

Choose one country in the majority world (low or middle income country) and critically explore the barriers to accessing good quality, consistent education for children and young people in your chosen country. Refer to national, regional, and international policies and reports; and apply theory throughout.

In 2015, all world leaders agreed that bold action was needed to face the challenges in today's world. The Global Goals for Sustainable Development are a "universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity", UNDP (2024). Unfortunately, we find ourselves further behind in progress than anticipated, partly due to the COVID pandemic and its subsequent impact on countries finances. This does not mean that all is lost, the progress made is significant and positive. It does bring into question whether the goals set were made with SMART target setting in mind. 'Achievable' and 'Time-based', whilst seeming realistic, reasonable and ambitious, may be overstretching it. Although the growth mindset (Dweck, 2012) is surely something to be admired. Within each of the 17 global goals there are multiple targets, with recognition that the goals are integrated and the effect of actions in one goal will impact another. This is confirmed by Green (2015) when he talks about the sustainable development goals and the progress that countries are making towards them. Green supposes that in order for substantial real change to happen we need the leaders of our countries to make the change for the better. In order for us to have good world leaders that share the same ideas for progress (global goals) then we need to vote for these leaders. This relies on the population knowing what they want in the world and in politicians/government. This can only happen through education. Identifying the need to engage the youth of their country in politics, the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act (2020) empowered Welsh children to vote at age 16. This was supported by the new curriculum for Wales (2022) through its aims in all four purposes of producing "ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; ready to learn throughout their lives; to play a full part in life; as valued members of society". By creating opportunities for young people to express their voice through education in political literacy, they will have the ability to use those rights for the greater good both locally and globally. The removal of this oppression improves the well-being of this demographic, this is something that Green (2015) also recognises as having a huge impact on SDG's. Gross domestic product (GDP) is a way of measuring a country's economic wealth, which might give the impression that a country with a high GDP would be excelling with the SDG's. More money for investment in education, eradicating poverty, cleaner energy and reduced inequalities, you would think. Yet Green (2015) reports that although they have a rather modest GDP, Costa Rica scores higher on the Social Progress Index for quality of life, through prioritising education, health and the environmental sustainability of its people. They are using their country's wealth for the well-being of their citizens, with positive results. As Maslow (1943) theorised, humans need their physiological needs met in order for them to satisfy a higher set of needs, leading to self-actualisation and fulfil their potential. These physiological needs are represented in the sustainability goals 1,2,3 and 6. With the circulation of global education, comes democratization and schools play a valuable role in educating children in readiness for exercising their future democratic rights. In educating children with the knowledge needed to make responsible judgments and contributions. That will impact the well-being of society within their communities Nationally and globally. Developing their consciousness to see the wider consequences that their behaviours and judgments have. These teachings are supported by. Azonlay (2023), UNESCO's Director General when she states, "Education is a public good, it is delicate., It is fragile, but it is the best possible

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investment we can make.”. The Welsh Government (2008) Further supports this when they state that “the world is unjust and unequal, but that it can be shaped and changed by the attitudes, values and behaviour of the people who populate it”.

After the experience of World War I, Eglantyne Jebb (founder of Save the Children fund) Proclaimed that children worldwide deserved assistance through a recognised protection policy. Following the Declaration of Rights of the Child (1923), The League of Nations adopted this thinking and named it the Geneva Declaration (1924). Making history as the first. Time recognition was made regarding specific rights for children. Although the document doesn't use the words rights specifically. It does pertain to adults' obligations for the well-being of children in their development, through protection. Consequently, in 1946, the establishment of the International Children's Emergency Fund was formed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNICEF), with the emphasis on children in a global aspect. It is following on from the recognition that children all over the world deserve to be protected through special care and assistance (UDHR, 1948), that the Rights of the Child (1989) came into force. Article 28 declares “the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity”, UNCRC (1989). Whilst this right cannot be disputed as being in the best interests of any child theoretically, it does conflict with Article 30 in some countries. Stating in countries of minorities children should “not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language”. This is the ‘complex web’ of policies, frameworks and values that globalization promotes, yet contradictory social and political values skirmish upon, as Cornwall and Graham-Matheson (2012) discuss.

It is with this in mind that when we look at a developing country such as Lesotho, that we see the barriers to education that are still holding back Aim 4 ‘Quality Education’ of the United Nations (2015) SDG's. Whilst as previously stated, it is important to remember that this goal has causality with goals 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10, regarding, poverty, hunger, health, gender equality and inequalities. Lesotho is a land locked country surrounded by South Africa, with a population of 2.2 million. Formally known as Basutoland, it became a British Colony in 1959 after seeking association with the British following territorial wars with the Dutch. As it gained independence from Britain in 1966, Basutoland became known as Lesotho. Known for its mountainous terrain and source of South Africa's two largest rivers, Lesotho trades its water supply with South Africa in return for electricity. There are two official languages of Lesotho, its mother tongue Sesotho and the second language of English. In 1948 Lesotho was under the rule of the Afrikaner Nationalist government, where it used its language in education policy for its political aims. Extending the policy in 1953 of educating African learners through their mother tongue from the first four years of schooling to the first eight years. This Bantu Education Act (1953) saw the oppression of black African children in accessing good quality education, separating them from white children and extending the apartheid to black schools. The white supremacy of Bantu education denied the opportunities and resources afforded to white students, such as full-time education with good quality teachers to educate. In effect, Bantu education denigrated the culture, identity and history of its black population. By limiting their hours of access

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to education, combined with poor quality teaching and curriculum, black African students were being raised to fulfil the governments prophecy of them only ever achieving manual labour with poor quality living. This led to the portrayal of African communities as being un-progressive, traditional and rural, further promoting racial stereotypes and myths about them worldwide. During the 19th century, Welsh school children were forbidden from speaking their native language in schools. The oppression of Welsh children's right to converse in their mother tongue is the antithesis of the experience of African children, but which impacted negatively on their education and well-being and impeded the development and future of both countries. As well as the oppression, Welsh children caught speaking their first language were further ridiculed by having to wear a piece of wood hung around their neck, called the Welsh Not. The misfortune of being the child wearing the Not at the end of the day resulting in being caned. Thankfully, under the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment (Wales) Act 2020, a law was introduced in 2022 that prohibits the physical punishment of children in Wales, from residents or visitors, protecting children from violence against them today. With such comparable experiences in mind, that it was no surprise that in response to the Ethiopian Famine of 1984, Wales identified Lesotho as a country it would like to establish a link with. Appealing through its similarities in the country's size, bilingualism, landscape and cultural heritage, Wales was twinned with Lesotho. In the hopes that Wales would listen with empathy to Lesotho, as Rogers (1969) promotes, so that as a more affluent country it may assist Lesotho in progressing its nation. This is in line with the United Nations SDG's (2015). Launching in 1985, the Dolen Cymru link was established to strengthen international relations through friendship and "mutual learning – about each other's situation, culture, challenges, aspiration", Williams (2008). Following the official visit, it was two educationists, one of which a lecturer on Education from Trinity College Carmarthen Ann Bonner-Steele, that visited for two weeks in May of 1987. Bonner-Steele's task was to assess the link between primary and secondary education and report back on the findings to the British Council on any improvements that she could identify. Proving that this twinning was more than just becoming an aid agency, not falling into the false generosity of white saviourism, but instead showing mutual respect by working with the oppressed for them to be liberated, Freire (1968). As Ginott (1971) expressed, teaching and learning has the power to humanise or dehumanise within a climate of learning. How you choose to behave in those situations can then be mirrored (Bandura, 1963) back to you by others. It was after further attempts to oppress the education of black students in 1976 that resulted in the Soweto Student uprising. Spreading through the country and beginning 20 years of political resistance. It was through the Language in Education Policy of 1997, that the right of choice in the language of learning and teaching was promoted. However, this was hampered by challenges as reported by Sookrajh and Joshua (2009), which could be attributed to the isolation of rural schools and the difficulties in monitoring open lines of communication. This is particularly evident of a community of Basotho (citizens of Lesotho) males. Herd boys, named so for their work in remote locations in Lesotho's mountainous regions, who tend to livestock, many of whom have not attended school, or dropped out to commit to working on the land as directed and expected by their family/elders. With a negative perception from society, their unkempt appearance

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invites unkind stereotypes and discrimination. Unlike the UK, there is no Equality Act (2010) to protect them by law and policies. Their community is not protected and therefore racism regarding their appearance is a regular occurrence according to Pitikoe and Preece (2016). The impact of which weighs heavily on their well-being, lowering self-esteem by name calling and casting aspersions on their character by implying criminal activity. This can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy where the herders become angry at their treatment and retaliate with aggression and hostility towards society. This supports Skinner's (1958) theory of operant conditioning, whereby reinforcement of a behaviour has strengthened the response and made it more likely to occur again. Bandura (1977) would argue that in order for these herders to alter their negative behaviour, they need to be shown some to replicate by society. Although he would also stress that the herders need to have the motivation to want to replicate positive behaviour. For that to develop there needs to be a shift in their society, so the herders are given a voice to be heard, without judgment. As Pitikoe and Preece (2016) report, this community want recognition and they want to be considered as part of the wider community in Lesotho, through rehabilitation. Identifying that their perception by society has held them back from progressing, engaging and completing educational programmes. Herder views in relation to what they want their education to look like is less formal than the Basotho society currently promotes. The expression of interest in experiential learning for practical life experiences and sustainable skills, rather than the passive learning of information by rote, is something that Dewey (1958) was passionate in promoting. The provision of vocational qualifications in Welsh schools is supported by the Welsh Governments (2021) Co-operation Agreement, in reforming the foundations of Wales through the education system. Reforming the qualifications of children to "fit the needs of our learners and our economy".

Through a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Friends of Lesotho (FOL), a registered non-profit organisation formed in 1985, the Heal Our Land Organisation (HOLO) have built a purposed based classroom to host an intervention group for Lesotho children. Targeted at children who are disengaged, gang members and vulnerable in Matsieng, HOLO provide a Motivational and Educational Club (MEC). Through well-being sessions HOLO works "to promote and protect education, human dignity, gender equality and public health through training, advocacy and social mobilization and empowerment strategies and improve the culture in Lesotho as a whole", FOL (2022). Including the targeting of shepherds (herders) this is the type of project that could have great success in working with the herders to promote positive links with education, which in turn would better their community, society and country. The benefit to this would also be the economic prosperity, social progress and sustainability of Lesotho, in line with the SDG's (2015). This influence on the development of the children of Lesotho is supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, regarding the balance of nature and nurture. The different factors that have played a part in influencing the child range from the Chronosystem of the child's biological hereditary make-up, combining with the environmental forces that evolve over time. The Macrosystem of Social and cultural values is one That heavily influences and impacts Basotho children with regards to their education. in fact, as well as being. A nation in support of the UN CRC, Africa made its own and it

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is the only region-specific rights charter. The African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) came into force in 1999 and all members of the African Union have signed this Charter, unlike the UNCRC which is still missing some countries from the global list. The ACRWC builds on the UNCRC, with rights specifically relevant to the African concept of community. For example, Article 31, of the 48 Articles, pertains to the responsibilities of the child. "The child, subject to his age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present Charter, shall have the duty: to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times, and to assist them in case of need", (ACRWC, 1999). Such as in the cases of the aforementioned herd boys, they may not have the choice of whether to attend school, if the needs of their families come first. This is indirect. Contrast to how we view the child in the UNCRC and in Wales/ UK. However, who are the rest of the world to argue that this is not the best way for the child/ children. Again, it comes back to cultural differences and a sense of morality and empathy. Doing the right thing, making the right choice when fully informed from all perspectives. If an African child needs to leave education at the age of 10 to look after the animals because of the loss of their father, who are the rest of the world to say this is wrong. However, Article 31 does go against the Article 11 (1), "Every child has the right to education", (ACRWC, 1999). In the Exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979), the child has indirect influence from national and local government, such as funding allocation and budgets for education. Whilst what those governments do does affect the child, they are in a removed broader circle outside of the child. Those in direct influence with the child in the Mesosystem are people such as teachers, healthcare professionals and outside agencies, such as educational psychologists. These people work directly with those in the Microsystem, such as parents/carers in the child's immediate environment, with the child at the centre. It is also worth noting that Bronfenbrenner believed that how those in the different systems interacted with each other could affect the child's development too. Positive relationships between the systems are key in helping to bring awareness of the cultural and environmental influences on the child, so that appropriate experiences for learning can occur for the child to develop positively.

It is this theory it seems, that is key to the success of the sustainable development goals (2015). Every country has its own biological hereditary make-up impacted by environmental forces. Each country has governments and policies, with a population of adults and children that all want the best possible living conditions and positive experiences like education and healthcare. All people want what is best for their children and for the future of their children. In essence, countries should be building positive relationships with each other to enable this to happen. As Madela (1990) stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world".

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