

Education Will Win the Fight

By Isabella Vallejo-Wolff

With education comes empowerment and, when empowered, people have the confidence and skills to become active societal members. As FDR said in an address for American Education Week, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education."

As an International Relations and Security Network study shows, people with primary education are 1.5 times more likely to support democracy than people without education and people with secondary education are 3 times more likely (1). Knowledge grants people the proper tools to take part in political discussions, access political information, and understand the implications of those they vote for. The educated population is therefore more able to compel its government to advocate for the necessary changes on a national and international level.

Education guides people to establish peace through conciliatory means, to eliminate gender inequality, to find ways to help our dying planet, to understand each other. Yet, nearly eight times the amount of federal spending is put into military than education and our new president, who had huge support from the uneducated white population, only wishes to increase that deficit. He has already expanded military spending by 54 billion dollars "at a time we most need" and funded it by cutting programs related to education, science, the environment, and poverty. These are the very programs that truly deserve more attention. Education is the most powerful weapon in the world, not military and violence.

In this day and age, there is a world wide crisis of education. In 2013, an estimated 61 million primary aged children around the world were out of school and even more, 250 million, were unable to read and write. Currently, 476 million people, mostly in countries facing a humanitarian crisis, are in desperate need of education (2). This lack of education will only give rise to generations not given the proper and necessary means to contribute to society. As Evelyn Rodriguez-Perez, Director of USAID's Office of Education in Washington, D.C., proclaimed, "going to school and learning is critical; it provides children with a sense of normalcy and helps prepare them for the future." Without it, many let their future be decided by others. They sit back and allow those that "know more than them" to take over and control their lives. But, sometimes, that person can be just as ignorant as them. Everyone, worldwide, needs the necessary skills to hold their governments to account for a nation they can be proud to be apart of.

We can not put education on the back burner any longer. We must focus our money and energy on promoting equal educational opportunities and affordable schooling in order to secure democracy and establish peace as well as a better, more efficient world. No global challenge will be solved efficiently if those ruling our world do not believe they exist, or do not care to fix them.

References

- (1) <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/>
- (2) Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, "Education: The Most Powerful Weapon for Changing the World" (US Aid, 2014)