Zambia’s Position Paper

Committee: African Union

Topic: Access to Education for Women and Girls

Country: Zambia

School: Lower Canada College

Education is something that should be available to everyone because it is the factor that can change people’s lives forever. Unfortunately, countries with less money than others have a harder time developing and maintaining educational facilities. The repercussions of a population without access to education are very negative. Children will not be able to pursue different fields that they may love, lots of violence can stem from a lack of education, and a country will stay poor without an educated population. Zambia is a prime example of a country that is not able to break out of the poverty spectrum due to the lack of education. Zambia is one of the poorest countries in the world where more than a quarter of a million of children are not even in school. Additionally, 47 percent of the 4 million children who are in primary school do not finish the full 5 years. Even though Zambia has made commendable progress in increasing access and gender parity, the education system is not very strong in the country. Not only does the lack of education hurt the growth of Zambia, it also leads to more diseases being spread (particularly HIV). Due to the population not being taught about safe sex and disease prevention, horrible diseases are easily spread. As of now, 16.1 percent of females in Zambia are HIV positive and 12.3 percent of men are HIV positive. These statistics are very negative for Zambia and more education would reduce the number of people who have HIV.

As for female education, the Girl's Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project, made in 2015, has been helping women in Zambia have more access to education. In primary school, the number of boys vs. girls is not too grave but the real problem arises in the later years. Dropout rates for girls is much higher than the dropout rates for boys. In 2009, 1.7 percent of boys dropped out compared to 2.7 percent of girls. The main reasons women dropout of school is because of economic constraints, marriage, and pregnancy. The costs of secondary education remain a constraint to keeping older girls in school, unlike primary education, for which tuition is free. 19 percent of women aged 20 to 24 had been married by the age of 15 and this forces them out of school as well. These huge differences leads to females being less educated on the larger scale. This leads to a multitude of women being farmers for a living without pay. In 2010, 90 percent of women living in rural areas worked in the agricultural field.

Fortunately, Zambia has been partnering with UNICEF in order to aid the porous education situation. With UNICEF’s three step plan, (Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE), Quality Basic Education and HIV and AIDS and Life Skills Education), Zambia has been slowly improving its education systems. For the early childhood care, UNICEF sets up many friendly learning centers for young children. Moreover, these centers also mentor Zambian teachers in order to have a more beneficial classroom setting. The quality basic education focuses on building more facilities and making sure sanitation is good in schools. Right now, 10,000 children are learning in 60 new facilities that UNICEF has built and they are furthering their education. Lastly, the life skills education program teaches children about disease prevention and living healthy lives. This part is also essential for the safety of the Zambian population.