



Eye on the SOUTH

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The Southern Syllabus: Educational Initiatives Created in the Developing World



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A. Introduction

Education is a vital pillar for economic and social development within the Global South, making investment in education crucial. It has been one of the key factors contributing to higher development levels in the Global North. Winner of the Nobel Prize for economist Amartya Sen emphasizes in his prominent work “Development as Freedom”, that education is a driver of technological advancement, social stability and economic growth. There is a significant difference in the rate and quality of education between both regions.

According to the latest UNDP HDI report, countries in the Global North have higher literacy rates, greater access to secondary and tertiary education, and lower gender disparity rates. Gross enrolment for OECD countries is much higher at 96%, compared to the Global South; 65.9% for South Asia and 59.4% for Africa. Gender parity in education is almost equal at 99.5% in European countries, while in Africa and South Asia it is 88.9% and 94.5% respectively. All this translates into richer human capital, better productivity, more innovation, and leads to economic growth. This is reflected in human development within developing countries having an average HDI of 0.712, much lower than OECD countries with an HDI of 0.916. Similarly, OECD countries also have a GDP per capita of \$46,724 which is much higher than \$5,659 for low- and middle-income countries. These discrepancies are mostly a result of better investment in educational infrastructure in the Global North.

This correlation between education and economic prosperity is well documented. A study by Hanushek and Woessmann (2012) demonstrated that cognitive skills, measured by scores in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), show that higher scores in earlier periods lead to long-term economic growth. Countries in the Global North have more resources to invest in education to ensure economic dominance in the long-term. Furthermore, educated populations are able to fill the need for high-skilled labor, and attract foreign investment while also developing strong government institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

Given how important education is to the economic development of the Global South, collaboration in this realm within the region is crucial. This collaboration has grown steadily over the decades, starting from a basic understanding of the importance of educational collaboration, to the establishment of several concrete collaborative educational programs and projects to promote sustainable development in the region. The journey that led to the development of these programs starts from foundational discussions during the 1950s, to



present-day partnerships which demonstrate the commitment of developing countries to uplift education as a pillar of socio-economic progress.

This issue of “Eye on the South” will explore the types of educational collaboration taking place between countries in the Global South. This section, Section A, has already highlighted the importance that education plays in the development of the region. Section B provides a historical overview of educational cooperation from the 1950s to the present day, highlighting the circumstances under which these initiatives emerged and how they addressed various aspects of education. This section also analyzes the development and structure of early educational exchanges. Section C focuses on contemporary educational partnerships and recent initiatives that take place in the present day and will also analyze their outcomes. The issue will conclude with the final Section D explaining the overall outcome of this educational collaboration and identify their drawbacks and successes.

B. Historical Context

Although contemporary collaborative educational programs now exist, their foundations can be traced back to the early post-World War II period and the onset of decolonization. The initial concepts formulated during this era have gradually evolved into the established initiatives and projects we see today.

B.1. The role of the Bandung Conference in raising awareness

During the 1950s, many countries in the Global South were newly independent and faced significant challenges in nation-building. The Bandung Conference in Indonesia of 1955 was one of the first initiatives to promote educational collaboration between post-colonial Asian and African nations. The conference emphasized the need for collective efforts to eradicate illiteracy, reforming curricula to reflect local cultures, and improve educational standards as methods to help advance newly independent developing countries.

Among the key ideas promoted at Bandung were the exchange of students and educators, the establishment of scholarship programs between those countries, and encouraging joint research initiatives. The conference also promoted reforming educational curricula that reflect local histories and cultures to replace colonial influenced education. The aim was not only to improve the educational level within those countries but also to close the gap between the Global South and the Global North.



Although the conference did not establish any concrete proposals or establish collaborative programs, it was the first major event to raise awareness on the importance of education in post-colonial developing countries for improving their economies. The ideas pursued at the Bandung conference influenced the idea of the Non-Aligned Movement to build more tangible programs later on.

B.2. The role of the Non-Aligned Movement in building new programs

The establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961 marked an important stage for countries in the Global South by creating a third bloc for developing nations that were not aligned with either of the two major blocs. It provided a platform for these countries to speak in a unified voice on the world stage on many issues including economic development, health, and education. The NAM emphasized the significance of education for development and self-reliance. Similar to the previous ideas of the Bandung Conference, NAM members highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge, eradicating illiteracy and creating culturally relevant curricula. This was done with the aim of increasing educational standards and closing the gap between the Global North and South to increase economic independence. The NAM conference was a major step from the Bandung conference, because it was the first major event that led to concrete proposals, which helped develop academic and vocational programs that exist to the present day. These include:

- **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** program was established by India in 1964. The program provides scholarships to students, training for professionals, and capacity-building programs to public institutions in developing countries in the Global South. To this day, the program continues to train students from Africa, Latin America, and Asia in the fields of engineering, agriculture, public administration, and IT.
- **The African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO)** is an intergovernmental organization established in 1962 to promote education in rural areas, especially in the field of agricultural development between African and Asian countries. Representatives of member countries collaborate on the common goal of spreading knowledge to help improve the livelihoods of residents in rural areas across member countries. It does this through:
 - Conducting capacity building by organizing training programs to equip farmers with modern agricultural techniques and skills. These programs focus



on sustainable farming, irrigation, soil conservation, and agro-industrial technology.

- Providing scholarships and fellowships to individuals from member countries for academic research in agriculture and rural development relevant to their environment. This enables researchers to gain expertise and bring innovative ideas to their rural communities.
- Encouraging the adoption of modern technologies and practices in agriculture, so that rural workers are better informed about the changes in the farming industry. It does this by supporting pilot projects to evaluate and demonstrate innovative agricultural practices, such as precision farming, so that their success can be replicated elsewhere.
- Establishing community development programs that focus on building skills in agriculture and resource management to support small businesses in rural areas.

Providing direct support to member nations by offering consultancy services and expert advice on implementing rural development projects, such as irrigation systems, crop diversification, or livestock management.

- Cuba launched a literacy campaign in 1961 by recruiting volunteers and professionals to help eliminate poverty in rural areas. Later, the Cuban government launched the **Yo Sí Puedo (Yes I Can)** program, which expanded these literacy initiatives across Latin America.
 - The Cuban government sends teachers and volunteers to rural areas in over thirty countries to set up basic primary schools and combat illiteracy.
 - The program focuses on both children and adults.
 - The program has been adapted in multiple languages.
 - In Cuba, the program has managed to reduce the illiteracy rate from 23.6% to 3.9%. In Angola, over 300,000 people benefited from it.
- **The International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS)** was established by the Indian government during the 1980s as a dedicated think tank focusing on public policy, with many branches across the developing world.¹
 - The institute collaborates on joint research with universities and think tanks in the developing world to share their experiences and craft new policy ideas.

¹ International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies - <https://www.iins.org/?form=MGOAV3>.



- Despite the institute being established much later than the establishment of the NAM, it is rooted in the same ideas of non-alignment.
- The institute played a key role in providing intellectual resources to diplomats and policy makers across the Global South to strengthen their influence in global politics.
- It built on NAM's legacy by producing research on public policy that is relevant and suited to the economic and political model of non-aligned countries.

Many of the programs established after the formation of the NAM were more concrete and focused on primary education in the early stages, while later on there was more focus on technical and vocational training. Although the NAM movement became less politically relevant after the Cold War, these educational cooperation programs among member states continue to operate today.

While NAM was instrumental in initiating the first wave of structured educational cooperation among developing nations, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action expanded this vision by institutionalizing South-South collaboration through multilateral frameworks. This laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to educational development in the Global South.

B.3. Impact of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 1978

The Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was created by the group of developing countries in 1978 at the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. This event was a significant milestone, as it was the first action plan to focus exclusively on South-South cooperation. The BAPA action plan encourages developing countries to increase awareness of their own capabilities, skills and experience and share them with other countries in the Global South. The plan aimed to enhance capacities in key areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructure, and education.

With regards to education, BAPA urges governments in the Global South to implement long-term information and education programs that reinforce their cultural identities and promote education as a tool to achieve self-reliance in the Global South, while removing technical and legal barriers that hinder cooperation between educational institutions.

This was important since during the 1970s developing countries nationalized their oil production resulting in the creation of National Oil Companies (NOCs). Managing these new NOCs required significant expertise in the extraction, refining, and commercialization of oil. This expertise was crucial for exchange among developing countries, facing similar challenges, as it enabled them to strengthen and manage their

NOCs more effectively. The BAPA sees the UNDP, UNCTAD and other multilateral institutions as the main vehicle to achieving the goals set out by the plan. The BAPA conference led to the establishment of educational programs in several dimensions within the Global South, which are listed in Table 1:

Table 1. Aspects of education of BAPA programs developed at the UN conference.

Dimension	Description	Example
Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building	BAPA encouraged countries in the Global South to share expertise, resources, and best practices in education. This led to the development of regional training programs and the exchange of educational methodologies.	A regional training program is Thailand's South-South Cooperation Program. It focuses on providing technical assistance, training, and scholarships to neighboring countries like Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. The program emphasizes education in agriculture techniques and educational development.
Strengthening Educational Institutions	The plan emphasized the importance of building and enhancing educational institutions in developing countries. This included support for universities, vocational training centers, and research institutions to address local development needs.	BAPA facilitated the creation of technical training institutes in collaboration between India and Brazil, which exchanged expertise and resources. These centers focused on equipping individuals with skills in agriculture, engineering, and small-scale industries, tailored to the specific needs of local economies.
Focus on Technical and Vocational Education	This involves technical and vocational education to help empower individuals and help find new jobs.	The India-Africa Vocational Training Program facilitated the establishment of vocational training centers in African countries, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, with technical assistance provided by India. These centers offered skill development programs that reflect the demands of the local community
South-South Collaboration in Education	BAPA facilitated partnerships between countries in the Global South to develop joint educational programs, promote the exchange of students and teachers, and collaborate on research projects.	The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Academic Exchange Program brings universities and research institutions from the three member countries to collaborate on joint research projects, faculty exchanges, and student mobility programs.

Source: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC) - <https://saarc-sec.org/index.php/areas-of-cooperation/education-security-culture>.



Many of these programs exist to this day and still play a role in exchanging educational expertise at all levels. BAPA was significant as it became the reference point for South-South educational collaboration. It has managed to achieve the following:

- Became the first formal UN-backed framework when previous agreements were made on a one-to-one basis. It led to the creation of several UN agencies such as the UNDP and UNCTAD that assisted in educational cooperation.
- It promoted larger developing countries, such as China, India, and Mexico, as development partners rather than relying solely on countries in the Global North. It also led to the creation of regional hubs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Asia and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Africa that promoted education.
- It further strengthened the G77 NAM giving them a stronger voice on issues such as trade, debt, and climate.

Many programs were initiated after the BAPA declaration encountered several challenges.

- Despite advancements in technical and educational training cooperation, significant barriers remained due to the concentration of intellectual property within the Global North.
- The rivalry between India and China led to bilateral agreements serving as strategic tools for influence rather than promoting multilateral collaborations through the UN, which would have been more advantageous for knowledge and education exchange for other developing countries.
- Many of the educational exchanges focused on middle-income countries, while leaving less-developed countries behind.

Despite these drawbacks, BAPA succeeded in pushing South-South cooperation as a development model, but was hampered by inequities in the capacity of government institutions, which led to poor coordination. Geopolitical goals often hindered these programs from reaching their full potential. Nonetheless, BAPA's legacy endures through the numerous cooperation initiatives it inspired. Building on this momentum—and in response to the shortcomings of earlier efforts—India took a more prominent role in 1987 by advancing similar initiatives to strengthen educational collaboration in the Global South.

B.4. The New Delhi Declaration 1987

The New Delhi Declaration of 1987 led by India urged countries in the Global South to prioritize investment in social services, especially education. The declaration was made in response to the trend of increasing military spending instead of social services by many of the world powers. This declaration led to several educational partnerships between India and other developing countries. These partnerships involved funding and implementing various educational programs in the Global South.

The declaration highlighted education as a human right and its importance for social and economic development. It emphasized the need for India to share its experience to help other countries build educational institutions, vocational training programs, and research facilities to address local development challenges. Table 2 lists the various initiatives and their purpose established by the declaration.

Table 2. List of educational initiatives established by the New Delhi Declaration

Initiative	Countries	Purpose
India-Africa Vocational Training Program	India, Kenya, Ethiopia	Skill-development aligned with local community demands
Technological cooperation between India and Brazil in Biotechnology	India, Brazil	A program distributes grants in research in the field of biotechnology by research teams in India and Brazil
The South Asia Economics Student Meet	India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan	This is an annual event created by India and organizes a conference in different South Asian countries. It provides a platform for undergraduate and graduate students in Economics to present academic papers to help stimulate new ideas for the economies in the South Asia region.
SAARC year of literacy	South Asia Region	This initiative recognized literacy as a human right. Illiteracy was recognized as a major contributor to poverty and social injustice. The SAARC summit in 1997 aimed to eradicate illiteracy in the developing world. Considered visionary, it suggested methods such as Open Learning and Distance learning as cost effective measures for developing countries to bolster basic education programs.



India-Africa Science & Technology Initiative	India, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Kenya, Ghana, Namibia, Senegal	This initiative supports research partnerships between Indian and African institutions in areas like agriculture, healthcare, and renewable energy.
ASEAN-India Science & Technology Cooperation	India and East Asian countries	Implemented in 1996, this program has funded research fellowships, joint R&D projects in the private sector, and technology-sharing programs.

Sources: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, <https://aistic.gov.in/ASEAN/aboutUs>, <https://saarc-sec.org/index.php/areas-of-cooperation/education-security-culture>.

Many of the programs established in the years following the New Delhi declaration had the same focus on improving education in the Global South for development, but they had some minor differences with programs preceding the declaration.

- Post-declaration initiatives focused on producing original research as opposed to learning from an established curriculum. There was a greater focus on establishing research programs in the sciences and public policy based on new research and ideas, instead of implementing established ideas, specifically tailored to the Global South.
- Earlier initiatives were often organized by the UN or smaller initiatives between several countries. This effectively meant many of the programs were either funded and controlled by countries in the Global North or simply lacked adequate resources. Initiatives established after the New Delhi declaration were centered around India, with the largest population in the Global South, to share its experience in utilizing education to promote development.

Nearly all of the programs established as a result of the New Delhi declaration were centered in India, involving numerous developing countries from both Africa and Asia. This model promoted a degree of independence from multilateral institutions, granting the Global South greater agency in shaping its educational cooperation efforts. The concentration of initiatives centered around India made them slightly risky, as the effectiveness of these programs heavily depended on India's capacity to implement them. By the 1990s, shifting global economic conditions prompted the creation of more ad hoc educational initiatives, expanding the scope of collaboration across various educational fields.

B.5. Challenges in the wake of enforced global austerity during the 1990s

During the 1990s, many countries in the Global South implemented austerity measures as part of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) guided by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These programs often required significant cuts to public spending—including education—as a condition for receiving loans and grants. To mitigate the impact of these budget cuts, these countries pooled resources to create cost-effective, ad-hoc educational collaboration programs, thereby sustaining their educational development efforts despite financial limitations.

At the same time, these countries had a growing youth population, which further reduced the allocation of resources per student. Many of these reforms led to consequences such as lower enrolment, teacher strikes, gender disparities and poor infrastructure as shown in Table 3 below. The table lists these reforms along with the negative impacts they had on their educational system

Table 3. Effect on social austerity on education programs in various countries

Country	Economic Reform	Impact
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce teaching staff • Cut school budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in primary enrolment due to fees, Teacher shortages, & overcrowded classrooms • Rise in private schools leading to education inequality
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut education subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in primary enrolment (especially girls) • Poor physical school infrastructure
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce partial fees to replace free fees • Freeze teacher salary increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp decline in enrolment in rural areas • Teacher strikes due to unpaid wages
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralize school funding to provinces • Privatize some aspects of education, which lead to inequality in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher protests • Growth of low-fee private schools (deepened inequality)
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce education spending • Introduce school fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich-poor gap: 86% wealthy vs. 37% poor children in school, with girls disproportionately affected
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut funding for higher education • Introduced several private universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in public university funding • Protests • Expansion of private institutions (less accessible to poor)

Source: Neoliberalism and Education in the Global South: A New Form of Imperialism - https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-3-030-29901-9_144.

This compelled countries in the Global South to explore innovative ways to enhance their educational systems while maximizing limited financial resources. While many of these policies were reversed by the 2000s, the effects of the social austerity measures were long-term, as they impacted students who later entered the labor force, and much of the school infrastructure was costly. From the 1990s onwards, many countries in the Global South launched a new wave of educational initiatives to overcome these side effects. Unlike previous initiatives, they were neither coordinated by multilateral institutions nor single countries.

B.6. General overview of historical context

Overall, we can see that since the 1950s educational cooperation in the Global South has evolved into more concrete and established programs, in response to the changing global situation over time. Table 4 presents a summary of this historical evolution of cooperation in education from 1955 to 1990. It outlines the global situation, purposes, proposals, and types of cooperation characterizing each period.

Table 4. Evolution of educational cooperation in the Global South from 1955 to 1990

Aspect	1955 Bandung Conference	1961 Non-Aligned Movement conference	1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action	1987 New Delhi Declaration	1990 Austerity in the Global South
Global Situation	Post-colonial countries had high illiteracy rates and colonial influenced education systems	Global South did not have a voice on the global stage compared to the two major powers	Lack of economic sovereignty, limited foreign aid and oil shock crisis affected many developing countries	Both major powers investing in defense instead of social services such as education	Many countries in the Global South adopted austerity reforms with cuts to education
Purpose	Highlighted the necessity of basic education and reforming curricula to reflect local cultures	The NAM movement was established for the Global South to speak in a unified voice on issues such as education	Highlighted the necessity for larger countries in the Global South to share knowledge in combatting the crisis	Using knowledge India has built up to share with the Global South	Finding innovative ways to improve education while also being cost efficient
Proposals and initiatives	No specific concrete proposals	Programs to improve literacy rates and government capacity	Building technical institutes across the Global South to promote technical education	Educational initiatives between India and the Global South	Programs targeting diverse aspects of education
Type of cooperation	Raising awareness with no specific cooperation	Between several Global South countries through ad-hoc agreements	Intra Global South with the support of multilateral institutions such as the UN	India led initiatives with countries in the Global South	Multilateral ad-hoc agreements within the Global South

Source: ECES Research.

C. Current Educational Initiatives and Partnerships

In the 1990s, smaller nations in the Global South encountered significant financial constraints due to imposed social austerity measures. Additionally, the demand for higher education surged because of rising populations and heightened awareness of its benefits. To address these challenges, these nations collaborated to pool resources and support education during a period of financial austerity, which coincided with an expansion of the Internet and new digital technologies.

C.1. The Pan-African University initiative

The Pan-African University (PAU) initiative, launched in 2011 by the African Union, is composed of a series of post-graduate institutions aimed at advancing higher education using research and post-graduate education to drive innovation across Africa. The initiative is composed of several institutes across different African countries, with each institute specialized in the field of its expertise. The initiative aims to address Africa's development challenges by fostering locally relevant research and knowledge-sharing among African universities. Table 5 below lists the various institutes established by PAU, along with their research focus.

Table 5. List of institutes by the Pan African University

Institute	Specialization	Location	Research
Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS)	Governance and Humanities	Yaoundé, Cameroon	Focuses governance policies on sustainable development in Africa
Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI)	Basic Sciences, Technology, and Innovation	Nairobi, Kenya	Development of affordable medical tools for low-income regions
Institute for Space Sciences (PAUSS)	Space Sciences	Cape Town, South Africa	Using space technology and satellites to help collect data on environmental changes
Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change) (PAUWES)	Water and Energy Sciences	Tlemcen, Algeria	Renewable energy solutions and water management in dry regions in Africa

Source: Pan African University.

The PAU has a strategic focus on retaining African talent as well as offering educational programs specifically designed to address the continent's unique challenges. They help overcome brain drain by helping students pursue advanced studies within Africa and contribute to their home countries' development. The PAU also helps some students who face financial barriers to studying by providing financial aid. Within ten years of its establishment, the PAU managed to launch several projects based on the unique research that was tailored to the African region. Table 6 lists the main projects that were launched based on previous research that was mentioned earlier.

Table 6. Various programs established by institutes in the PAU.

Institute	Project launched
Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI)	<p>The Washa Project introduced solar-powered, handwashing machines to combat COVID-19 and improve sanitation. These devices were built using locally sourced materials in Kenya.</p> <p>The DISHASILI – Digital Innovation for Health project was a project that utilizes digital technologies to reduce health costs in Africa.</p>
Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change) (PAUWES)	The SoCool project is a business focused on developing affordable, energy-efficient cooling systems tailored towards humid African climates.

Source: Pan-African University.

Although the PAU was funded by members of the African Union, financed by the African Development bank and generates its own income through tuition fees and research contracts, it has appealed for additional external funding. It has been funded by developed countries in the Global North such as Germany (GIZ), Japan (JICA) and the EU. The African university has had several achievements since its founding, including:

- Helped in graduating 2,300 students, produced 1,825 scientific publications and has filed 15 patents internationally over a period of 13 years.²
- It helped establish incubation hubs in Nigeria and Algeria, attracting a diverse student body across Africa.
- It has achieved high prominence in scientific output compared to other local universities in Africa, which helps it attract external funding for research from countries in the Global North such as Germany, UK, France and the US.

² Pan African University 13 Years of Impact - https://pau-au.africa/news-events/news/news-detail?tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=455&cHash=d99992345b72a3b36df54b1bf26ad66c

Despite these achievements, it has faced some challenges.

- Despite having institutes across several universities in Africa, it still has an incomplete regional representation. Major African economies such as Egypt, Ghana, Ethiopia and DR Congo are not included in the PAU network.
- PAU institutes face challenges related to infrastructure and resources, affecting their ability to deliver sound educational experiences and research output.
- Despite its achievements, PAU and its institutes often lack visibility in global university rankings. This limited recognition can affect the university's ability to attract international partnerships and funding.

In summary, the Pan-African University has made significant contributions to higher education and research in Africa, promoting academic excellence, innovation, and continental integration. However, addressing its challenges, particularly in expanding regional representation and improving financing, is crucial for its continued success.

C.2. Pan-African e-Network project

The Pan-African e-Network project was initiated in 2009 with the aim of enhancing connectivity and ICT collaboration among African nations and India by building internet infrastructure through cable and satellite connectivity. In addition to building internet infrastructure, the Indian government has helped build and train various sectors of the economy. The project aims to use digital technologies to help enhance training of workers in education, medicine, governance, commerce, and agriculture. Table 7 lists the various programs established by the e-Network projects describing their objectives as well as illustrating their impacts through case studies.

Table 7. Various training programs provided by Pan-African Network Project

Program	Description	Case Study
e-Education	Provides virtual classrooms and facilitates distance learning programs, enabling students to access quality education remotely.	This has enabled students in remote areas of Africa to attend virtual classes and access educational resources from universities in India.
e-Medicine	Offers training on using telemedicine services, to connect them with health professionals.	Patients in rural Africa have been able to consult with medical specialists in India, improving healthcare access and outcomes.
e-Governance	Enhances administrative efficiency and transparency by	This has helped African governments implement e-governance solutions, improving



Program	Description	Case Study
	implementing ICT solutions within governmental processes.	transparency and administrative efficiency.
e-Commerce	Provides training on using online business transactions and digital marketplaces to boost economic growth.	This has facilitated the growth of digital marketplaces in Africa, enabling businesses to reach a wider audience and boost economic growth.
e-Agriculture	Provides training on utilizing technology to improve agricultural practices, providing farmers with data and resources for better crop management.	The Pan-African e-Network project has provided African farmers with access to data and resources for better crop management, leading to improved agricultural practices.

Source: Pan-African e-Network project.

The combination of building internet infrastructure, building digital applications and training a workforce to use these applications has helped in bridging the digital divide in Africa. It also helps in providing access to education, healthcare, and various e-services. The initiative has used the growth of internet infrastructure to facilitate knowledge-sharing between African nations. Eventually, this helps utilize ICT to drive economic development.

Among the successes:

- Helped link India and Africa directly through both submarine cables and a satellite system, and also used Indian expertise to build fiber optic networks.
- The initiative was widely accepted, with 48 countries in the African Union adopted it.
- Among the African Universities that used the initiative to upgrade its ICT infrastructure, it has helped graduate over 22,000 students.
- Building ICT infrastructure in hospitals and health centers helped a large number of African patients in remote areas access telemedicine consultation services.

Despite these successes, there have been some failures:

- While the networks were built with Indian expertise, many African institutions lacked the expertise to maintain them and link them to their networks.

- The lack of institutional experience of some African countries was compounded when the Indian government partially withdrew from the network due to financial reasons in 2017.
- Despite the initiative being widespread across Africa, the impact was uneven. Countries like Ethiopia, South Africa and Senegal benefited by upgrading their infrastructure, while countries like Burkina Faso and Nigeria didn't benefit due to lack of political support or poor capacity of their institutions.

Despite this, the Pan-African networks showcase how building a strong digital infrastructure in the developing world can lead to improvements in economic development, health, and education.

C.3. The African Virtual University

The African Virtual University (AVU) was launched in 1997 to help expand higher education opportunities in Africa. Its goal was to leverage ICT to make tertiary education more accessible across the continent. The launch of the AVU was seen as pioneering as it spread the advantages of the internet in its early stages where distance education was unheard of. Based in Kenya, the AVU provided various programs across the African continent. Table 8 below outlines the various programs with their focus areas, illustrating their implementation through case studies.

Table 8. List of programs by the African Virtual University

Program	Description	Case Study
ICT in Education	Training educators to integrate technology into teaching and learning processes.	The AVU collaborated with Kenyatta University in Kenya to implement ICT-based teaching methods.
Teacher Education	Providing professional development for teachers in various disciplines.	A pilot program in Senegal focused on enhancing teacher qualifications through distance learning.
Computer Science	Offering courses in programming, software development, and IT management.	Students in Uganda successfully completed programming courses, leading to local tech startups.
Business Administration	Equipping students with skills in management, finance, and entrepreneurship.	A partnership with institutions in Ghana helped students launch small businesses.
Mathematics and Science	Enhancing knowledge in STEM fields to address regional educational needs.	Collaboration with universities in South Africa improved STEM education accessibility.

Source: The African Virtual University.

The AVU helped to improve educational standards across Africa by:

- Improved access to education by making it more accessible to those living in remote areas and/or with limited resources.
- Increased supply of teachers in the fields as listed in Table 7, thus having a compounding effect, with more teachers providing wider access to education.
- Improved capacity building in public and private institutions by enhancing digital literacy, taking advantage of the early internet era.
- Building a collaborative educational network through virtual classrooms allowing students across Africa to interact with each other, when long distances were a barrier.
- Narrowing the gender disparity in higher education, as a significant percentage of students enrolled at the AVU are female.

Despite these successes, the AVU has faced many challenges to make a greater impact. These include:

- Many universities that partner with AVU lack sufficient internet infrastructure, and many of the students enrolled are faced with similar constraints at home.
- The university faces a lack of sustainable financing and relies on financing from the African Development Bank or external funds.
- There is a lack of recognition and integration between the AVU and the educational ministries in several African states. Many of the degrees have not been recognized by African member states.
- Despite the progress and scale in reaching more students across Africa it still does not meet the massive demand for higher education in Africa. Between 1997 and 2015 AVU enrolled about 43,000 students.³

Overall, despite the AVU being a pioneering initiative that foresaw the development of the Internet for use in distance learning, it faces issues with integration into the educational policies of different countries and financing issues that hinder its full potential.

C.4. The BRICS Network University

The BRICS Network University (BRICS NU) was launched in 2015 to encourage academic research between BRICS member countries. This university focuses on priority areas

³ Out of Africa: e-learning makes further education a reality for tens of thousands - https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/may/20/elearning-africa-conference-addis-ababa-further-education?utm_source=chatgpt.com

such as energy, computer science, ecology, and climate change with the aim of overcoming challenges that current universities face. Table 9 presents priority areas identified by the BRICS Network University, outlining their objectives, challenges faced and mentions case studies demonstrating collaborative initiatives.

Table 9. List of areas of specialization of the BRICS Network University

Priority Area	Objective	Challenges faced in the education sector	Case study
Energy	Promote sustainable energy solutions	Coordination complexities	The BRICS Network University collaborated on a project to develop solar energy solutions in rural areas of India, addressing the challenge of coordination among multiple stakeholders
Computer Science	Enhance technological innovations	Varying academic standards	A joint research initiative between BRICS universities led to the development of a new software platform that integrates diverse academic standards and enhances technological innovation.
Ecology	Address environmental issues	Need for increased funding	The BRICS Network University conducted a study on the impact of deforestation on the Amazon rainforest, highlighting the need for increased funding to address environmental issues.
Climate Change	Develop strategies for climate resilience	Resource allocation	A collaborative project within the BRICS Network University focused on developing climate resilience strategies for coastal cities, tackling the challenge of resource allocation.

Source: The BRICS Network University.

Among many of these priority areas, the BRICS Network University helped overcome issues of limited resources by coordinating research experience between countries to help overcome developmental challenges. The university network helped develop several postgraduate programs in BRICS countries by aligning the programs with the needs of the labor market. In addition to that however, the research programs are designed to align with the national development goals of BRICS member countries. This is expected to help in avoiding creating generic research or knowledge, and instead generating actionable knowledge that is relevant to the region.

Despite the initial success, the BRICS university network has been slow to implement, and has faced multiple delays. This is mainly due to the projects relying on the

national budget of member states instead of external financing. There are also geopolitical tensions between some BRICs member states, which undermines cohesion between various universities.

C.5. Each One Teach One

The "Each One Teach One" is an educational initiative developed by India to help promote literacy across the country and to expand it into Africa, building on India's experience in education. The initiative aims to enhance adult literacy and vocational training by pairing a literate individual with an illiterate individual in the same community on a one-on-one basis. This is viewed as an alternative method of promoting literacy to structured programs as it is more flexible. The Indian government sends educators within India and to various African countries to recruit local volunteers to help improve their teaching skills and kickstart a matching program. This program aims to spread education faster by ensuring that each educated person helps teach a less educated individual. This approach is intended to increase skills and improve literacy rates while bypassing formal institutions.

Though originally launched in 1983, the initiative is inspired by earlier Indian experiences dating back to the 1930s. The rise of new communication technologies in the 1990s made it more practical to implement and scale up the program across different regions.

While "Each One Teach One" has been successfully applied in various contexts in both India and Africa, its administration remains largely decentralized. Each local program is managed independently, based on the foundational concept developed in India, with little cross-communication between country-level efforts. Table 10 below shows a list of case studies where this program was implemented with its own focus area and outcome.

Table 10. List of some case studies in Africa under the "Each one Teach one" program.

Case Study	Location	Focus Area	Outcome
Tusome Early Grade Reading Program	Kenya	A program launched in 2015 focused on improving literacy among early-grade students through teacher training and provision of learning materials.	Significant improvements in reading fluency in both English and Kiswahili language among primary school students.
Street Library Ghana	Ghana	A literacy program that recruits volunteers, providing mobile library services and educational activities to children in rural communities.	Improved access to educational resources in schools



Case Study	Location	Focus Area	Outcome
UBA bank Foundation's Each One Teach One Program	Nigeria	A CSR initiative where UBA staff volunteer to teach vocational skills and practical skills	Empowered youths with practical skills, improving their employability and economic prospects.
PeerLink Initiative Uganda (PELI-U)	Uganda	Promotes literacy and reading through community libraries with educational resources	Set up the first community library with educational services.
Monash South Africa's Each One Teach One Program	South Africa	A university student-run volunteer program aimed at improving literacy and numeracy among primary school students through one-on-one tutoring sessions.	Assisted 55 primary school learners weekly, which helps them aim for long-term educational success.

Source: African Leadership Magazine, Hilti foundation.

The **“Each one Teach one” initiative** has been credited for boosting literacy rates and vocational skills across Africa and India. In addition, it had the following successes.

- The program is cost-effective as it is partially based on volunteers teaching or mentoring others in the same community. The program also does not rely on building a physical infrastructure.
- The programs are culturally relevant since they incorporate local contexts within small communities. This makes learning more accessible and relatable.
- The peer-to-peer model is more sustainable as it ensures continuity in a local community. It does not rely on educators from different regions of the country. Many of the learners become future educators within their communities.

However, it has faced the following setbacks:

- It is hard to measure the impact of the programs due to the informality of the teaching process and the decentralized nature of the programs. Many of the outcomes do not have specific indicators, as they are not measured.
- There are resource limitations that make it hard for volunteers to access such learning materials.

This approach has been instrumental in advancing literacy and education across Africa at a time when public educational institutions were financially constrained. It leverages community involvement and peer learning to make education more accessible to remote and underserved areas despite the challenges it faces.

C.6. Joint curriculum development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The Joint curriculum development in the Southern African Development Community is a program that focuses on harmonizing educational policies and practices across SADC states to promote regional integration by ensuring students in all member states follow the same curriculum. This program was proposed to help address challenges such as teacher shortages and disparities in educational resources, and the need for sustainable development. The program was segmented into two distinct subprograms as outlined in Table 11.

Table 11. Joint curriculum development in the Southern African Development Community

Program Name	Description
SADC-UNESCO Joint Program of Action (2022-2025)	Focuses on aligning curriculum development with sustainable development goals, emphasizing teacher training and global citizenship education.
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Regional Strategic Framework (2022-2030)	Supports curriculum development aimed at addressing climate change and sustainability through regional cooperation.

Source: The Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The development of the joint curriculum has been successful in many ways.

- It helped create a unified framework for developing a curriculum in vocational and academic training, which helped reduce the duplication of efforts.
- It helped align regional economic needs with the regional curriculum, bridging the job skills gap.
- Having a unified curriculum made it easier to train teachers and allowed for greater mobility for teachers within the region. This helped address teacher shortages.⁴

Despite this, there were many factors that hindered the program from reaching its full potential.

- Limited financial resources in the region makes it harder to make the program sustainable and to update the curriculum in the future.

⁴ UNSECO - Education for sustainable development in the Southern African Development Community: regional strategic framework - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384023>



- Despite sharing a common language in the region, the region has different countries with diverse government capacities. Implementing a common curriculum will vary depending on the institutional capacity of each country.
- There are political and bureaucratic hurdles, as different governments have varying priorities.

This joint curriculum development within SADC has led to the enhancement of educational standards, resulting in more comprehensive and relevant curricula that help address common challenges in the region, such as those posed by climate change. The implementation of teacher training programs to promote better teaching methods has made the program more sustainable.

C.7. Collaborative teacher training programs in ASEAN countries

There have been various collaborative teacher training programs in ASEAN countries since the early 2000s aimed at improving the quality of education. These programs focus on professional development, cultural exchange, and introducing teaching strategies. The programs also focus on the professional development of mid-career teachers. Table 12 below lists these collaborative teacher training programs.

Table 12. Collaborative teacher training programs in ASEAN

Program Name	Countries Involved	Description
SEAMEO VOCTECH (1990)	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	A multilateral organization that focuses on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and how to overcome problems that hinder training. The organization also has a platform that consolidates knowledge on providing vocational training and provides it to policymakers in the region.
ASEAN Teacher Mobility Program	Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore	Promotes teacher exchange to enhance multicultural understanding and exchange expertise in teaching methods. The program aims to build a cohesive and common educational program in the region.
Association of Southeast Asian Teacher Education Network (2014)⁵	ASEAN member states	The program aims to create curriculum comparability and academic calendar harmonization so that students can transfer their credentials between ASEAN member states.

Source: ASEAN; Association of Southeast Asian Teacher Education Network.

⁵ In Pursuit of Quality Teacher Education in ASEAN - <https://theaseanmagazine.asean.org/article/in-pursuit-of-quality-teacher-education-in-asean/>



The aforementioned programs have enhanced teacher qualifications and introduced innovative teaching methods, while also exposing teachers to different cultures in the region to promote teaching. Many of these programs have benefited the ASEAN region by providing:

- More experienced teachers due to higher mobility within the region, which facilitates the exchange of best practices.
- Harmonized teacher education standards across ASEAN, ensuring consistency in teaching quality across the region and mutual recognition of qualifications. This also ensures a more integrated labor market in the region.
- Digital learning and inclusive education have improved, supported by workshops that strengthen teacher capacity in these fields.
- While these are all relatively small-scale programs, discussions about them have influenced national education policies. This shows how smaller collaborations on the ground can influence government policy in the long term.

There are, however, a number of drawbacks.

- Many ASEAN countries face a teacher shortage, making it harder to take advantage of teacher mobility across the region.
- Differences in language and culture can hinder the effectiveness of many collaborative education programs.
- Resource Disparities mean that some ASEAN countries struggle with funding and infrastructure, limiting access to high-quality training.

Despite these drawbacks, many of these programs led to ASEAN countries having their educational systems being ranked as some of the best worldwide.



D. Conclusion

The collaborative educational initiatives in the Global South, from the foundational efforts of the Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement to modern programs, like the Pan-African University and the BRICS Network University, highlight a commitment to leveraging education for socio-economic development. These partnerships have addressed critical challenges such as illiteracy, teacher shortages, and resource disparities while fostering regional integration, innovation, and capacity-building. By prioritizing culturally relevant curricula, regionally tailored research and technical training through South-South cooperation, these initiatives have not only improved access and quality of education but also empowered the Global South to tackle local and global economic challenges. As the Global South continues to expand these collaborations, education remains a cornerstone of sustainable development and collective progress.



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