Committee: UNESCO

Country: Mexico

Agenda Item: Expanding Global Education Opportunities and Reducing Inequalities in Access to Education

The United Mexican States, located in North America, is a Federal Republic with 31 states and a federal district. With a population of around 130 million, Mexico is the 11th most populated and largest Spanish-speaking country. Approximately 51.51% of the population is female, and 23.2 million people consider themselves Indigenous. Mexico has achieved a high literacy rate of 92.25% and is an active member of the G20, APEC, UN, OAS, and OECD.

Education systems worldwide face various problems. According to Bustillo and Patrinos (2023) from the World Bank, the biggest four issues that usually appear in developing countries include poverty, lack of attention to early childhood care and education, lack of qualified teachers, and problems in evidence-based policy development. According to UNESCO, 250 million children are out of school, a number that worsens for Indigenous people. Indigenous communities, which make up 5% of the global population, have less access to quality education. The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples defines quality education as culturally sensitive, respectful of heritage, and well-resourced, aiming to develop individuals and communities while respecting human rights.

Countries need to transform their education systems to address these issues and ensure equitable education for Indigenous peoples. UNESCO emphasizes the importance of continuous funding, inclusion, gender equality, and social well-being for such transformations.

Mexico, with 37 million students and one of the countries with a high number of Indigenous Peoples, needed to face similar problems. To address the problems in the education system for Indigenous People, the Mexican Government made some attempts. As indicated by BBVA, while the changes in education aimed to restructure the system, and the schools, it focused on developing more professional and quality teachers with new content in education. More importantly, related to the Indigenous People, the new system targeted inclusion and equality. Aligned with these objectives, the Mexican government created the General Department of Indigenous Education to include Indigenous people in the education system, and the program of “bilingual and bicultural” education was able to be piloted in some schools. With the same objective, as part of the Compensatory Education Project, Mexico partnered with the World Bank to improve education for indigenous people in Mexico. With these initiatives and some others, the literacy rate among Indigenous people is recorded as 56%. While this number can be increased, this can be considered as an achievement.

The Mexican government remains committed to improving education for Indigenous peoples. We recommend the UN adopt a similar approach in other countries with significant Indigenous populations, focusing on culturally sensitive education, quality learning, and greater access. We are prepared to lead initiatives and participate in follow-up discussions to ensure the success of these efforts globally.

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