AU
PACMUN 2017

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Delegates of the African Union,

Welcome to the AU. My name is Janick Gold, and I've been given the honor of kicking off my second year of Model UN as your Director of Committee at PACMUN 2017. I have had the pleasure of representing Inglemoor High School as a delegate at conferences in Washington and British Columbia for the past year, and I am excited to serve as a member of staff for the first time at such a professionally organized and talented conference. Working beside me in our committee will be my fellow dais members: Vivek Dutta, a Junior at Interlake High School, who will serve alongside Tesla STEM Sophomore Amrutha Srikanth as your Assistant Directors; and Andrew Wang, also a Junior at Interlake High School, who will be your Chair of Committee. We'll be working as best we can prior to and during the conference to make your time at PACMUN as engaging and meaningful as possible. We hope for all of our delegates to leave PACMUN feeling as if they have grown as a delegate, and inspired to pursue a greater understanding of the African condition.

In July 2017, the African Union utilized its annual summit in Ethiopia to propose its initiatives to combat some of Africa's most challenging social, economic, and political challenges. AU Commissioner Anthony Maruping spoke extensively on the importance of integrating African markets and stabilizing politically to encourage further external investment. He introduced the African Union's Pan-African Investment Code (PAIC) that aims to "establish an appropriate business climate and how African nations can adopt this model to suit their local [political and social] climates." Leaders at the summit also pledged to further commit themselves to investing in the continent's youth, with ambitious goals for the improvement of sanitary and educational infrastructure. The African Union's theme of "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth" set the tone for the next year of action for the coalition.

Taking into account these initiatives and the African Union's ability to catalyze change, my dais members and I have decided on two topics that we feel are of the greatest importance and interest to the African Union in 2017. They are: Foreign Investment in African Nations and Access to Second-

ary Education. We have chosen these topics both because we believe they are of extreme importance to the future of Africa as a whole and because we believe of their complexity will spark a discussion in which every delegation feels it is in their best interests to be active and constructive. Make no mistake: these topics—the positions of blocs—are not two-sided. You will find in each topic that within the African Union there are a host of positions taken by nations looking to promote self-interest, build alliances, or collaborate for the interest of Africa as a whole.

Your dais team and I wish you the best of luck in preparing for PAC-MUN. Delve deep into your country and its neighbors—you will find a fascinatingly tangled web of social, economic, and political issues waiting to be comprehensively solved. Know your rivals as well as your allies, and you will find in the conference the ability to drive home or dissuade a speech or resolution with efficiency and success. Enjoy your work and your writing.

Until November—welcome to Addis Ababa. I look forward to our conference.

Sincerely,

Janick Gold

Director, AU

INTRODUCTION: FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Postcolonial Africa has faced a wide range of highly disruptive and systematic issues in its half-century long existence—war, hunger, political strife, and poor medical care have proved challenges for the continent. Below the surface, however, a main contributor to the independent African struggle has kept the continent from achieving developmental success—economic stagnation. This issue has, in many cases, singlehandedly proved a catalyst for political turmoil and destruction, breeding frustration and distrust in leadership.

Individual African nations, along with the AU's predecessor, the OAU, have tried an array of methods with the goal of kickstarting economic growth in Africa. One of the most successful sectors in achieving this has proven to be bilateral trade with foreign nations—an agreement with the potential to solve Africa's economic growth issues and forge ties with some of the world's most economically stable and strong nations.

However, this seemingly positive development has had its pitfalls, and the method and prevalence of foreign investment in Africa has become a highly controversial topic. China has been accused of neocolonial practices by Western and African nations who feel that they are being stripped of their resources and not benefitting economically.

When discussing this topic, delegates will be forced to assess the intentions and economic effects of Chinese investment, along with managing the human rights and environmental challenges that result. They will also need to ensure that cooperation with China does not threaten existing arrangements with Western nations that oppose Beijing's involvement on the continent.

HISTORY

In order to understand the history of foreign investment in Africa and the effects it has had on the continent's economy as a whole, one must first establish a basic understanding of the economic situation Africa found itself in as it emerged from the colonial era of the early 20th century. It wasn't until the 1970s that the majority of sub-Saharan Africa gained independence from British, French, and Portuguese rule, and when this did occur, the changes were rapid and often overwhelming for these former colonies. Within a matter of years, they found themselves without a formalized government, economic infrastructure, or a population prepared for independence through higher education or vocational training. By the 1980s only Benin, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Senegal and Zimbabwe had a fully diverse exporting economy. Despite their mineral and resource wealth, the new African nations were plagued by shortages of capital

and labor. Numerous systemic issues in the new African economy gave rise to an era of political turmoil for the continent.

Continuing well into the 1990s, this period of stagnation (and in some cases regression) strained the viability of the African Union's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, and contributed to its dissolution in 2001. It wasn't until the early 2000s that a new market catalyst was introduced to the African scene: foreign investment.

It began in 1995, when Chinese president Jiang Zemin declared an initiative for Chinese entrepreneurs: "**Zǒu chūqū**," or "**go out**." It encouraged Chinese businesses to look to overseas markets to grow the Chinese stake in the world economy. This resulted in a boom of economic and commercial Sino-African relations. Chinese companies invested heavily in sectors such as telecommunications, manufacturing, agriculture, and infrastructure. African nations welcomed these changes, not only for the economic boost that they brought, but also for an alliance of sorts forged around the concept that the world economy was unfairly dominated by western, former colonial powers. To this day, government-backed Chinese companies are often awarded tax breaks and other advantages over equally successful western companies.

The effects of this rapid economic shift were clear. Chinese investment in African nations immediately rose as the most crucial aspect of bilateral African economics. Growth and poverty reduction both sped up. The per capita growth rate of the African economy as a whole grew from 0.6% per year in the 1990s to 2.8% in the 2000s. Institutions and macroeconomic policies were strengthened with the help of these companies, and Chinese demand for exports such as oil, iron, copper, and zinc only further heightened export volumes.

By 2010, the investment trend in sub-Saharan African nations had, from the surface, appeared to have blossomed into a complete economic revolution in Africa. The African economy had been revitalized, given a jumpstart for growth and stabilization.

It was during this time, however, that criticism over Chinese methods first arose.

Criticism for Beijing's business practices in Africa were first voiced from Western and African civil society, focusing on China's failure to promote stable governance, abide by local laws, and protect human rights. China was accused of stripping African nations of their resources without contributing to local economies. While some African nations themselves dismissed the criticism, China's relationship with Africa has challenged its policy of noninterference in the affairs of African governments.

Several African leaders themselves have vocally resisted Chinese advances in their countries. Michael Sata built his winning 2011 campaign for the Zambian presidency on anti-Chinese sentiment after Chinese managers shot and killed a group of protesters at a Zambian coal mine. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi of the Nigerian Central Bank stated in 2013 that "Africa must recognise that China—like the U.S., Russia, Britain, Brazil and the rest—is in Africa not for African interests but its own."

This noninterference has been tested, given shifting geopolitics on the continent. From 2005-2015, more than 2,500 Chinese troops were dispatched to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, in Darfur, DRC, Mali, and South Sudan. Furthermore, in 2010, China began planning for its first permanent overseas naval installation in Djibouti.

The claim has been made that the economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (and Africa as a whole) over the last twenty years has been grabbed almost entirely by the economic elite. It will take more sustained struggle by the African working class to see a significant change in poverty rates and overall per capita GDP growth. But uprisings like those in South Africa and Nigeria in recent years have proven this to be possible.

PAST ACTION

Historically, the United Nations and the African Union's work against foreign exploitation has been focused on the decolonization and development of African nations. Since the UN's creation in 1945, more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence,[1] with many of those colonies in Africa. However, though these colonies have presently gained the formal right to self-govern, they faced a plethora of different, newer issues. Most remained unable to effectively utilize their natural resources due to the export-purposed infrastructure built during colonial times, and often suffered from political instability due to former colonisers' lack of consideration of ethnic divides when drawing national boundaries. Combined with the neo-imperialist political and economic meddling by foreign countries seeking to exploit these weaknesses, Africa has encountered much strife that hinders its ability to prosper economically.

As one of Africa's most pressing issues, conflict in African nations has been a major threat to their economic development, and has allowed economically dominant countries to exploit African resources. Foreign countries often take advantage of conflicts between ethnic or political groups by making deals with political entities involved in the conflict. In order to provide political stability for these vulnerable nations, the African Union has participated extensively in conflict resolution as an immediate necessity to assist the struggling nations of Africa. During a civil war in the former Belgian Congo in the 1960's, the UN autho-

(1) https://www.un.org/en/decolonization/history.shtml

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rized the creation of a joint military force in the Congo,[2] and the African Union has played an integral role in limiting terrorism and human rights abuses in Somalia, Mali, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. From 1990 to 2008, the UN and AU have deployed twenty-four peacekeeping operations to Africa manned by a maximum of 144,375 personnel.[3] Through the responsibility to protect principle adopted in 2005, it has also accepted responsibility to prevent war crimes and mass killings in Africa, if the domestic government is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens.[4] These interventions have protected many people from the effects of decolonization, allowing further efforts to minimize foreign control of African territories to continue.

The economic development of African nations is also vital to their ability to profit from their own resources. Africa is projected to have the fastest-growing, most youthful work force in the world by 2050,[5] demanding imminent economic growth to provide jobs for the massive number of new workers. The UN and the AU have implemented several methods to assist in the assurance of economic stability for these quickly-expanding countries. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals[6] have contributed to improved education, gender equality, and disease prevention, all of which have contributed to foster Africa's development, thus protecting Africa's youth from harm and providing economic incentives for outsourcing, which provides jobs and training for Africa's workforce.

By creating regional alliances, African nations hope to reduce the consequences of natural resource exploitation. One of the most important efforts is the AU's integration of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into its structure and processes in 2010, which streamlined the process for providing aid and fostered cooperation between local and international agencies.[7] The NEPAD agency has implemented multiple initiatives hoping to discourage exploitative practices by investing in the development of infrastructure, human resources, and technology. Additionally, it invests in natural resource protection and governance and security, which obstructs large corporations from irresponsible use of natural resources. Similarly, the Africa Progress Panel, a ten-member group that works with leading African policymakers to increase transparency, fair contracts, and equitable tax regimes, works to raise awareness for unjust economic conditions in Africa. It does this by publishing an annual report highlighting the devastating economic impacts of resource exploitation, the Africa Progress Report.[8]

(2) https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/congo-decolonization
(3) P. Williams (2008) 'Keeping the Peace in Africa: Why "African" Solutions Are Not Enough', *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 3. pp. 309-323
(4) A. Bellamy and N. Wheeler (2008)'Humanitarian intervention in world politics', in J. Baylis (ed.) The Globalization of World Politics 4th ed. USA, Oxford University Press, pp. 510-528
(5) http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23030403
(6) http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
(7) http://www.nepad.org/content/about-nepad#aboutourwork
(8) http://www.africaprogresspanel.org/publications/policy-papers/2015-africa-progress-report/

CURRENT SITUATION

The continent of Africa is immensely rich in scarce mineral and natural resources. It is estimated to possess more than 200 billion barrels of oil reserves, a number that drastically increases each year due to improved oil exploration techniques.[1] Its massive mineral wealth includes minerals such as uranium, which is used to make nuclear weapons and provide efficient energy, and columbine-tantalite (also known as coltan), which is an essential component of the hardware of modern electronics, including phones and computers. The African continent is abundant in copper, gold, platinum, tin, diamonds, timber, agriculture, and biofuels, as well as rare natural products such as Ivory and Rhino horn, which can cost upwards of 100,000 USD per kilogram, and old-growth rainforest trees, which can be valued at more than 20,000 USD each. Additionally, the continent is the site of more than 600 million hectares of arable land,[2] which is nearly 60 percent of the global total. This vast mineral and natural wealth of the African continent has done little to help its economy, however, perhaps even exacerbating the living conditions of Africans. Though Africa has been mostly decolonized, it remains under the economic control of foreign powers. Conditions for Africans are still among the worst in the world: Child and slave labor are commonly used to mine metals, and competition over natural resources has been a driving factor of armed conflict in Africa. Oftentimes, stringent regulations in African nations mean large foreign corporations ignore the environmental and human impacts of their mining, leading to extensive pollution of nearby land and water and poor conditions for workers.

Oftentimes, the domestic exploitation of African resources has led to human rights and environmental safety violations.[3] Mining workers are often forced to work by armed groups threatening to physically harm them and their families, and many groups utilize child labor. These workers often face dangerous working conditions such as a lack of protective equipment against harmful substances and even lack of proper tools. There have even been some instances reported of workers resorting to mining by hand.

Foreign exploitation in Africa has often profited from regional conflict, and it has almost always fuelled conflict. This vicious cycle is encompassed in the concept of "conflict minerals", which are minerals from a conflict-infested region of the world whose mining and trading are interwoven with conflict. These minerals generate hundreds of millions of dollars a year, providing an

(1) http://www.ey.com/gl/en/industries/oil---gas/africa-oil-and-gas--a-continent-on-the-move---the-african-oil-and-gas-landscape
(2) http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.ZS?view=map
(3) http://web.mit.edu/12.000/www/m2016/finalwebsite/problems/humanrights.html

important source of funding for armed groups.[4] However, recent attempts at reducing the effect of conflict minerals has also discouraged foreign direct investment in legal, responsible sources of minerals.[5] For example, forcing companies to export only conflict-free minerals has dissuaded potential buyers from purchasing minerals that are often more expensive and harder to come by.

(4) https://www.sourceintelligence.com/what-are-conflict-minerals/
(5) http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/rwanda-has-become-worlds-largest-coltan-exporter-reports-kt-press-300010371.html

BLOC POSITIONS

Primary Sector Countries: Angola, DRC, Benin & Rwanda

The majority of African nations still have an economy based almost exclusively on export of raw goods. These countries are usually dependent on a few major foreign economic partners, which often motivates their partners -- and their own governments -- to maintain the existing model of cheap, efficient production of raw goods at the cost of the well being of the local people. These countries are focused on diversifying their economy, as the low-skilled nature of natural resource industries further exacerbates their dependency on more developed nations. However, it is important to recognize that many of these countries are administered by an elite class that benefits from these raw materials-based partnerships despite the detriment to their own population. The delegates from these countries may not express the same level of concern for economic diversification.

Primary sector countries are usually against radical actions to prevent corruption and exploitation through FDI, but will support, to a lesser extent, monitoring measures. Their primary focus is bolstering their economic and diplomatic ties with foreign investors, as these countries will likely stress development as their main priority.

Secondary Sector Countries: South Africa & Botswana

Certain African countries have already taken steps to extensively diversify their economies, usually after using their abundance of natural resources to develop efficient manufacturing industries. These countries likely dislike the current economic status quo, as the presence of large foreign corporations results in trade exclusivity, which not only reduces their own competitiveness but also bolsters the political power of corrupt governments in their region.

Isolationist Countries: Zimbabwe & Sudan

While many of the nations mentioned have enjoyed a profoundly positive relationship with foreign investors, there remains still a number of nations that have been through the worst that the trade has to offer. These countries have experienced significant internal strife, wholly or partially as a result of foreign investment. Social and political upheaval, human rights abuses, diminishing of skilled workforce, limited control over internal affairs, and, most commonly, economic downturn have led these nations to shut their doors to investors. They remain steadfastly opposed to foreign investment and discourage neighboring countries and regional powers from participating in it at every opportunity.

Receptive-Independent Countries: Zambia & Angola

The complexity involved in the reception of foreign investment is no new concept to many African nations. A number of countries have experienced over the decades an array of relations with economic investors. As a result of past conflicts, yet taking into account the economic benefits this investment has brought them, many African nations have adopted a cautious stance towards potential investors. At the same time, these countries are readily receptive to the aid that regulated, monitored investment can bring them. They place emphasis on retaining their economic independence and refuse to be drawn into situations where their investors have power over internal affairs.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study #1: Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has a lengthy, convoluted history of violence and exploitation driven by its immense mineral wealth. Since their first major interactions with western Europeans in the late 15th century, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been marred by slavery, colonialism, corruption, and conflict. Despite the economic and political stabilization of many African countries at the turn of the century, the bloodiest war since World War Two continues in the DRC with foreign and domestic corporations and governments taking advantage of this conflict for their own profit, leaving the DRC rated lowest on the UN Human Development index.

The horrors of DRC when it was a Belgian colony are undeniably atrocious, but Lumumba's assassination, to many, was the fatal blow to post-decolonization reconstruction efforts. Western leaders assassinated Lumumba under the excuse of communist ties in order to sustain the DRC's economic status quo: cheap mining of raw materials fueled by slave labor. Instead, they placed Joseph Mobutu in power

and turned a blind eye to gross accusations of government corruption government and various human rights abuses.[1]

Even after Mobutu's corruption and tyranny finally led to the DRC's collapse, living conditions have not significantly improved in the DRC, as the disastrous consequences of an ongoing war have been exacerbated by foreign companies seeking to benefit off the war profiteering of Congolese armed forces. Among these companies are not only European and American-based multinational firms, but also businesses and government officials from neighboring African countries. A 2002 UN investigation even claimed that there were attempts to prolong the conflict by purposefully inciting violence between armed militias.[2]

Though the violence in the DRC continues, it is important to understand the reason why its immense natural wealth has been unable to improve, and has even exacerbated, the dismal living conditions of its population. It is evident and widely agreed upon by relevant academia that domestic and foreign economic exploitation, implemented with the assurance of negligence or secretive support of foreign powers, is extensively to blame for the DRC current situation. More specifically, there are many factors that allowed for this exploitation. The country's economy, being based almost entirely on natural resources, was extremely vulnerable to exploitation due to increased dependency on manufacturing countries.[3] Additionally, the lack of government transparency was an important domestic cause for foreign exploitation. These issues, therefore, require extensive economic diversification efforts through forays into the manufacturing industries[4] and stringent monitoring of public-private partnerships and foreign direct investment. Similar policies remain relevant to the many other African countries today who remain vulnerable to or affected by economic exploitation.

Case Study #2: Zambia

Zambia, a country situated strategically as a trading hub of Southern Africa, has been a target of heavy foreign investment ever since gaining its independence in 1964. China in particular has had a decades-long, tumultuous relationship with nearly every government in charge of the African nation since 1985. The most egregious of many incidents that have occurred in Zambia took place in 2005, when 52 Zambian laborers were killed at an explosives factory in Chambeshi, and in 2010, when Chinese opened fire on protesting Zambian workers at a copper mine in Lusaka.[5]

This escalation of violence can be linked to a newer model of partnership between investor and workforce that has been widely criticized by advocates for economic and civil independence. By offering large loans with low interest rates and generous grace periods, China has drawn many African nations into a status of relative economic dependency. This model, where the Chinese government grants loans to a country for the country to in turn contract Chinese firms for infrastructure develop-

(1) https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/jan/17/patrice-lumumba-50th-anniversary-assassination
(2) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/oct/22/congo.rorycarroll
(3) http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/137478
(4) http://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/economic-diversification-priority-action-now-more-ever
(5) https://qz.com/999630/china-and-zambia-are-in-a-diplomatic-clash-over-illegal-copper-mining/

ment, has come to be known as the "Angola model."[6] Though the Chinese and their African partners often claim the plan is mutually beneficial, instances of human rights abuses against laborers are still common, as the nation finds itself unable to enforce their own civil law, fearing a withdrawal of funding for its most important sectors. On a broader scale, Africa-China partnerships based on the Angola model often require the use of Chinese workers from Chinese companies, a condition that not only exchanges direly needed job opportunities for often poorly constructed infrastructure, but also inhibits the ability of the African nation to develop its own high-skill workforce, thus deterring the country's ability to diversify its economy.

Since the incident in 2010, the newly-elected Patriotic Front government in Zambia has taken a stronger stance on Chinese authority in the country. Still welcoming foreign investment, President Michael Sata stated that a greater focus should be set on the upholding of domestic law and security. He admitted that previous governments had not done enough to ensure the protection of laborers in Zambian-based firms controlled by Chinese businessmen. "When you give the Chinese a project without specifications, don't blame the Chinese," said Sata, "Blame yourself."[7]

Since the early 2000s, Zambia struggled to cope with the additional responsibility of negotiating with a foreign party while protecting its domestic workforce. Countless native laborers have suffered as a direct result of poorly enforced human rights regulations and safety measures in Chinese-operated industries. Zambia's narrow vision for economic development also left it in a power struggle with Chinese authority in the country. China itself struggled to uphold its image as a viable economic stimulator, as fatal incidents gained close attention by other economically vulnerable African nations. But at the same time, the Zambian economy boomed. Backed by financial powerhouses, Zambia underwent a period of steady financial inflow, high levels of employment, and increased production (particularly in the copper and silk industries).

Facilitated by the freedom created by invaluable economic investment, Zambia's progress towards their broader development agenda has since been granted a perception of higher urgency.[8] Chinese presence in the country has indirectly given rise to a greater focus on social, medical, and educational development within the nation, placing Zambia firmly in the forefront of international Southern African affairs. Yet it has come with an undoubtedly high cost, one that will only continue to rise bar a major shift in current political conditions. Given this greater picture, China's presence in Zambia can only be perceived as both the best and the worst of foreign investment in Africa.

(6) https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/chinas-aid-to-africa-monster-or-messiah/
(7) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/03/zambian-president-workers-chinese-mines
(8) http://www.africalegalnetwork.com/zambia/newsevices/silk-road-or-dragon-path-the-impact-of-chinese-investment-in-zambia/

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Which countries or corporations seem to be primarily responsible for exploitation, and how much overlap is there between these countries and entities essential for African development?

2. How will economic growth be balanced with regulation of FDI? To what extent will political alliances impact economic decisions for or against the regulation of FDI?

3. How does the government's opinion differ in the population's opinion on investment and economic diversification, especially in corrupt, authoritarian, or conflict-ridden countries?

4. To what extent does conflict drive exploitation in Africa? What types of regulations on foreign investment, if needed, be most effective?

5. What steps must be taken for economic diversification, if needed?

FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A comprehensive overview of the politics of African exploitation, with more relevant sources: http://therealnews.com/t2/component/content/article/170-more-blog-posts-from-david-william-pear/1944-africa-incredible-wealth-exploitation-corruption-and-poverty-for-its-people-

2. Looting Africa by Patrick Bond: https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=tBXF3IIcBwYC&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=Africa+exploitation&ots=zFK-TIH-1hI&sig=cyWUXbdxarOT_Q2nwyumwSHfLeI#v=onepage&q=Africa%20exploitation&f=false

3. A description of the current economic situation of most African countries: http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/home

4. This article provides a more detailed account into the situation of economic exploitation in Africa and its effect on the current global economy. It reveals the possible political motivations behind the continuation of exploitation today: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/aug/20/past.hearafrica05

INTRODUCTION: SECONDARY EDUCATION

While education is a major priority for many countries around the world, it is especially beneficial to the future of all countries in the African Union. The status of secondary education for African youth specifically has been pushed aside to instead debate the highly-contested issue of primary education for children. Multiple obstacles, including funding and the lack of proper schooling facilities and unequal opportunity for education, remain in the way of solving this issue. Plans set in place must take into account the differing status of education systems in place already in the various countries. They must also emphasize the importance of funds since the increase in conflict in Africa has caused many countries to divert their funds from the education sector to the military sector. Certain countries also have a larger concentration of villages within their borders, where proper schools and schooling methods may not be found. This could be a major detriment to students' learning. Although these obstacles would be more easily overcome by a more developed country, the African Union must band together and look for a solution to this issue that can be feasible for all countries involved.

HISTORY

As previously stated, access to secondary education in Africa has not been given as much attention as that of primary education in the past. Currently, however, multiple solutions have been provided to solve the issue of primary education and the focus has shifted to access to secondary education. Secondary education has been present around the world since around 320 BC in Greece and was revitalized during the European Renaissance. Originally, secondary education was used to foster artistic talent and vitalize the culture of the society. However, as time went on, secondary education became a means of "engineering" better workers that could support stronger and more powerful nations. Today, education has been declared a fundamental human right by the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is said by the Global Partnership for Education to "yield significant development benefits," when invested in.

Education has been proven to reduce poverty, increase economic growth and income, raise a person's chance of having a healthy life, and promote gender equality and peace. These advantages have proven to help multiple countries improve their global standing and economy, as well as their own citizens' situation. Promoting and providing more access to secondary education in Africa will bring these benefits to the African Union and positively impact the lives of youth all over the continent.

Studies show that children living in a rural environment are twice as likely to be out of school than urban children. Africa contains many villages that may be far from urban centers and hard to travel from to schools. As stated by the UN Women Watch, in rural areas, there is often "a greater prevalence of social and cultural barriers, labour requirements and distance 'penalties,'" that keep girls out of school. In Pakistan, a half-kilometre increase in the distance to school decreases girls' enrollment by 20 percent. Building local schools in rural communities increased girls' enrolment in Egypt, Indonesia and several African countries. However, to address these factors of the issue on a larger scale, funding and continental cooperation is needed. Decreasing the distance between schools and the homes of students would mean that more schools be built and more teachers hired. All of the factors of this issue will have to be explored to better understand the situation of the African Union.

Several NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), including Barefoot College, have already had success in combating issues connected or similar to that of access to secondary education. However, the issue of secondary education is rarely touched on, due to the abundance of options in more developed countries and skepticism that parents will allow their children to continue to go to school after primary education. Many parents and guardians in Africa will send their children to work in fields for more money to buy simple necessities for living. Incentivizing going to school, as is done in the United States, would be in order. In the United States, school is widely marketed as a advantageous experience and students are pushed to improve themselves and their skills so they may be better prepared for the real world. The importance of succeeding in secondary education to get into a good post-secondary program is also greatly emphasized in the American society, to ensure students will apply themselves for their future benefit. Multiple countries, including Sweden, Trinidad, and Tobago, provide free schooling until the student moves on to post-secondary education. While these solutions may not work for the countries of the African Union, they do show the overall importance of education and the dedication countries must have to their youth and students. Access to secondary education is simply the next step in the journey to universal education.

PAST ACTION

While the campaign for secondary education enrollments rose to prominence in the last couple decades in Africa, it does not mark the beginning of the African Union's involvement in these realms. Given the AU's role as one body encompassing many individual member states, the organization has been involved in numerous efforts to promote secondary education and therefore has had to deal with passing laws and acts for this cause.

The African Union has a vision of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, driven by its own people to take its rightful place in the global community and the knowledge industry. The vision rests on education of its citizenry, who can hopefully be prepared and developed in such a way as to attain this vision. The Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006) responded to these challenges by addressing: fair and equal access to primary education, quality education, and capacity building. In spite of the intrepid efforts of member states, a decade of this plan highlighted several key flaws in terms of achieving goals. The Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted a resolution to launch a Second Decade of Education for Africa, and endorsed the Framework for Action earlier adopted to that effect by the Second Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF II). Poor stakeholder participation and weak publicity meant that there was little evident ownership for the first Decade plan, as well as the fact that it was not enacted until two years after the campaign launch meeting. Cooperation with Africa's development partners has also been a setback for this plan, with most of the partners developing independent programs to address the same goals, weakening support for the Decade plan.

The Second Decade for Education for Africa has inspired new optimism, and draws on existing organizations such as FAWE, AAU, ADEA, and ADB with a goal of benefiting the entire African continent. Under the Second Decade, the primary goals are: avoiding creation of new educational systems but rather improvement of existing systems, encouraging collaboration among member nations of the AU, and effective oversight of all systems at all levels.

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) is a ten year program which calls for a shift towards transformative education and training systems to meet the knowledge and skill requirements necessary for Africa's sustainable development goals. CESA hopes to overcome the challenges faced in expanding secondary education opportunities by providing math, science, and vocational training for marginalised communities, women, and children.

The Continental TVET (technical and vocational education and training) strategy consists of a complex set of national policies that focus on student training to address economic development, poverty reduction, and increased youth leadership and innovation. With a system of indicators set in place to monitor progress, TVET aims to familiarize African youth with all forms of training, formal or informal, to build capacity, self-employment skills, and versatility. TVET prepares youth for acquiring jobs in the future; it is not a refuge for those who failed in primary education.

CURRENT SITUATION

One of the biggest obstacles that must be overcome to increase access to secondary education in Africa is financing a program that could effectively and efficiently provide children from the ages of 12-18 access to the education they need. The countries that will need the most support in implementing a plan or solution to this issue may not have the funds necessary to do so. Another major obstacle is the possible lack of educators or teaching facilities that will be needed to properly educate students. Many of the children that need to be reached live in villages that may be far from any urban centers where supplies for schools can be brought in from. This greatly hinders the running of schools in areas surrounding these villages. NGOs step in to address these factors of the issue. However, in the past, NGOs have focused on the education of young children in primary education and not those in secondary.

The AU has already made small steps towards increasing access to secondary education for all. In January of 2016, the African Union Commission developed a strategy driven by the desire to set up a "qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable to achieve the vision and ambitions of the African Union." Those who will implement this strategy will be assigned to "reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels." While the strategy does outline a set of 12 strategic objectives, including revitalizing and expanding tertiary (secondary) education, it does not provide steps on how to do so, simply objectives and the ideal outcome. As a result, the plan is seen as surface-level, not delving deeper into the specifics. That will have to change if the access to secondary education for youth in Africa is to be increased.

When providing access to secondary education for the more than 19 million youth in Africa, many factors must be taken into consideration to effectively do so. Multiple obstacles, including funding and the lack of proper schooling facilities, as well as unequal opportunity for education remain in the

way of solving this issue. The issue of funding must be addressed since the increase in conflict in Africa has caused many countries to divert their fund from the education sector to the military sector. Plans set in place must also take into account the differing status of education systems in place already in the various countries, and the possible shortage of teachers and teaching facilities to teach these students. As the world continues to evolve and grow, it will become harder and harder for students in underdeveloped countries to catch up. It is crucial that this issue be resolved and a solution be provided as soon as possible.

BLOC POSITIONS

Comprehensive Education Bloc: Egypt

Countries with a well-developed education system are more likely to see lower literacy rates, and an increase in overall productivity. An example of one such comprehensive system is Egypt. Egypt has a very well-structured and extensive education system, with 3 paths of education to follow during secondary schooling and 31 universities. While the Egyptian Ministry of Education's primary goal at the secondary education level is to prevent illiteracy, less than half of all primary school students go on to complete secondary school. The greatest shock in this statistic is that primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling is free in Egypt, yet less students take advantage of this than expected. Countries with a more advanced education system may be looked to as an example for countries who may be less developed.

Developing Education Systems Bloc: Kenya & Ethiopia

In the past 60 years, Kenya has greatly improved its educational system. Part of this improvement was to cater to the needs of both students who would pursue higher studies after secondary schooling and those who would stop there. As a result, attendance has increased greatly. In 1963, there were only 151 secondary schools, with a total enrolment of 30,120 students. Today, there are nearly 3,000 secondary schools, with a total enrolment of 620,000 students. Of these 620,000 students, roughly 40% are girls. Despite all of this progress, there is still an imbalance of students in Kenya's secondary schools, with some schools being under-utilised while others are congested. Countries like Kenya may see that there is an imbalance between genders in schools, access to education depending on wealth level, and a continued lack of secondary school students. Many times, these issues raise from an a lack of funds or guidelines from within the government. To combat this, countries may look to non-profits or other governments to help aid their work towards more access to education.

The education system in Ethiopia is mostly being benefited from by those from a wealthy background. Since some families consider working to be more beneficial to their livelihood than their children going to school, many children from poor families do not go to school or simply drop out. At the level of secondary education, wealthy families send their children to private schools while the less fortunate are left with public secondary schools that do not live up to the standard that private schools set. However, Ethiopia is working to solve this discrepancy, having a GPE Grant from the Global Partnership for Education and working to build more local schools.

Little Secondary Education Bloc: South Africa

South Africa's education system is fairly simple throughout primary school and strives to make sure that all students are literate. However, if a student is to continue through secondary education, they must either meet the high standards of government schools or pay to attend one of the private colleges in the country. This greatly limits the access by the less fortunate to secondary education in South Africa. These children must be excellent students or pay the price in order to get a secondary education in South Africa. This is a major issue in many underdeveloped countries, and leads to a systematically undereducated workforce. This work force is then unable to pay the fees to go to secondary school -- and the pattern continues. In these cyclic situations, a major overhaul of a country's education system is necessary. In extreme cases, outside humanitarian forces such as the UN must step in to aid the government.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study #1: Classroom First in Nigeria

The case of Sokoto State in Nigeria represents Africa's education crisis and all that is wrong with the education of the African youth. Pick an average primary school and one will find over fifty students congested in a single classroom. Only a lucky one or two students have textbooks, supplies are lacking, and the teacher is often absent or delivering mundane lectures based on memorization. A recent survey revealed that 80% of Sokoto's third grade are unable to read a single word, results of years spent in an inefficient, mismanaged education system. Even the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, admits that the region's issues with violence and poverty come down to poor educational standards. As he says, the people cannot even differentiate Christianity and Islam, such is the dearth of quality in education. The Sultan's words, as shocking as they may seem, are brutally honest. The primary schools are dilapidated buildings, long since evacuated by children. With no real plan

to move the homeless youth off the streets and back into schools and population rapidly expanding, the quality of education, and life, in Sokoto is regressing. Under the Universal Basic Education standards, Sokoto leads the list with the most unqualified primary schools in Nigeria.

In early 2015, Aminu Tambuwal, current Sokoto state governor, announced an emergency on Sokoto's education system. With this alert, Tambuwal and his advisors promised the people prosperity and newer, better measures to change the direction of the education sector in the near future. With the government speaking up about the issue for the first time in years, Tambuwal's announcement stirred widespread optimism and relief among the Sokoto people. The first aspect of the education crisis the government aimed to fix was the poor teacher training. Speaking about the ultimate aim to " improve human capital capacity in the sector, eliminate inequality in access and radically improve numeracy and literacy", Tambuwal targeted improving quality of teachers through rigorous proficiency tests. Days after declaring emergency, the government announced its recent multi-million dollar purchase of JAMB forms for over 8,000 students, suddenly opening up the possibility of youth going to secondary and tertiary schools.

However, Tambuwal's hard work and desire to bring positive change to the people of Sokoto have led to many seeing him as a radical revolutionary. In July 2015, Tambuwal passed into law a new rule that criminalized the act of parents refusing to send their children to school. Many parents in Sokoto have ignored the government's attempts at reform and only frustrated its efforts. Threatening punishments to those who dissented, Tambuwal proceeded with his plan for the most part unchallenged. Soon, he approved the immediate payment of scholarship funds to all native Sokoto students. Tambuwal's rapid movements have definitely pushed the state of Sokoto in the right direction the last couple of years, and although the results may not be substantial yet, his promises and ability to deliver on his word give the people hope for the future.

Case Study #2: Online Education in Ghana

Over the last few decades, online education has popularized as a method of schooling in Ghana. Rated as one of the top nations for cyber-learning, the program is still nascent and has lots of room to improve. Online education has risen as an alternative form of learning for those who cannot pursue higher forms of education due to financial, infrastructure, or transportation limitations. But even as the whopping statistics reveal that e-learning is on the rise in Ghana, with 1 out of every 2 students having internet and most universities having 24-hour access, the system still has many flaws. A key setback is lack of online teachers. The number of professionals trained to teach online is

slim to start with, not to mention many have gone abroad to teach, stranding thousands of children without opportunities. Strikes are common due to low salaries, but the government is indifferent to the situation. Network and communication issues also press. Not every region of Ghana has the fiber-optic cables necessary to facilitate online education, and there is still a significant portion of the population starved of internet access. Currently, there are over 50 wireless operators and the US operators made Undersea fiber optics cables available for the first time between 2009 and 2010. This set off an internet revolution in the sub-Saharan region, but there is still a long way to go.

A common concern about this new innovative way of teaching is methodology. Surveys and investigations conducted about student behavior in reference to e-learning revealed that there is a large portion of the population skeptical about its ability to stand-in for traditional face-to-face education. According to the survey, many students feel that online learning in insufficient in promoting collaborative learning and social skills that are very much necessary in schooling. Many students indicated that online education lacks the face-to-face interactions with teachers that they feel is important for properly understanding the subjects in class. Due to the flexible nature of online education, many students have also complained about the difficulties coordinating with teachers to be online simultaneously.

However, online education has a vast array of benefits that transcend traditional face-to-face education and offer hope for the future. It gives the poor working classes the opportunity for social mobility by taking advanced courses online for degrees and better salaries. Transportation barriers are almost nonexistent with online education. Long distance travel, often the case for students living in isolated villages far from urban centers where schools are located, disappears, and the cost of fuel can be saved. Flexibility of online education and 24-hour access to all materials make the system convenient and desirable.

Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging behind in the online education sector. Hoping to move past the barriers of traditional education, online education currently stands as the best option for the future. If the government and the AU can devote more attention and support for online education, perhaps literacy rates will rise for Africa's youth and graduates can apply for better jobs. When people can think in the right direction and make sound decisions, society as a whole prospers and Africa can move forward.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How can technology factor into the issue of access to secondary education in Africa?

2. How do you make the government aware of the education crisis and take adequate action?

3. What is an efficient way to train and qualify teachers to ensure that students experience quality education?

4. Is there a way to increase number of schools in those regions where resources and roads are more scarce?

FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A beginner's guide to the importance of education: http://www.globalpartnership.org/education

2. An important recent press release by the African Union: https://www.au.int/en/pressreleases/19702/african-union-heads-state-and-government-adopts-continental-education-strategy

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