

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Introducing SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 Free equitable and quality education

4.2 Access to early childhood development

4.3 Access to affordable higher education

4.4 Increase of skills for financial success

4.5 Elimination of discrimination in education

4.6 Universal literacy and numeracy

4.7 Education for sustainable development

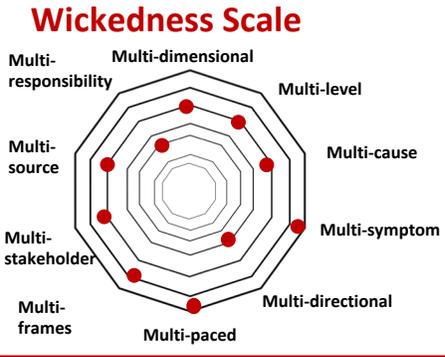
4.A Provision of inclusive and safe schools

4.B Expansion of education scholarship

4.C Increased supply of qualified teachers

Our focus – SDG 4.5

1. **Gender disparities** – The opportunity for quality education for both boys and girls
2. **Children with disability** – Facilities provided for children with special needs
3. **Care for indigenous children** – Integrity programs for immigrants and indigenous children
4. **Children in vulnerable situation** – percentage of children living under poverty line or in war zone

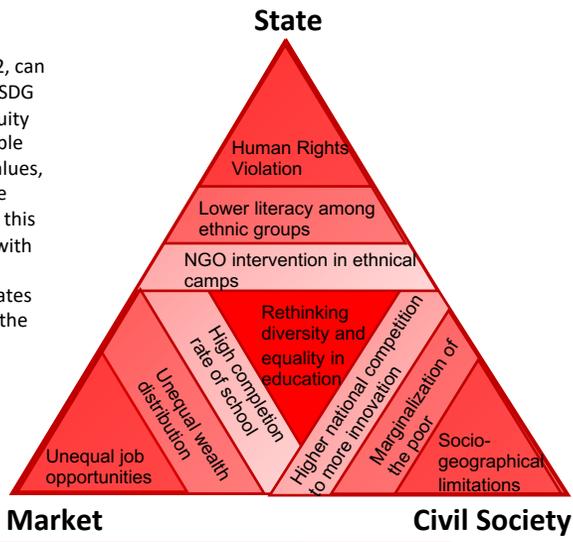


Wickedness of the Educational Problem

SDG 4.5 is extremely complex and according to the wickedness scale, with a score of 52, can be defined as a wicked problem. I will discuss the most notable dimension of the scale. SDG 4.5 advocates for equal educational opportunities for all genders and Inclusion and equity (UNESCO, 2021). This is complex by nature because it targets the world's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, it is deeply intertwined with systematic racism, cultural values, institutionalized discrimination and gender norms. Tackling ideas and practices that are rooted in society is a hard process and different in every region of the world. Therefore, this problem is multi-symptom and multi-frames. Besides, there is a high degree of denial with these issues making it very multi-paced. Moreover, this SDG 4.5 is in conflict with other SDG's, for example SDG 2. SDG 2 advocates for 'zero hunger', however vulnerable kids that have to work in order to bring food on the table will face a difficulty when going to school: education or food. Moreover, this SDG 4.5 is in conflict with other SDG's, for example SDG 2 which advocates for 'zero hunger' (UN, n.d.-b). Vulnerable kids that have to work in order to survive will face a difficulty when going to school: education or food. In conclusion SDG 4,5 is a wicked issue with many dimensions.

Trend SDG 4

Considerable progress on education access and participation has been made over the past years. For example, participation in organized learning grew steadily, from 62 per cent in 2010 to 67 per cent in 2018 (UN, n.d.). Unfortunately, COVID-19 changed the world in 2020 and after 1,5 years of living in a pandemic all the progress that has been made over the last 20+ years has been reversed (UN, 2021a). The UN calls the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling a "generational catastrophe". The most vulnerable children and those unable to access remote learning are at increased risk of never returning to school and of being forced into child marriage or child labour (UN, 2021). Showing once again why 4.5 is such an important sub goal of SDG 4 and now more important than ever.



Societal Traingulation Analysis

State

- The biggest failure of the Chinese state is the violation of the human rights of the muslim ethnic groups and Uyghur children in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Amnesty International, 2021; Kuo, 2020; The Associated Press, 2020; Qin, 2020)
- The causal effect of these crimes result in lower literacy rate and opportunities for ethnic children in the region (Ayoroa, Bailey, Crossen & Geo-Jaja, 2010; Jaschok & Chan, 2009).
- As a consequence, NGOs such as "Save Uighur" are fighting for the human rights and diversity inclusion of these children (Regencia, 2021; Save Uighur, n.d.).

Civil Society

- The socio-geographical allocation of the population in China is unequal. The rural area is significantly undeveloped compared to the urban one (Ayoroa et al., 2010; Fu, 2005).
- The failure leads to marginalization of the poor rural residents that cannot afford quality education, because they need to work as early as possible (Ayoroa et al., 2010; Hu, Song, Li & Lu, 2019; Samadder, 2021; Tan, 2020)
- Since the education in China is mostly public, there is a high competition for the best schools and universities that lead to innovation and ambition of the students (China-Mike, 2020).

Market

- The unequal distribution of the corporate landscape highly concentrated in the urban area creates major inequality issues (Fang, Yang & Meiyang, 2009)
- The supply of labor exceeds the demand and creates a filter for the most educated students coming from a limited number of reputable institutions (Moodle Monkey, n.d.; Zuo, 2021).
- Luckily, a great number of corporations are state-owned and the public universities are among the preferred source of labor (OECD, 2016).

Frontrunner's solutions

The plastic brick toy company, LEGO needs no introduction, its products are available in more than 140 countries around the globe. Its name comes from Danish: "Leg GOdt" that is "Play Well" (The LEGO Group, n.d.-a). True to its name, LEGO's mission is to "be a force for Learning through Play". LEGO made a commitment to the 4th and 12th of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education for All and Responsible Consumption & Production (The LEGO Group, n.d.-b).

Learning Through Play

In May 2021, LEGO Group, LEGO Foundation, and UNICEF announced a three-year partnership during which they invest US\$2.5 million into community-based family support in 200 disadvantaged rural communities of China. They aim to provide 20,000 children aged 0-6 with age-appropriate play materials and around 40,000 caregivers with the knowledge of the learning-through-play methodology to empower them to support the development of the children by incorporating play into their everyday lives (UNICEF, 2020; The LEGO Group, 2021a). Additionally, in the Yunnan Province in China, LEGO is also entered into a three-year partnership with Save the Children, investing US\$2.3 million to reach 50,000 children with the learning-through-play methodology (The LEGO Group, n.d.-c).

LEGO

Lego Braille Bricks

LEGO' Braille Bricks are just like regular bricks but the studs on top form the letters and numbers of the Braille alphabet. Lego Foundation is in partnership with 20 countries where Braille Bricks are distributed for free to institutions in the blind community for the education of visually impaired children. Through Lego's learning-through-play methodology children with visual impairment can learn Braille playfully and entertainingly (The LEGO Group, n.d.-a).

Brick-by-Brick

The Brick-by-Brick program is a partnership between the LEGO Foundation and Play Included started in 2021 where facilitators are trained to use LEGO bricks for therapeutic purposes. In so-called Brick Clubs, neurodivergent children work together and build LEGO models in different roles within the team. This way children develop their social, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills meanwhile the program reduces social isolation, mental health problems, and the stigma around autism. Play Included have trained teachers and psychologists in 40 countries, and the facilitator manual is available in Chinese as well (The LEGO Group, 2021b).

Partnership Challenges

Level I – Intra-sectoral	Level II&III - Bipartite	Level IV - Tripartite
Education is primarily a matter tackled by the Government since the schooling program is decided by Ministry of Education. Thus, the state might consider investing further in a better educational infrastructure in the rural areas.	Local NGOs and domestic, but also foreign MNEs can concentrate their effort in provision of aid designated for the educational needs of the ethnic groups in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region.	The collective efforts of the society and the market on diversity inclusion can initiate a disruptive change in the mentality of the population which would put pressure on the State on promotion and consideration of Human Rights of all citizens of China

Bibliography

- Amnesty International (2021, March 19). *China: Parents of missing Uyghur children describe horror of family separation*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/03/china-parents-of-missing-uyghur-children-describe-horror-of-family-separation/>
- Ayoroa, P., Bailey, B., Crossen, A., & Geo-Jaja, M. A. (2010). Education in China: the urban/rural disparity explained. In *Globalisation, ideology and education policy reforms* (pp. 89-113). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Fang, C., Yang, D., & Meiyang, W. (2009). Employment and inequality outcomes in China. *Institute of Population and Labour Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*.
- Fu, T. M. (2005). Unequal primary education opportunities in rural and urban China. *China Perspectives*, 2005(60).
- Hu, S., Song, W., Li, C., & Lu, J. (2019). School-gentrifying community in the making in China: Its formation mechanisms and socio-spatial consequences. *Habitat International*, 93, 102045.
- Jaschok, M., & Chan, H. M. V. (2009). Education, gender and Islam in China: The place of religious education in challenging and sustaining 'undisputed traditions' among Chinese Muslim women. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(5), 487-494.
- Kuo, L. (2020, October 16). *Chinese detention 'leaving thousands of Uighur children without parents'*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/16/thousands-of-uighur-children-orphaned-by-chinese-detention-papers-show>
- Mike, C. (2020, February 13). *Education in China: Interesting Facts & Figures*. <https://www.china-mike.com/facts-about-china/facts-chinese-education/>
- Moodle Monkey (n.d.). *MNC Employment and Chinese Labour Market HRM Assignment*. <https://www.moodlemonkey.com/solution/mnc-employment-and-chinese-labour-market-hrm-assignment/>
- OECD (2016). Education in China: A Snapshot. <https://www.oecd.org/china/Education-in-China-a-snapshot.pdf>
- Qin, A. (2020, December 28). *In China's Crackdown on Muslims, Children Have Not Been Spared*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/28/world/asia/china-xinjiang-children-boarding-schools.html>
- Regencia, T. (2021, July 8). *What you should know about China's minority Uighurs*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/8/uighurs-timeline>
- Samadder, B. (2021, June 11). *Existing Challenges in China's Education System for the Achievement of the Agenda for Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education Goals of UN's SDG4*. <https://familiarr-strangerr.medium.com/existing-challenges-in-chinas-education-system-for-the-achievement-of-the-agenda-for-inclusive-and-a205999cb0dd>
- Save Uighur (n.d.). *Save Uighur*. <https://www.saveuighur.org/>
- Strietman, F. (2020). *How 7 Companies Help Tackle the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. <https://medium.com/proofofimpact/how-7-companies-help-tackle-the-un-sustainable-development-goals-b06a83d80785>
- Tan, R. (2020, September 18). *What You Need to Know About China's Rural-Urban Education Gap*. <https://borgenproject.org/what-you-need-to-know-about-chinas-rural-urban-education-gap/>
- The Associated Press (2020, June 29). *China Cuts Uighur Births with IUDs, Abortion, Sterilization*. <https://apnews.com/article/ap-top-news-international-news-weekend-reads-china-health-269b3de1af34e17c1941a514f78d764c>
- The LEGO Group (2021a). *The LEGO Group and the LEGO Foundation join forces with UNICEF to provide playful parenting to children in need in China*. <https://www.lego.com/da-dk/aboutus/news/2021/may/unicef-china-partnership/>
- The LEGO Group (2021b). *The LEGO Foundation Partners with Social Enterprise, Play Included, to Strengthen & Scale LEGO Play Based Learning Programme for Neurodivergent Children*. <https://www.lego.com/nl-nl/aboutus/news/2021/march/lego-foundation-and-play-included/>
- The LEGO Group (n.d.-a). *About LEGO Braille Bricks*. <https://www.legobraillebricks.com/about>
- The LEGO Group (n.d.-b). *Sustainability: Sustainability progress H1 2021*. <https://www.lego.com/en-my/sustainability/reporting/>
- The LEGO Group (n.d.-c). *Sustainability: Children*. <https://www.lego.com/en-my/sustainability/reporting/children>
- UNICEF (2020, May 27). *The LEGO Group and the LEGO Foundation: A UNICEF corporate partner since 2015*. <https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/lego>
- United Nations. (n.d.-b). *THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> United Nations. (z.d.). *Education | Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/education?page=1%2C0>
- United Nations. (2020). *Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- United Nations. (2021). *Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs | Progress and Info*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- United Nations. (2021a). *Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs | Overview*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- UNESCO. (n.d.). *Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) | Education within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Geraadpleegd op 4 oktober 2021, van <https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal>
- van Tulder, R. (2018). Business & the sustainable development goals: a framework for effective corporate involvement.
- Zuo, M. (2021, June 25). *Education in China: high costs, intense competition for schools, excessive tutoring, and fewer children*. <https://www.scmp.com/news/people-culture/social-welfare/article/3138457/education-china-high-costs-intense-competition>