUCATE AND NOURISH 2,650 STUDENTS IN VENEZUELA - The project will educate 2,650 students and provide them and their teachers with a nutritious meal, allowing them to step out of malnutrition, concentrate in their work and stay healthy.
- OSCASI (http://www.oscasi.org/) Project Name: Consolidating youth education and health in Petare - With this project, the organisation aims to reinforce the comprehensive care and training in the areas of education, nutrition, and health of 165 out-of-school children and their family group in the Petare neighbourhood, offering them personalised care in their diet, comprehensive development of themselves physically, emotionally, and intellectually, creating programs for the development of these skills.

8. Describe economic policies, legislation, promising practices, or strategies and national, regional or local processes aimed at:
    - increasing social spending, through national and local budgets, for the provision of public services; - see how the budgets are being used in schools, what resources, funding for activities for upliftment, salary, medical and other facilities.
    - addressing structural discrimination in the provision of public services; - structural discrimination in schools, within different kinds of communities (i.e. disabled groups)
    - maximising available resources for the provision of public services; - how well or how competently the given resources are being used
    - reallocating public expenditure for the provision of public services – see if sufficient money is being pooled for education, if the money is being put to use. See how much money is for education, if it's too little, and if it's being used properly. Look up the budget allocated for education.

India

- Increasing Social Spending for Public Services – Through the National Education Policy, India has introduced the Gender Inclusive Fund[85] to address the gender inequalities girls face. This is in addition to the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao program,[86] which serves the educational purposes of the girl child.
- Addressing Structural Discrimination - The Government of India has taken up multiple initiatives. The Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching[87] aims to include innovative teaching methodologies for better teaching outcomes. This includes using scientific evaluation methods to encourage the development of multiple skills of the students.

[85] Press Information Bureau, Government of India. "Steps taken by the Government for Gender Inclusion Fund". *Press Information Bureau*. December 1, 2021. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1776914
[86] Ministry of Women & Child Development. "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" https://wcd.nic.in/bbbp-schemes
[87] https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pandit-madan-mohan-malviya-national-mission-teachers-and-teaching

- Maximizing Available Resources – initiatives such as SWAYAM and The National Institute of Open Schooling have been significant steps in maximising resources and making them accessible to all.
- Preventing Corruption And Associated Illicit Financial Flows - The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, is India's primary legislation to combat corruption in government agencies and public sector businesses. Government officials are also bound by service rules, including the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules 1964, which prohibits government officials from accepting services exceeding the thresholds mentioned within the law.
- Reallocating Public Expenditure – the budget for national-level education for the financial year[88] 2023-23 allocates INR 1.13 trillion in national-level education spending, covering school and higher education. The technical and vocational education sector has been given a budget of around £ 352 million.

Netherlands

- Increasing Social Spending for Public Services - In 2022, the Dutch government spent more than 39 billion euros on primary, secondary and tertiary education. In 2023, spending was almost 41 billion. The Dutch government provides insight into the budget, which allows for transparency. This budget estimation also shows that funding is allocated to education for Ukrainian refugees (more than 100 million for 2022 and 2023) and instruction recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. [89]
- Addressing Structural Discrimination- Since the end of the pandemic, the goal is to repair the damage caused by the pandemic. The National Program Education Primary and Secondary Education (i.e. *Wet regeling bijzondere en aanvullende bekostiging uitvoering National Programma Onderwijs VO en PO*) is the foundation for this. Through this program, 8.5 billion euros became available to address challenges.[90] The program runs from the academic years of 2021/2022 until 2024/2025 to ensure students have enough time to profit from the program.[91]
- Maximizing Available Resources – The National Program is primarily directed toward students who face educational challenges; its main objectives are to assist students who have fallen behind in their studies during the pandemic and to promote their personal and practical development. Schools are granted flexibility in how they utilise the funds, but the Dutch government provides them with a range of options from which they can

[88] Sahay, Sandeepa. "India's National Education Budget for 2023-24." *British Council*. February 16, 2023. https://opportunities-insight.britishcouncil.org/blog/india's-national-education-budget-2023-24

[89] Ministerie van Financiën. (2023). Bijlagen bij miljoenennota: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. Rijksfinanciën. https://www.rijksfinancien.nl/miljoenennota/2023/bijlage/1485617#:~:text=De%20totale%20omvang%20van%20de,in%20het%20po%20en%20vo.

[90] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Steunprogramma. NP Onderwijs. https://www.nponderwijs.nl/over-het-nationaal-programma-onderwijs#:~:text=Leerlingen%20en%20studenten%20verdienen%20volwaardig,%E2%82%AC%208%2C5%20miljard%20beschikbaar.

[91] Nederlands Jeugdinstituut. (2022). Nationaal Programma Onderwijs verlengd. NJI. https://www.nji.nl/nieuws/nationaal-programma-onderwijs-verlengd

select. This approach allows schools to use the funds to address their needs and priorities.[92]

- Preventing Corruption And Associated Illicit Financial Flows – Furthermore, the Dutch government also allocates funds to the fight against inequality in education. Primary schools with a complex student population split around 300 million annually to invest extra resources to prevent learning delays. Another way to combat inequality is an investment of 170 million in preschool education. Pre-school education focuses on children whose caregivers cannot positively contribute to their child's development.[93]
- Reallocating Public Expenditure – When it comes to educational facilities, they receive their budget through lumpsum financing. However, educational facilities increasingly also receive extra funds for specific problems. While these funds are welcome and can make a difference, it does not always ensure that structural issues will be tackled. Additionally, monitoring whether these funds are used for the intended problems is difficult. For these reasons, structural funds are preferred over incidental funds.[94]

New Zealand

- Increasing Social Spending for Public Services - New Zealand to introduce a new tertiary fund to help remove the barriers for disadvantaged tertiary students.[95] This is particularly beneficial in targeting those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. It is a positive step taken for the upliftment of those from the Māori, Pacific, disabled and other persons from disadvantageous backgrounds.
- Addressing Structural Discrimination - The New Zealand qualifications framework was introduced in 2010. This is an excellent initiative by the Government to reduce duplication and proliferation of certificate and diploma qualifications.
- Maximizing Available Resources – tertiary education employment outcomes have empowered students, teachers and communities to engage more actively in the learning process.
- Preventing Corruption And Associated Illicit Financial Flows – the Crimes Act 1961 addresses public sector corruption, including giving, receiving, accepting or obtaining a bribe. New Zealand has ratified the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and has made legislative amendments in line with their policies.
- Reallocating Public Expenditure – the education budget for the year 2023 is just under $21.5 billion, with the most significant investment in early childhood education.[96]

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[92] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Steunprogramma. NP Onderwijs. https://www.nponderwijs.nl/over-het-nationaal-programma-onderwijs#:~:text=Leerlingen%20en%20studenten%20verdienen%20volwaardig,%E2%82%AC%208%2C5%20miljard%20beschikbaar.

[93] Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. (n.d.). Beleid kansengelijkheid. Gelijke Kansen. https://www.gelijke-kansen.nl/over-gelijke-kansen/beleid

[94] Van Aalst et al. (2023). De Staat van het Onderwijs. Onderwijsinspectie. 38. https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/onderwijsinspectie/documenten/rapporten/2023/05/10/rapport-de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2023/Staat+van+het+Onderwijs+2023.pdf

[95] Tinetti, Hon Jan. "New tertiary fund to help remove barriers to student success." *Beehive.govt.nz.* August 23, 2023. https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-tertiary-fund-help-remove-barriers-student-success

[96] Ministry of Education. "Budget 2023" https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2023/#:~:text=The%20Budget%202023%20education%20package,to%20just%20under%20%2421.5%20billion.

Venezuela

- Increasing Social Spending for Public Services: Historically, Venezuela allocated a significant portion of its national budget to education, covering teacher salaries, infrastructure development, and the provision of educational materials. However, these allocations have been eroded due to economic difficulties and inflation, making it challenging to provide adequate resources for schools, upliftment programs, and even basic facilities. As of 2022, education received 15.33% of the overall expenditure and 27.61% of social spending, falling short of UNESCO's 20% benchmark. This reflects broader issues undermining the education system, leaving the government with substantial debt to fulfil educational requirements. Increasing budgetary allocations and ensuring efficient resource utilisation are crucial to address this.
- Addressing Structural Discrimination: Efforts to promote inclusive education in Venezuela, aimed at marginalised communities and individuals with disabilities, have been hampered by economic challenges and political instability. Initiatives such as 'Misión Ribas' for secondary education and 'Misión Robinson' to combat illiteracy and raise adult literacy rates have faced difficulties sustaining and expanding due to these challenges.
- Maximizing Available Resources: Efficient resource utilisation within schools is essential to enhance the quality of education. However, economic constraints have led to resource shortages, affecting maximising these resources. This includes challenges related to underfunded schools, insufficient pay for teachers, and sociopolitical issues that can disrupt regular school operations. To address this, a focus on efficient resource management, adequate funding, and teacher support is essential.
- Preventing Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows: Venezuela has faced corruption challenges in the education sector, impacting the quality of education through embezzlement and misuse of funds. Countermeasures, including legislation and oversight mechanisms, exist to combat corruption, but their effectiveness has been hampered by political turmoil and a lack of trust in the government. Ensuring financial transactions and allocations within the education system are visible and holding individuals and institutions accountable can deter corrupt practices.
- Reallocating Public Expenditure: The Ministry of Education operates within the budget the President and Congress allocate. Historically, the educational sector has typically received around 15% of the national budget. Higher education typically commands the most significant share within this allocation, accounting for approximately 33% of the budget, followed by primary and secondary education. Notably, private corporations have substantially supported higher education by establishing various scholarship and fellowship programs funded by the private sector. It's worth noting that specific budget figures are not disclosed in the provided source, and detailed budget information cannot be found online.

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