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Goal Four: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

What do you think are the entry points for achieving this goal in your host country? What recommendations would you make for achieving this goal in your host country?

There are several entry points for ensuring quality and inclusive education for the people of South Africa. With the HIV/AIDS epidemic that has run rampant and severely altered a generation of people in this country (as a generalization due to the area of the country in which we are working), this has also had a stark effect on the general upbringing and the paths of education of what is referred to as the Rainbow Nation. This in turn has left a void in the act of committing to education by learners in parts of the country. In townships, it is not uncommon for children to be left parentless from this disease, which also means a lack of focused guidance towards education. Many of the communities remain very traditional, where a child might not have a biological parents, a community raises these children, and from this knowledge is passed down through the elders to the younger generations. By targeting and educating this older population of South Africans who are revered and hold influence within their communities, this in turn can seep through to the younger generations and foster a sense of pride in learning.

In South Africa, since the time when Nelson Mandela led the country out of the apartheid era, building schools across the nation has become somewhat of a trend. While these school buildings may exist and were built with the best intentions, many across the country are known to be derelict and empty, and hundreds have been built in areas not accessible to even the most rural citizens. Township schools are on the other end of the spectrum. Township schools are notoriously overcrowded which acts as a complete impediment to the quality of education for the learners, especially in primary schools. I believe that for this Sustainable Development Goal to be effectively attained in South Africa, the ratio of teachers to learners is something that needs to be addressed. The average teacher to learner ratio for a primary school in a township sits at 1 teacher to 45 learners. Instead of always building these new schools in the rural areas of the country, the populations of learners in the townships need to be evaluated. Whether this means building new schools in the existing townships to lower this ratio, or to fund more teachers at existing schools, both would be a step in the right direction of quality education for the learners.

With high ratios such as these, teaching is often considered a daunting task with little reward in this country. This is where things get tricky with South African educators: you get what you pay for. In schools such as township schools, education is free, but the quality is known to be low. Where schools have required school fees, the quality of education for the learners is better. It is evident that these fee-based schools have

educators that have more incentive to teach with higher pay, and tend to have a network of support for the work they do. Instead of pitting these fee based schools and free government schools against each other, the work quality for non-fee schools educators should stand somewhat equally with their fee-paying counterparts. Incentives and more accessibility to professional development need to be put in place. By equalizing the field for educators, the chances of inhibiting better quality professionals throughout the various types of South African schools would likely have a positive effect on the learners of this country,

How do you believe that goal four relates with goal five? ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’

Sustainable Development Goals Four and Five are two goals that have to work hand in hand in order for both to be achieved. Not only do they have to work together to achieve each goal, they need each other, and feed off of each other in order to achieve either and both goals. It's a cohesive relationship that contains many similarities. By having equal and inclusive education, we are intrinsically also targeting aspects of achieving gender equality. Both genders are included when we create an equal playing field for education, and that education of equality will only ignite further movements on creating gender equality.