

Review Article

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Underlying Educational Inequalities in the Global and Fijian Context

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Abstract: The delivery of education and the outcome it produces largely depend on how students are taught, the resources they are exposed to along with the kind of facilities they are provided with. We have to acknowledge that teaching and learning do not occur in the same way across the world due to critical factors. These factors cause hindrances in the education system that create educational inequalities which exist in various forms as this article aims to outline. Some of these include shortage of teachers, poverty learning-gap, distribution of resources, location of schools, access to scholarship, and school curriculum. It is worth comparing Fiji's education system to the global context using all the three streams of education that is primary, secondary, and higher education. It is prudent that stakeholders in all three education streams are aware of the nature of inconsistencies that affect the students. This will inform and enable policy makers to engage with the current underlying inequalities in education in order to address these that persist in the world and in Fiji. Conversations that revolve around these issues will be fruitful for the education system in Fiji and worldwide.

Keywords: educational inequalities, shortage of teachers, resources, curriculum, Fiji

1 Introduction to Educational Inequality – Global context

This article sets out to compare Fiji's education system to the global context using all the three streams of education, that is primary, secondary, and higher education. It is prudent that stakeholders in all three education streams are

aware of the nature of inconsistencies that affect the students. This study aims to inform and enable policy makers to engage with the current underlying inequalities in education in order to address these that persist in the world and in Fiji. There is a growing body of research on global educational inequalities. Leathwood and Hayton (2002) support the view that inequalities in education not only persist, but in some cases even increase. Kenway (1997) argues that economic disadvantage is related to underachievement. According to Gillborn and Mirza (2000), since the late 1980s, the achievement gap between the top and bottom strata of society has widened (p. 18). In the UK, educational opportunities and achievements are linked to ethnicity and gender inequalities. Leathwood and Archer (2004) and Leathwood and Hayton (2002) found that Afro-Caribbean boys and Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls and boys outperformed Caucasians overall. The UK education system has long been seen as reflecting and reproducing inequalities (Leathwood & Hayton, 2002). Young (1971) explains as follows:

[...] In an ideal world, not hampered by shortage of resources, the unfortunate could have large sums spent on them too. But it was not, has not been, nor ever will be, an ideal world. The choice was between priorities, and there was no doubt how the decision had to go in England. What mattered most were the primary schools, where pupils were being divided into the gifted and the ungifted; and, above all, the grammar schools where the gifted received their due.

Young (2001) made a comparison of Britain's education system and notes similar observation from 1970s. He stated the following:

I expected that the poor and disadvantaged would be done down, and in fact they have been. If branded at school, they are more vulnerable for later employment. It is hard indeed in a society that makes so much of merit to be judged as having none. No underclass has ever been left as morally naked as that. In England, the rich and powerful have been doing mighty well for themselves, bolstered in the meritocratic belief that they 'deserve' it, and as a result general inequality has been becoming more grievous with every year that passes. (Young, 2001)

The observations made by Young about Britain's education system highlight that inequalities in resourcing and

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prestige would continue to be damaging to society (Goundar, 2023b). Rose, Sabates, Alcott, and Ilie (2017) claim that to keep progressing convergence in education, overcoming inequalities in learning is key. In his discussion of the forms of inequality in education in Latin America, Stromquist (2004) confirms the centrality of poorly staffed and incomplete rural schools, separate provision of public and private schools, uneven allocation and deteriorating rewards for teachers, unequal distribution of material resources, and a compounding effect of gender and social class. Even though Fiji can be best classified as a Small Island Developing State or Pacific Island State, comparisons of inequities within the global context are made to demonstrate that there are similarities in developed as well as developing countries.

2 Common Educational Inequalities in Global Primary Education

The primary level of education is a common point at which educational disparities emerge. At the World Education Forum in April 2000, the first resolution of participating members of the international community was that by the year 2015, all children access to quality, complete, free and compulsory primary education (Leathwood & Archer, 2004). It has a particular focus on girls, children from difficult situations, and members of ethnic minorities. Blair (2001) adds that social justice must be based on the equal worth of all individuals regardless of background, ability, creed, or race, and governments are determined to end discrimination and prejudice. Blair's concept of community and responsibility makes up the concept of social justice, along with equal value and opportunity for all (Leathwood & Hayton, 2002, p. 140).

Poverty is a key driver of inequalities in accessing education (Goundar, 2023b). Rose et al. (2017) clarify that in low and lower middle-income countries where primary school completion rates are higher than 50% there is almost no gender gap between boys and girls. However, young people from poor households who were learning at age 8 are very unlikely to access higher education. Thus, Rose et al. (2017) argue that inequalities in learning based on poverty start early in the life course and determine future educational outcomes. In examining the educational inequalities present in primary schools globally, Rose et al. (2017) explain that the rate of incompleteness is high for low- and lower middle-income countries. In certain developing countries, such as India, the image and international status associated with the metric of "primary school completion"

has resulted in federal and state governments indiscriminately pushing students through primary school levels, simply to bolster the "completion" figure. However, as it can be imagined, the skills possessed by such students are far below what is expected of their level. Further, Rose et al. noted the following:

[...] The gap between the poor and rich household widens as children from poor households are lacking opportunities to learn the basics, therefore they are more likely to drop out of school. The higher magnitude of learning gaps between all children is most evident in countries such as Niger, a country located in West Africa. The combination of low school completion rates, and low levels of learning for those in school results in very small numbers of children learning overall: about 10% of children from rich households complete primary school after grade 3 or 4, while less than 1% of the poorest achieve this. (Rose et al., 2017)

Schmelkes (2000) reported that in Mexican primary schools there was substantial difference in student performance depending on the type of school, whether private or public, urban or rural or indigenous. Stromquist (2004) notes that among indigenous students in Mexico, only 5–9% reached the national expected standards. Educational inequalities emerge in the allocation of financial and material resources (Stromquist, 2004). Further, Schmelkes, Noriega, Lavin, and Martinez (1996) made the claim that poor state of school infrastructure, such as access to basic facilities, drinking water, toilets, conditions of classrooms, and unavailability of books, was highest in Mexico. Cervini (2002) made similar observations in his study of primary schools in Argentina and concluded that the economic and social capital of families affect students' cognitive performance.

3 Inequalities in Secondary Education

Educational inequalities in the secondary education sector are argued to be based on the location of schools, distinction between private and public schools, and poor allocation of teachers (Goundar, 2023b). Unterhalter, Epstein, Morrell, and Moletsane (2004) found that two secondary schools located in the two largest towns in the Greater Durban Area with Black African population exhibited educational inequalities. They discovered that both schools were poorly resourced compared to middle-class, former white, suburban schools, though by national standards they had reasonably good facilities (Unterhalter et al., 2004). It was observed that the two schools were headed by African, Zulu-speaking male teachers who had been in

office for over a decade. Despite being located in developed townships, the largest schools with African population were still under-resourced.

Political neglect and the sparse distribution of the rural population mean that “the coverage of public schools in rural areas is limited” (Stromquist, 2004, p. 99). In addition, Stromquist (2004) provides findings from schools in the Latin American region which show that significant forms of inequality in education exist between public and private schools (p. 100). Children who attend private schools have taken home a lot of homework, read good quality books, and have good access to the Internet, quickly gaining an educational advantage over children in less resourced schools and settings (Stromquist, 2004). Leathwood and Hayton (2002) argue that educational inequalities are caused by the “selection” of pupils by British schools. By allowing some schools to choose, it is inevitable that top performing schools will be scooped and influence other schools in the neighbourhood (Webster & Parsons, 1999). Furthermore, Reay (1999) found that through this selective process, for some (middle-class) parents, discrimination increased with the school system, directly and directly into the opportunities available to working-class children and their parents.

Apart from the fact that selection between schools is a problem, another problem is the risk of skill disruption, especially since movement between sets is restricted (Gillborn, 1997). Leathwood and Hayton (2002) report that lower grade students receive a more restricted curriculum, making it more difficult to progress to higher grades. South Asian children have recently been shown to be more likely to belong to lower classes for linguistic reasons, while Afro-Caribbean children are similarly classified as destructive (Gillborn, 1997). However, Hatcher (1997) and Lynch (1999) answer that there is no evidence that using skill settings improve performance. Hatcher (1997) also points out that in the United States, policies to rapidly track some children may reinforce racial inequalities. He points out that policies that promote gender equality lead to turning differences into inequalities.

4 Higher Education Globally

Higher education not only involves young high-school learners who pursue undergraduate studies but also adult learners who return to studies after a break. These adult learners face hardship due to certain forms of inequalities. In discussing inequalities in higher education, Merrill (2004)

confirms that in certain departments of some institutions in the UK adult learners are perceived by lecturers as being non-traditional or non-standard, and not a normal student. Adult students soon learnt which departments in a traditional university did not favour adults (Merrill, 2004). This problem merits further investigation. One strategy put forward by Merrill (2004, p. 92) to address this problem is that further and higher education institutions need to listen to the voices of working class adult learners to ensure that their institutions become more accessible, rather than, as is the case with some universities, expecting them to adjust to the institutions.

Stromquist (2004) reported that in Latin America teacher training is becoming more technical, moving towards didactic-methodological courses and away from courses addressing historic, social, political, and economic concerns. In Argentina, it has been reported that plans currently in effect consider only two courses on these subjects, thus weakening among teachers the function of the knowledge that promotes critical consciousness about the complex social and economic relations of the country, the educational system, and their own practice (Vior, 2001). Leathwood and Hayton (2002) voiced concern about the gap between poor and rich higher education institutions. The unit of resources per student in poor universities is considerably lower than in the elite institutions that results in larger class sizes, few tutors, poorer library facilities, and lower teaching quality assessments (Hutchings & Archer, 2001; Leathwood & Hayton, 2002). Blackmore (1997) stressed that in under-resourced universities students are suffering due to reduced tutorials, increased tutorial size, and less student contact. Stromquist (2004) draws our attention to the compounding effect of gender and social class experience in higher education and notes that the disadvantage experienced by poor boys compared to rich boys is smaller than that experienced by poor girls compared to rich girls.

In Latin America, Stromquist (2004) points out that girls in poor families suffer the greatest educational disadvantage compared to girls in rich families or boys in poor families. Sloan (1984) and Vior (2001) argue that these policies seem to be adopted to maintain at most minimum levels of governance, that is, just enough to prevent social outbreaks.

5 Background of Education in Fiji

The preceding sections in this article have discussed educational inequalities experienced globally. After providing a brief background on the education system in Fiji, this

section discusses educational inequalities in Fiji. Since Fiji is a multiracial country with two dominant ethnic backgrounds, their terms have been used interchangeably in this article. These are Native Fijians or iTaukei or indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijian or Fijians of Indian descent (Goundar, 2020; Goundar & Sharma, 2021).

Education in Fiji was carried out at home and through community activities prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries and travellers (Goundar, 2023b). Children learned through listening, observing, imitating, and practising what their elders did. Schooling began in Fiji in 1835 soon after the arrival of first missionaries (Goundar, 2019b). The way schooling came to Fiji is explained by Goundar (2019a) as follows:

[...] Initially, Fijians were required to read the Bible, which had been translated to the vernacular language, but English soon became (and still continues to be) the language of instruction, official communication, administration, politics and law. Despite decolonisation, the curriculum is still Western-based, with an emphasis on academic-type subjects. English language, English literature, science and social science subjects still form the main disciplinary bases for schooling. During colonial times, a Western-type education was imposed on the colonial subjects and so began a process that would ensure that the colonised subjects became as ‘Western’ as possible. This process has continued unabated since decolonisation occurred and demonstrates to a large extent the profound psychological impact of colonialism.

The colonial government established schools for European children which followed the establishment of several more schools to cater for the chiefly elite Fijian families (Ali & Narayan, 2023). The local management committees constructed schools for Indo-Fijians and the local provisional council established schools for indigenous Fijian children. Lagi, Waqailiti, Raisele, Tyson, and Nussey (2023) emphasise that colonial racialising practices and their discriminatory manifestations left huge gaps in the quality of education for all but the Europeans. Today, education remains centrally controlled in Fiji (Ali & Narayan, 2023) with 907 schools that comprises of 736 primary schools and 171 secondary schools (Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts, 2021). Table 1 presents the number of schools, teachers, and students in Fiji as of 2020.

A number of higher education institutions were established in Fiji and the Pacific during the 1960s, including the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji (Goundar & Sharma, 2021; Goundar, 2023b). According to Kandasamy (2014), Fiji has 68 institutions of higher education, including three largest universities in the country: University of the South Pacific, National University of Fiji, and University of Fiji (Goundar, 2019b). Independence provided Fiji with

Table 1: Statistics on schools, teachers and students in Fiji

	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Total
Schools	736	176	912
Teachers	6,186	5,576	11,762
Students	154,248	70,093	224,341

Source: Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (2021).

opportunities for educational reform, but Lagi et al. (2023) argue that the influence of the colonial era on education has taken hold, favouring English as the sole medium of instruction. In Fiji, sociocultural factors such as student origin, ethnic background, gender, class, cultural deficiencies, and school/institutional disadvantages have been identified as major determinants of educational inequality (Goundar, 2020). Attitudes, impact on children, rural poverty, parental ignorance, and substandard school facilities are other factors (Goundar, 2020, 2023b; Goundar & Sharma, 2021).

Dubey and Alam (2014) strongly argue that in Fiji racial inequities in education are a consequence of constant complex and multiple interactions of the dynamics of race, gender, class, and location in the economic, political, cultural, and historical shores. They claim that the differential standards, access to, participation in, and outcomes of the education of indigenous Fijians compared to those of Indo-Fijians have been on the political agenda since independence occurred in 1970. Goundar (2023a) highlights that “racial” educational inequalities have been a preoccupation of the subsequent three predominantly Fijian postcolonial governments (Alliance 1970–1987; Interim 1987–1994; SVT 1994–May 1999).

In 2013, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was endorsed following community consultations. The vision of education articulated in the NCF is as follows:

To provide a holistic, inclusive, responsive and empowering education system that enable all children to realise their full potential, appreciate fully their inheritance, take pride in their national and cultural identity and contribute fully to sustainable national development. (Crossley et al., 2017, p. 876)

Crossley et al. (2017, p. 880) claim that the future of the NCF is unpredictable as the Ministry of Education has not taken the framework practically. They also highlighted that in their study teachers claimed their voice has been missing in consultations on policy matters. Teachers felt that they were being treated as machines and not allowed to think or voice their ideas in the policy making stages (Crossley et al., 2017). However, these were matters under the previous government. It will be interesting to observe how these inequities are addressed by the current Fiji government.

Since 2014, the Fijian government has provided a free education scheme which allows parents to send children to school without paying the school fees (Prasad & Asa, 2014). This scheme extends to free bus fare for families who are having financial constraints to pay transportation costs for their children. Parents have been able to take advantage of this scheme, especially families from remote areas who previously were unable to send their children to school due to financial burden (Prasad & Asa, 2014; Sharma, Loreman, & Macanawai, 2016). An important finding from Prasad and Asa (2014) is that 85% of the students indicated that they would opt for further education even without scholarship. This is a credit to the free education scheme which has been effective in addressing educational inequities that children in primary and secondary schools faced. After the 2022 general elections in Fiji, the People's Coalition government has also given assurance that they will continue the free education scheme which no doubt will be a welcome move by parents, students, and schools alike.

6 Common Educational Inequalities in Primary Education

The primary school curriculum plays a central role in student engagement, but in Fiji the colonial influence has created inequalities in the educational structure. Nabobo-Baba (2014) states that the formal education system introduced by Christian missionaries in the early nineteenth century and later by colonial governments destroyed traditional educational patterns. In his book *Deschooling Society* (1971), Ivan Illich made the following similar observations to Nabobo-Baba:

[...] incidental education cannot any longer return to the forms which learning took in the village or the medieval town. Traditional society was more like a set of concentric circles of meaningful structures, while modern man must learn how to find meaning in many structures to which he is only marginally related. In the village, language, architecture, work, and family customs were consistent with one another, mutually explanatory and reinforcing. If an apprenticeship never became a master or a scholar, he still contributed to making shoes or to making church services solemn. Education did not compete for time with either work or leisure. (Illich, 1971)

According to Chand (2015), the fact that English is the language of the tokenism given to slang teachings attests to the dominant presence of authority and power in the colonies. Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment systems are still “Western” oriented and often heterogeneous and is seen as inappropriate, irrelevant, and unrealistic.

Even though there has been some measure of localisation of the content to include materials on Fiji and the South Pacific (Goundar, 2020), Thaman (2009) believes that the focus is still very academic, theoretical, and fashioned after New Zealand and Australian curricula. Chand (2015) states that little progress has been made by the Ministry of Education in implementing multilingual education in primary school classrooms in Fiji. In his study, Chand (2015) explains that the Curriculum Development Unit is not equipped with necessary resources, there is no library where guides on the curriculum development process can be sought, and it does not have adequate infrastructure facilities. Further, due to the diversity that exists in Fiji, Goundar (2023b) and Sharma et al. (2016) maintain that educational planning must be inclusive in scope for the curriculum planners and educational policy makers in Fiji.

7 Educational Inequalities in Secondary Education – Fiji

One of the pivotal causes for educational inequalities in Fiji is attributed to the location of schools. Logistical issues such as isolation from urban educational centres and the related issues of distance have led to poor quality of education in schools (Ali & Narayan, 2023; Goundar, 2023b) as the bulk of which are situated in rural areas. Poor economic conditions in rural areas is also a contributing factor for poor educational performance of students. Voigt-Graf, Iredale, and Khoo (2007) point out that at secondary level in Fiji, some subject areas in lower secondary such as mathematics and science, information and communication technology, and accounting face considerable staff shortages in upper secondary. They highlighted that rural schools in general face greater difficulties in recruiting suitable staff despite the remote allowance paid to teachers working in remote schools (Voigt-Graf et al., 2007). Moreover, Voigt-Graf et al. (2007) state that this is only a partial solution to offset the disadvantages associated with teaching in a remote school in Fiji. Staff shortage in remote schools impacts the performance of the students which contributes further to educational inequalities faced by students in rural secondary schools (Crossley et al., 2017). Nabobo-Baba, Naisilisili, Bogitini, Baba, and Lingam (2012) add that no effort should be spared to ensure that highly qualified teachers are sent to rural and/or disadvantaged schools by providing them a package of incentives, such as study opportunities, extra pay, and good housing.

Nabobo-Baba (2014) states that the problems confronting the education of indigenous Fijian students are evident in

their poor performance at the upper secondary and tertiary levels. For example, in Nabuka's (1984) study, it was discovered that the most significant variable that caused educational inequalities amongst indigenous Fijian students was the people with whom students resided whilst at school or in boarding institutions when compared to Indo-Fijian students who lived at home. Other crucial observations from Nabuka's (1984) study include the educational level of the students' parents or guardians, the availability of reading materials in the student's home as iTaukeis had significantly fewer story books, and the availability of prescribed text books for students. This illustrates how inequalities become entrenched and propagate intergenerationally, without being questioned (Goundar, 2023b).

The fact that Euro-Western written education has become established and socioeconomically valued means that the lack of support material, such as written entertainment such as "story books," is now expected in the home domain as well (Goundar, 2023b). This is despite such written forms of entertainment being culturally foreign and unattested in native Fijian knowledge systems. However, the apparent "naturalness" of story books in the written form is accepted unquestioningly due to which families that lack these resources feel the pinch even more.

8 Inequalities in Fiji's Higher Education

Educational inequalities manifest at higher education level in Fiji due to allocation of scholarships (Prasad & Asa, 2014), the way teacher training is conducted, and shortage of teachers (Goundar, 2023b). Upon the recommendation of the 1969 Education Commission which specifically suggested for 50% quota of all government scholarships to be provided for indigenous Fijians at tertiary level, it soon after became a public policy (Nabobo-Baba, 2014). Lagi et al. (2023) put forward the argument that the policy by the Fijian Affairs Board to provide scholarships to assist only indigenous Fijian students was discriminatory, since all other races in Fiji were catered by the Multi-Ethnic Fiji Government scholarships (Prasad & Asa, 2014). This policy continued until the introduction of Tertiary Education Loans Scheme and National Toppers Scheme in 2014 for all students (Kandasamy, 2014).

As Sen (1985) pointed out, having access to resources does not guarantee that an individual will achieve what is expected even though he or she may be provided with the means of doing so. Therefore, Puamau's (2001) point can be

argued as the large educational gap between indigenous Fijians and other ethnic groups in terms of numbers accessing the higher levels of education as it is presently being filled on merit-based allocation of scholarships (Goundar, 2023b). Finally, Illich (1971) notes the general characteristics of educational institutions which are relevant in addressing the inequalities in the education system.

[...] a good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives. Empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known. Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum, or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma. Nor should the public be forced to support a huge professional apparatus of educators and buildings which in fact restricts the public's chances for learning to the services the profession is willing to put on the market. It should use modern technology to make free speech, free assembly, and free press truly universal and, therefore, fully educational.

A shortage of teachers in mathematics, science and commerce (Nabobo-Baba, 2014; White & Mua, 2022) in Fiji largely took place after the two military coups in 1987 and phasing out of preservice secondary teacher training in the mid-1980s due to a situation of impending oversupply (Dubey & Alam, 2014). As a result of the military coups, emigration of the best qualified teachers seriously depleted the teaching service and led to an acute shortage of qualified personnel (White & Mua, 2022). In a study conducted by Voigt-Graf et al. (2007) on teacher migration, it was found that 251 teachers migrated from Fiji in 2007 with two of the key reasons given as better opportunities for children elsewhere and unfavourable working conditions. Following the 1987 coups (White & Mua, 2022), Fiji Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (1991) reported that in 1990 there were 621 graduates with no formal teacher education qualifications, and an additional 462 teachers who had neither post-secondary education nor teacher training.

According to Close (2023), teacher migration in most cases has been permanent due to which Fiji loses valuable human resources, which has negative effects associated with skilled migration. A shortage of teachers due to emigration increases educational inequalities and more teacher training recruitment would need to take place to fill this gap (Crossley et al., 2017). On a similar note, Lingam (2012) explains that teachers with little knowledge and skills teaching in rural contexts are likely to adversely impact the education of rural children who are already at risk. He emphasises that in order to teach in Fiji's rural schools, teachers need adequate professional preparation

during their initial teacher education program (Lingam, 2012). In order to improve the quality of education in Fiji's rural schools and to not disadvantage the students, Goundar and Bogitini (2019) recommend that teacher training institutions in Fiji need to reflect on their pre-service teacher preparation courses and include training to work in rural schools.

9 Conclusions and Policy Implication

The teaching and learning process across the world is different. It does not occur in the same way due to critical factors which cause hindrances in the education system. These create educational inequalities such as shortage of teachers, poverty learning-gap, gender inequalities in schools, distribution of resources, location of schools, access to scholarship, and school curriculum. The article drew on examples of educational inequalities in global context primarily from the UK, Mexico, Uganda, Peru, Niger, Argentina, and the USA. It further gave insights on the educational inequalities in Fiji, in order to illustrate the way education was disseminated in the pre-colonial era and how colonisation changed the education system.

This article provides a platform for policy makers to reflect on the global and Fijian context in addressing these educational inequalities. New policies need to be implemented on curriculum that is made relevant to the context of the students' home country. This should be centred around dialogues with key stakeholders including parents and private sectors. For example, when revising the curriculum in schools, the history of indenture system in Fiji would be a good place to start with. This is pivotal in the history of what the country is today. There also needs to be a discussion of the coups that took place in the country and how this need not be repeated. These are just some of the ways the curriculum needs to be more relevant in the Fijian context. Language education also needs to be thoroughly looked at based on the findings. The countries highlighted are multilingual so there needs to be policies that are able to address the multilingual classroom setting.

There is also a need to fill in the gap of teacher shortages in rural schools. One way of doing this is by providing incentives to recruit more teachers in rural areas (White & Mua, 2022). Teacher training institutions in countries mentioned in this article ought to provide adequate training for trainees to adapt to rural school settings. It is crucial that schools in the rural zones are not affected because of teacher shortages.

There needs to be a combination of two elements to bring about change in addressing educational inequalities. First is dialogue among key stakeholders and policy makers such as curriculum designers, Ministry of Education, funding agencies, and teacher training institutions. Second, there needs to be an implementation process which will allow actions to take place from the dialogues that transpired between stakeholders and policy makers.

Finally, it is pivotal not to overlook the underlying educational inequalities in the three streams since education deals with lives of students, their families, and schools – they matter the most in the education system.

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