Addressing the Impact of Climate-Induced Environmental Shocks on Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in Ethiopia [1]

Context

Climate-induced environmental shocks pose significant challenges to education in Ethiopia, particularly for Out-of-School Children (OOSC). Ethiopia's vulnerability to climate change is compounded by its political unrest and a history of armed conflict. Recent conflicts, including the war in northern Ethiopia, have led to the destruction of educational infrastructure and displacement of populations, further hindering access to education. In Ethiopia, the recurrence of droughts and floods has resulted in loss of life, destruction of educational infrastructure, and the displacement of people. Predictions indicate that the frequency of droughts will escalate, adding pressure to already vulnerable food production systems. Rapid population growth and outdated traditional farming and land management practices further strain the country's soil, water, and biodiversity resources. Poor management practices such as extensive cultivation, overgrazing, and deforestation exacerbate these challenges. Collectively, these factors present a significant national challenge in responding to climate change. These environmental crises influence the education sector as they cause education discontinuity.

This policy brief examines the far-reaching impacts of climate-induced environmental shocks on OOSC in Ethiopia and offers actionable recommendations to mitigate these challenges.

Evidence of Impact

Empirical studies demonstrate the significant impact of climate-induced environmental shocks on education in Ethiopia. Children exposed to climate-related emergencies, such as droughts and floods, will likely drop out of school. In contrast, older children who left school tend to engage in paid labor to support their families, exacerbating educational disparities. Longitudinal studies reveal lasting consequences on cognitive development, with climate-induced shocks leading to inferior academic performance among affected children.

Recommendations for Action

Climate Resilience Education

Climate resilience education in the national curriculum represents a critical step towards equipping students with the knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges of climate change and environmental shocks. By incorporating climate change adaptation and resilience-building strategies across various subjects, hydroelectric power) in the MENA region's energy mix?

Ethiopia, integrating climate connected nature of environmental issues. Through experiential learning methodologies and practical skills development, students can actively engage in hands-on activities and community-based projects that foster a deeper appreciation for environmental stewardship and

[1] **This policy brief is based on the following paper:**
Out-of-School Children in Ethiopia: Impacts of Climate Change and Political Instability
Semela,T & Cochrane, L. (under review).

sustainability. Moreover, by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement, Ethiopia can create a supportive ecosystem where students, teachers, and local stakeholders work together to implement climate resilience initiatives and advocate for environmental conservation. By prioritizing teacher training and capacity building, which considers how to respond to environmental shocks effectively, Ethiopia can ensure that educators have the necessary skills and resources to integrate climate resilience education into their teaching practice effectively.

Investment in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

In Ethiopia, there is a pressing need for investment in climate-resilient infrastructure for education to safeguard the well-being and educational opportunities of children, especially in regions vulnerable to climate change impacts. Proposed recommendations include comprehensively allocating resources to assess existing infrastructure vulnerabilities and incorporating climate-resilient design principles into construction and renovation projects. Additionally, developing disaster preparedness and response plans is essential to mitigate risks and ensure the safety of students and staff during emergencies. Prioritizing accessibility and inclusivity, particularly in remote and marginalized communities, is crucial to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Community engagement and capacity building are also proposed to empower local stakeholders to contribute to climate-resilient infrastructure development. Through monitoring and evaluation, Ethiopia can assess the effectiveness of these proposed investments and continuously improve the resilience and sustainability of its educational infrastructure, laying the groundwork for the future prosperity and resilience of its children and communities.

Community-Based Adaptation

Expanding on the proposed recommendation of Community-Based Adaptation in Ethiopia entails fostering initiatives that empower local communities to proactively address the impact of climate change on education, particularly focusing on Out-of-School Children (OOSC). This approach acknowledges the invaluable knowledge, resources, and resilience within communities and seeks to leverage these assets to tackle climate-related educational challenges effectively. Central to this approach is fostering robust community engagement and participation, facilitating meaningful involvement of local stakeholders in the planning, implementing, and monitoring adaptation initiatives. This involves conducting inclusive community consultations, establishing participatory decision-making processes, and fostering collaboration between community members, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders. Additionally, prioritizing capacity building and knowledge sharing is essential, as it equips community members with the necessary skills and understanding to navigate climate change impacts. By providing training opportunities and raising awareness about climate-related risks, sustainable land management practices, developing the knowledge, and using the techniques of early warning systems and indigenous knowledge, communities can enhance their adaptive capacity and resilience, ultimately contributing to a more resilient education system for all.

Data Collection and Monitoring

Expanding on the proposed recommendation of Data Collection and Monitoring in the context of Ethiopia involves strengthening existing systems and developing new mechanisms to systematically gather, analyze, and utilize data related to the impact of climate-induced shocks on education. This

initiative recognizes the critical importance of accurate and up-to-date information in understanding the dynamics of climate change and its effects on the education sector. To achieve this, Ethiopia can invest in enhancing the capacity of relevant institutions, such as the Ministry of Education and research organizations, to collect, manage, and analyze data on climate-related hazards, their impact on educational infrastructure, and the resulting outcomes for students, particularly OOSC. This may involve deploying technologies such as remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS), and mobile data collection tools to improve the timeliness and accuracy of data collection. Furthermore, efforts should be made to ensure that data collection processes are inclusive and representative of diverse communities, including those in remote and marginalized areas. Once collected, the data should be effectively disseminated and utilized to inform evidence-based policy and programming decisions at the national, regional, and local levels. By strengthening data collection and monitoring mechanisms, Ethiopia can better understand the specific challenges posed by climate-induced shocks on education and develop targeted interventions to mitigate their impact, ultimately improving educational outcomes for all children across the country.

Conclusion

Addressing the impact of climate-induced environmental shocks on OOSC in Ethiopia requires coordinated efforts across sectors to build climate resilience, strengthen educational infrastructure, empower communities, and enhance data-driven decision-making. By prioritizing climate resilience education, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, supporting community-based adaptation initiatives, and strengthening early warning systems, Ethiopia can mitigate the impact of environmental shocks on education and ensure access to quality education for all children, thereby fostering sustainable development and resilience in the face of climate change.