

# THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## OUTLINE:

- Education Definition
- Brief historical background
- National development discourse
- Global Innovation Index (GII)
- Education and National Development
- Summary Action Points

Down through history, education remains a vital key-player in the growth and development of nations across continents of the world. What is Education? The *MWD*<sup>a</sup> defines Education as the action or process of teaching someone especially in a school, college, or university. It is the knowledge, skill and understanding that one gets from attending school, college, or university. Similarly, it is a field of study that deals with the methods and problems of teaching.

According to the Merriam Webster's Dictionary, the first known use of the term 'education' was in the year 1531. It is the action or process of educating or of being educated; also a stage of such process. It is the **knowledge** and **development** resulting from an educational process. Similarly, it is the field of study that deals mainly with methods of **teaching**, and **learning** in schools.

As defined above, education directly involves learning. However, there exist different schools of thoughts on how learning takes place in an individual. Among all, the *educare*, and the *educere* stands out.

The *educare* (pronounced e-du-ka-re) supposes that the human mind is like a blank slate – *tabula-rasa* at birth. This implies that it holds no previous information, skills or knowledgability whatsoever. However, learning commences as the child begins to grow and take in new ideas and information, thereby building his knowledge base as well as forming personal ideologies.

On the other hand, the *educere* believes that the human mind right from birth contains certain innate abilities and foreknowing. It supposes that such thinkability enables an individual to learn new things primarily by drawing out of his pre-existing wealth of knowledge and thereby forms and consolidates new knowledge ideas and concepts.

However, there's a generally fair amount of consensus that both *educare* and *educere* are applicable processes and procedures whereby learning takes place; depending on the individual's level of growth and intellectual development.

Unarguably today, education is become a matter of priority and utmost importance in achieving innovation and national development across the world. Top developed nation states have repeatedly proven that setting and maintaining high standards of quality education is a key prerequisite to attaining sustainable growth and development. By prioritizing education, they have enjoyed no-little progress in building flourishing economies based on diverse innovations.

Simply put, education and national development of nations like the two sides of a coin are, quite inseparable. Rather, it is become the foundation which sustains all other forms intellectual quest, innovative discoveries, breakthroughs and developments.

From cradle to college, education helps equips us with literacy, communication and interpersonal relations, reasoning & brainstorming, business negotiation, and diverse intellectual & professional skills among others. While in school, students learn to interact with one another, thereby gaining exposure to different cultural, religious and social backgrounds. Later on in life, they become professionals, business owners, national leaders and ambassadors' representatives making educated and informed decisions at local, state, national and international levels.

Essentially, in any typical nation state; education plays an integral role in fostering productive human capital development, improving social cohesion, religion tolerance and cultural integration, while affording beneficial diplomatic relations and allies.

It is noteworthy that though Singapore has little of natural resources on which to rely, her enviable growth and economic prowess among other nations is largely traceable to her commitment to human capital development hinged mainly on qualitative education structures and systems. The similar can be said of Finland in Europe, having one of the best education systems in the world.

Hence, nations who seek remarkable national development despite scarce natural resources will learn from countries like Finland (Europe) and Singapore (Asia). According to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2019 published on the Statistics Times, Finland (6<sup>th</sup>) and Singapore (8<sup>th</sup>) ranks among the top ten countries leading the innovation rankings.

The GII is a co-initiative of Cornell University,<sup>b</sup> INSEAD<sup>c</sup> and WIPO<sup>d</sup>. The index covers over 80 analysis indicators which explore a broad spectrum of innovation, including environment, political, **education**, and infrastructure & business sophistication. Countries such as Mali, Algeria and Nigeria with the 112<sup>th</sup>, 113<sup>th</sup> and 114<sup>th</sup> positions respectively will do well by considering placing more importance and commitment to Quality education<sup>2</sup> as explained in the United Nations SDGs.

In closing, the **role of education in national development** as explained in this publication post serves to:

- i. Inspire individual organizations, corporations, as well as public and private institutions on the need to prioritize and contribute substantially to educational funding, research and development across all levels.
- ii. Enlighten educational stakeholders: education ministries, educators, parents and students on the critical role of quality education in intellectual and human capacity development. And;
- iii. Motivate organizations<sup>2</sup> across boards to take on several quality educational development projects and initiatives either as social business enterprises or corporate social responsibilities (CSRs); as tool for national growth and development.

All three among others, shall help contribute immensely to the growth and economic development of nation states around the world.

### **References and Source Citations:**

1. Organizations: sole-proprietorships, partnerships, limited liabilities etc.
2. Quality Education: As defined in the United Nation's SDGs
  - a. MWD: Merriam Webster's Dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
  - b. Cornell University: This is a Paris based business School
  - c. INSEAD: <https://www.insead.edu/>
  - d. WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization:  
<https://www.wipo.int/portal/en/index.html>

### **Further readings:**

1. Global Innovation Index (GII): <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator>
2. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 4 – Quality Education: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>
3. *Educare and Educere: Is a Balance Possible in the Educational System?*  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ724880>