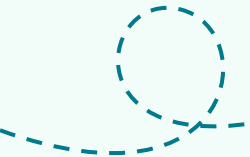




Education

"I regard it as the foremost task of education to insure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self denial, and above all, compassion" ~ Kurt Hahn





The Big Scope

01

- ★ Purpose and Goals
- ★ Culture in SG
- ★ Recent Policies

02

- ★ Power of Education

03

- ★ Downsides of Education

04

- ★ Tackling Essay Questions





01

● ● ● **Goals, Culture and
Action**



Key Terms to note

- Education: The systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires **knowledge, experiences and skills** needed to participate effectively in society and the economy. It aims to make an individual, **civilized, cultured and thoughtful**.
- The Paper Chase: The effort to attain a professional certificate or license. Often used to reflect people's parochial view that education's value lies in providing students with the certification to find a job.



Aims of Education

- To be more aware of your society and the global affairs occurring around you so that you will not be left in the ditch as the world progresses
- To gain self-esteem and confidence
- To foster civic-mindedness and inculcate moral values
 - Education passes down values beneficial to society, such as honesty and politeness. We have subjects aimed to develop character such as civics and moral education, social studies and project work. Other subjects, especially the humanities, instill virtues such as compassion in the students' lives. Hence, education does not only aid character development; it acts as a **catalyst** for character development.

~~ Dean William R. Inge once said, "The aim of education is the knowledge not of fact, but of value."



Ongoing debates about our Education system

1. Overemphasis on grades
2. Lack of opportunities to encourage creativity
3. Overwhelming stress levels on children


Existing solutions to these issue:

- Shift to emphasis on “joy in learning” culture in the recent years
- Significant changes made to current education system to lessen the emphasis on grades
- Variety of new courses added to O levels curriculum, such as electronics and computing, drama, sports science to provide students with a chance for hands-on learning
- Many companies such as Managed by Q, Slack and NerdWallet are starting to look at one's interpersonal/soft skills instead of just merely grades





How did we even get embroiled in the paper chase?

- When Singapore was founded in 1965, we were a mere fishing village. We had no foundations to fall back on and our government saw the urgent need to create a strong economy.
 - Hence, great emphasis was placed on attaining professional degrees or certificates. It was successful, initially, in churning out a repertoire of engineers, lawyers and businessmen who served in building our nation from scratch.
 - The turning point came in the Asian Financial Crisis of the 1990s: Our government was forced to reconsider its traditional, rote-learning approach to education when our students performed in standardised testing but falter in critical thinking and presentation skills, all of which are increasingly prevalent in today's economy.
- 



How did we even get embroiled in the paper chase?

- Since then, an initiative entitled "Teach Less, Learn More" was implemented by MOE in 2006, followed by the Applied Learning Programme in 2016.
- As said by Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam: The toughest question to ask ourselves... is not what we add to education system, but what we subtract."
- In schools, exams have been modified to test on application of facts to real-life scenarios as opposed to pure regurgitation of facts.
- Learning journeys, projects and experiments have also been integrated into the curriculum to enrich students' learning process.





Existing educational programmes locally (AQ)

1. Besides the academics, SG also emphasises on the importance of community service and giving back to the society amongst children. E.g. The shift in name from Community Involvement Programme (CIP) to Values-In-Action suggests the emphasis on significance of values through community work done
2. Direct School Admission (DSA) focuses on individuals talents ad character beyond grades.
3. School of the Arts, Singapore Sports School: Recognises one's holistic talent and creates multiple pathways to success
4. Online platforms such as Khan Academy enables individuals to access courses, tutorials for them to learn. Encourages self-directed learning





Other programmes globally

1. One Laptop Per Child: To produce affordable tablets to children in underprivileged countries to provide them with employable skills
2. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG): Signed by world leaders in 2000 to combat poverty, hunger, disease, literacy etc etc. One of the major aims is to provide universal primary education for all children
3. Malala Yousafzai and The Malala fund: International advocacy for gender equality to education, sheds light on lack of educational opportunities for girls in certain developing nations due to entrenched culture of sexism
4. United Nations Children Fund: Focuses on providing emergency aid in terms of food, education, healthcare to families recovering from global crisis around the world.



Finland's Education system

In Finland's context, it is debated to be one of the best education system. This is due to the fact that they:

1. Have a smaller class size
2. No school ranking or streaming system
3. Shorter school hours, emphasis on work and life balance
4. No high-stakes examinations until the age of 18 (National Matriculation Examination)
5. Significantly lesser competitive culture, believe in competing against yourself instead of others
6. Strong emphasis on culture of equality by putting students of all abilities in the same class and ensuring everyone has equal rights to receive education regardless of wealth, background etc



Overview of Major Policies ahead

- Abolishment of exams and tests for P1 and P2 from 2019
- Abolishment of mid year exams for Sec 1 from 2019
- Abolishment of mid year exams for P3, P5 and Sec 3 from 2020
- New grading system for PSLE in 2021 (Removal of T-score)
- Removal of streaming in Secondary schools, new subject-based banding system



On the left side of the slide, there are several decorative elements: a blue leaf at the top, a yellow maple leaf in the middle, and another blue leaf at the bottom. A dashed blue line curves from the top left towards the center. Three dots (two blue, one yellow) are arranged vertically to the left of the main text.

02

Positive Impact of Education

On the right side of the slide, there are several decorative elements: a yellow leaf at the top, a blue fern leaf in the middle, and another yellow leaf at the bottom. Three dots (two blue, one yellow) are arranged vertically to the right of the main text. A dashed blue line curves from the bottom right towards the center.



1. Healthier workforce & economy

Wallstreet reports that countries with higher math and science skills have grown faster than those with lower-skilled populations because a **highly educated workforce** is likely to be **more efficient** and tend to command a higher pay, which help boost economic growth.

Singapore's compulsory education programme, coupled with a competent team of educators, is also backed by a relatively high government budget (>S\$10B). Apart from ensuring that the workforce has a basic level of education, the government has further streamlined students based on their strengths to capitalize on their potential. E.g. Streaming of academically stronger students in Junior Colleges and universities whereas those who are academically weaker are given opportunities to hone their technical skills and eventually go on to polytechnics and even universities. This model of education is credited for Singapore's strong economic growth since Independence.



1. Healthier workforce & economy

Moreover, because of the government's belief that education is a life-long journey, policies like Continuing Education and Training (CET) provide workers with periodic upgrading of their skills, making them more efficient and resilient. In fact it was CET and policies like Special Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) that contributed to Singapore's strong recovery from the 2008 financial crisis.

With manpower as our only resource, the government invested heavily in education and since independence, Singapore has grown from a small trading hub to a highly-developed economy with one of the highest GDP per capita in the world. Many reputable Multinational Corporations (HSBC, UOB, Google, etc.) that set up regional headquarters in Singapore cite our strong talent pool as one of the main reasons for setting business in Singapore.



2. Reduced Crime Rates

Globally, crime rates are highest among those who are least educated. Recent studies posit that basic education can reduce adult crime rates because students learn the moral and practical implications of crime, making them more risk averse to offending.

Moreover, people who have been educated are in a better position to improve their lifetime learning opportunities, which increases their opportunity costs for turning to crime. E.g. Research from the Centre of Human Capital and Productivity shows that that increasing the high school graduation rate in the United States in 1990 would have resulted in nearly 100,000 fewer crimes.





3. Improved integration and inclusivity

As the saying goes, ignorance breeds intolerance. Likewise, education builds a more cohesive society because it helps people to understand and even come to appreciate the differences in race, gender or religion.

Race & Religion: There have been no repeat of significant racial or religious riots since the Maria Hertogh and Hock Lee Bus protests in the 1950s. While this was due in part to Singapore's policies of multiracialism, the education tool of bilingualism, which signifies that all are equal regardless of race, plays a significant part in our racial harmony.





3. Improved integration and inclusivity

Social mobility: Education is being used as a tool in many countries to break out of the poverty cycle or the status quo. E.g. Singapore's practice of meritocracy, where academic grades are considered as objective measures of the students' ability and effort, irrespective of their socio-economic background, and its strong financial assistance system have been lauded overseas for giving each child an equal opportunity to excel to the best of his abilities.

Women's Rights (Female Genital Mutilation): In Senegal and many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, a revolutionary education programme, which decries the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sees villagers take part in a three-year education programme where they learn about human rights and other subjects including health and literacy. At the end, communities even decide to hold "declaration ceremonies" where they vow together to abandon FGM. The scheme has been so effective that experts believe Senegal could be free from FGM by 2015.





4. Cultivates a mature society

Education makes it possible for democracy and political stability to exist. People are able, through education, to make more informed choices regarding their leaders, and have a part in the governmental decision-making process.

For instance, rising standards of living and literacy rates were purported to be the cause of the Arab Spring. The well-educated and burgeoning middle class was dissatisfied with a lack of government action to solve prevalent problems of income inequality and human rights abuses and their subsequent civil uprising led to the removal of the rulers' power in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.

This is essential to develop and sustain democracy. People would learn how to give their feedback in a constructive manner and avoid derailing the political stability that we enjoy.





03

● ● ● Negative Impact of
● ● ● Education



1. Breeding a divisive culture

Many school systems around the world practice streaming, where students who are academically stronger receive more resources whereas those who do not do as well are sidelined. The vicious cycle is perpetuated throughout the entire system, leading to parents' fear that the education system is too elitist and leave poor-performing students behind.

Ivy League Universities in USA: USA private high schools which cater to the upper- middle class have significantly higher school fees which are beyond the reach of most families' income levels. They aim to gear their students towards prestigious Universities like those found in the Ivy League Universities as opposed to Public Universities.



1. Breeding a divisive culture

Singapore's Gifted Education Programme (GEP): While the aim of GEP was to identify the top 1% of students with the highest verbal, mathematical and spatial ability and nurture them to their full potential, the programme has been cited for being elitist due to a number of incidents. One notable example was the Wee Shu Min Elitism Scandal, where the 18-year old GEP alumna caused public outcry in November 2006 for making insensitive and judgemental remarks against others. There was a similar controversy where a Primary Six GEP student wrote a letter to *Today* openly declaring that non-GEP students (referred to as "mainstreamers") were immature, and that she preferred to mix with "(similar) people like us.





2. Overcompetitiveness and stress

Job Recruitment: Most job advertisements state a minimum level of education. Schools even stress the importance of education in establishing a career. In addition, many see the relatively well-paid jobs going to the more educated. These reasons contribute to the illusion that education is indispensable in establishing a career.

High Incidence of depression and associated illnesses: In Singapore, 1 in 5 students below the ages of 16 are purported to be suffering from unhealthily high stress levels. Reasons cited include the pressure-cooker learning environment that demand for children to strive for success at a young age, the amount of homework that they get every day, and pressure that they receive from their parents.





3. Uneven spread of educational opportunities

While most students in developed countries have had the opportunities to go to school, there are many others in developing nations, notably sub-Saharan African countries who have little or no chance to do so.

Sub-Saharan Africa's Education Challenge: UNESCO warns that shortfalls in aid threaten to derail efforts to get sub-Saharan Africa's 32 million out-of-school children into classroom. Based on current trends, there will still be 23 million African children out of school by 2015. Just over one adult in three cannot read or write





3. Uneven spread of educational opportunities

Even with education infrastructure in place, students have low aspirations due to the lack of employment opportunities or due to the state of the economy.

Philippines: Despite rising quality of local school education, the lack of well-paying career opportunities actually impede students' aspirations of attaining higher levels of education. For instance, nurses and doctors are paid nearly the same despite doctors having to go through an additional 4 years of medical training, necessitating the Senate to debate on increasing doctors' minimum pay. Students do not see the long term benefit of pursuing tertiary education and instead prefer to join the workforce as soon as possible despite being able to qualify.



3. Uneven spread of educational opportunities

Absence of a competent government in some nations also results in the inability to implement the necessary framework for society to progress even with an educated majority.

Zimbabwe: Despite having the highest literacy rate among all African nations (92%), problems like hyperinflation and income inequity cannot be resolved by an educated upper class without political will and consensus to address and tackle the issue.





4. Over emphasis on need for grades

Lack of Academic background is not always a weakness: Low-paid careers such as construction work do not require educational qualifications. Some outstanding entrepreneurs established their career and achieved success in their careers without much educational background, such as the Charles and Keith's founder, Charles Wong or NOC's founder, Ryan and Sylvia.

Firms emphasise on soft skills too: Many employers consider educational qualifications as only pre-requisites, looking out for deciding factors such as teamwork and enterprise. In 2011, the Straits Times reported a period of time when more polytechnic graduates were hired as compared to university graduates, because employers felt that, despite the lower level of education, polytechnic graduates were more enterprising and had better social skills.





Some Legends in Education

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

From 2000-2010, the Foundation has contributed over \$1.2 billion to high school reform efforts, helped bring technology into schools that needed it, and advocated with some success for changing the high school system in the US.

Ken Robinson (Education activist)

At the crux of Robinson's activism in education is his belief that it should foster diversity by offering a broad curriculum and encouraging individualization of the learning process, foster curiosity through creative teaching, which depends on high quality teacher training and development; And focus on awakening creativity rather than standardized testing, giving the responsibility for defining the course of education to individual schools and teachers.





Some Legends in Education

Nikhil Goyal (Education reform activist)

At 17 years old, Nikhil Goyal's book, *One Size Does Not Fit All: A Student's Assessment of School*, describes the flaws within America's education system and provides solutions to fix the present challenges. He explains the importance of finding progressive leaders to transform their nation's education system. Goyal encourages students to get involved in the education movement by writing about their personal experiences within the classroom through creating a blog





Essay Questions to look at

1. Does education necessarily guarantee progress?
2. The word *failure* should never be used in education. Discuss.
3. Education today achieves excellence at the expenses of character. How far is this true of your society?
4. "Education is the great leveller." How far is this true?
5. The most effective education is one that takes place outside of the classroom. Do you agree?



Essays to be reviewed in tuition classes. DM me for enquiries!



In the top left corner, there are three solid circles (two blue, one orange) and a dashed blue line that curves around the text.

**Interested in what you see? Click on
the link in my profile to get the full set
of notes for FREE! Don't forget to
follow me @thatgpguy first!**





**Interested in learning more? DM to
enquire on how I can better target
YOUR needs and make sure you get
that A for GP :)**



Thanks

Do you have any questions?

youremail@freepik.com
+91 620 421 838
yourcompany.com



Please keep this slide for attribution

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**.