

ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN MULTISECTORAL EDUCATION: LEARNING FROM AN INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This article explores ways to address disparities in education through a multisectoral approach, drawing on a review of international literature. Disparities in education, which are influenced by socio-economic, geographical, gender and physical ability factors, require holistic solutions that involve various sectors such as health, economy and society. The review emphasises the importance of policies that not only focus on infrastructure and curriculum but also provide social and financial support for disadvantaged groups. In addition, sustainable and data-driven programme planning is needed to identify the groups most in need of interventions and the types of interventions that are most effective. By adopting this approach, education policy can be more dynamic and responsive to challenges, potentially significantly reducing educational disparities.

Keywords: Disparities, Multisectoral Education, Learning from International Literature Review

Introduction

Disparities in education have become a significant global issue, affecting millions of children and young people in different parts of the world. Disparities are significant inequalities or differences in educational opportunities, access, quality and outcomes received by certain individuals or groups compared to other groups. These disparities can arise due to various factors such as geographical location, economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability (Juliani & Aslan, 2024); (Mariska & Aslan, 2024); (Fiteriadi et al., 2024); (Zakiah & Aslan, 2024); (Hayani et al., 2024). These inequalities lead to disparities that negatively impact not only the academic development of disadvantaged individuals, but also affect the socio-economic progress of society as a whole. In general, disparities in education impede the achievement of the full potential of each individual and hinder the progress of an inclusive and equitable society (Nikolai et al., 2022).

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full potential of each individual and hinder the progress of an inclusive and equitable society (Helbig & Sendzik, 2022).

These disparities can take many forms, such as differences in access to and quality of education between urban and rural areas, between economic groups, and between ethnic and gender groups. These inequalities have a direct impact on individual life chances and growth, as well as a long-term impact on a country's socio-economic development (Jung et al., 2023).

Quality education is a fundamental right of every individual and plays a key role in building inclusive and sustainable societies. However, to date, many countries still face challenges in ensuring that all children have equal access to quality education. This gap is not only limited to the level of access, but also includes the quality of teaching, educational facilities and infrastructure, as well as family and community support (Han & Hermansen, 2023).

A multisectoral approach is beginning to be considered as a potential solution to address these disparities. This approach involves co-operation across sectors, including education, health, social welfare and the private sector. This cross-sectoral cooperation aims to integrate different resources and expertise to create more holistic and sustainable solutions (Turner & Voisin, 2021).

Several countries have successfully implemented multisectoral approaches in their efforts to reduce educational disparities. Case studies from countries such as Finland, Canada and Singapore show that education policies supported by a multisectoral approach can result in significant improvements in access and quality of education (Kolbe, 2023).

Through a review of international literature, this research aims to identify proven effective strategies and analyse how they can be adapted and implemented in the local context.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is a systematic approach to collecting, analysing and synthesising information from written sources relevant to a particular research topic. This method involves identifying existing literature such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other academic sources that are credible and of high validity. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of concepts, theories, and previous findings related to the research topic under review (DEWI, 2019) ; (Zaluchu, 2020) . In this process, researchers typically organise and categorise information based on specific themes or subjects to highlight trends, gaps, and existing scientific consensus, as well as formulate new theoretical frameworks or research questions that can form the basis for further empirical research. This method is very useful in building a foundation for more in-depth research

and producing a thorough summary of existing knowledge on the topic (Moha & Sudrajat ., 2019)

Results and Discussion

A multisectoral approach to education

A multisectoral approach to education is a strategy that involves various sectors and stakeholders to ensure the achievement of comprehensive and sustainable education goals. It recognises that problems in education cannot be solved by the education sector alone but require collaboration with other sectors such as health, social welfare, finance, infrastructure and the environment. This collaboration aims to address the complex barriers that affect education processes and outcomes and ensure children and young people have supportive and inclusive learning environments (Blalock & Balmer, 2023).

Firstly, the health sector plays a key role in ensuring students come to school in good physical and mental condition. This can include immunisation programmes, regular health check-ups and nutrition services that ensure students get adequate nutrition. Mental health is also important, so counselling services and psychological support are integral to this approach. When students are in good health, they tend to have better attendance and optimal learning ability (Durrant et al., 2024).

Second, the social welfare sector contributes by providing support to students from families with economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Financial assistance programmes, scholarships and social services that include child protection, ensure that all children, especially the vulnerable, have access to education without economic barriers. This also includes community empowerment programmes that help families increase income and reduce poverty, which in turn reduces dropout rates and increases enrolment. (Gerhards, 2021).

Third, the infrastructure sector is crucial in providing adequate physical facilities for education. This includes the construction of schools, classrooms, libraries, computer labs, as well as proper sanitation facilities. Access to technology and the internet is also an important focus in an increasingly digitalised world. Adequate infrastructure ensures a safe, comfortable and conducive learning environment which is crucial for an effective teaching-learning process (Ribeiro et al., 2024).

Fourth, the environmental sector plays a role in education through programmes that promote sustainability and environmental awareness from an early age. Environmental education can be incorporated into the curriculum to instil values of love for nature and responsibility towards environmental conservation. Meanwhile, ensuring the school's surrounding environment is free from pollution and natural disasters is also an important responsibility that affects the health and safety of students and staff (Mcquitty, 2023).

Overall, a multisectoral approach to education ensures synergistic collaboration between different sectors so that all elements that influence quality education are facilitated. By combining efforts from different fields, this approach not only improves access and quality of education but also contributes to holistic and sustainable human development. This is an important step towards ensuring that all children, without exception, can receive a proper education and have equal opportunities to achieve a better future.

Effective Strategies from Different Countries to Reduce Education Disparities

Reducing educational disparities is a challenge facing many countries around the world. Some countries have taken effective steps to address this issue through innovative and comprehensive strategies, including;

Firstly, Finland is known for its excellent and equitable education system. One of Finland's key strategies is to adopt an inclusive approach where all students, regardless of socio-economic background, receive the same quality education. Teachers in Finland are rigorously selected and provided with ongoing training and professional support. In addition, Finland provides a range of support services, including psychological guidance and specialised assistance for students in need, to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed (Tucker, 2023).

Secondly, South Korea has taken decisive steps to reduce the education gap by prioritising education at the national level. The South Korean government invests heavily in educational infrastructure, providing state-of-the-art technology and ensuring all schools have adequate facilities. In addition, extracurricular education programmes that are accessible to all students regardless of economic background help balance the learning experience outside the classroom (Ivy & Mayorga, 2022).

Thirdly, the UK has implemented a Pupil Premium programme that provides additional funding to schools with students from low-income families. These funds are used to support initiatives such as additional tutoring, skills development programmes, and mental and emotional support services. The aim of the programme is to reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and other students and provide them with access to equal educational opportunities (Liu, 2022).

Fourth, Brazil has successfully reduced educational disparities through the Bolsa Família programme, which conditions financial assistance to poor families on their children's school attendance. This programme not only encourages increased school attendance rates, but also helps reduce dropout rates among children from low-income families. In addition, Brazil also focuses on improving teacher quality and providing ongoing training to ensure effective teaching in all corners of the country (Young, 2023).

Finally, Kenya has introduced free education programmes at the primary and secondary levels in an effort to reduce educational disparities. The Kenyan government also collaborates with various non-governmental organisations to provide school

materials, uniforms and other support to students from poor families. This programme has significantly increased access to education and reduced the number of children dropping out of school, especially in rural and remote areas (Casatelli, 2024).

Overall, the strategies implemented by various countries show that reducing education disparities requires an integrated approach that includes financial support, improving education quality, social inclusion and policies that integrate the various factors that affect education access and quality. The successes of these countries can serve as valuable lessons for other countries in their efforts to reduce education disparities and ensure equitable access to education for all children.

Conclusion

Addressing disparities in multisectoral education requires a holistic approach that considers the various factors that influence access to and quality of education. These disparities are often influenced by socio-economic conditions, geography, gender and physical ability. To address this, it is important for education policy to not only focus on infrastructure and curriculum but also on providing social and financial support for disadvantaged groups. In addition, co-operation between various sectors such as health, economic and social is essential to ensure that all aspects of life that affect education are addressed in an integrated manner.

Furthermore, the review points to the importance of continuous, data-driven planning and implementation of education programmes. An approach that uses data and empirical evidence allows for more accurate identification of the groups most in need of intervention, as well as the types of interventions that are most effective. Through continuous evaluation and adaptation to changing needs, education policy can be more dynamic and responsive to challenges. This approach not only improves equitable access to education but also the quality of the learning experience for all students, thereby significantly reducing disparities.

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