

Equal educational opportunities for everyone are something that should be available regardless of wealth, race, or gender. Many countries around the world struggle with this concept, as promoting education, especially for the less privileged, is an expensive and complicated uphill battle. On T.V. I see kids my age who are not able to attend school, something that is a regularity and privilege for me. It breaks my heart to know that while I have a chance at attending a good college and working a job that assures my financial stability, others won't.

There are foundations like NorthSouth helping the cause, but they need support. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 22 percent of children in the U.S. are impoverished. An informative study by McMaster University¹ detailed the impact that poverty can have on the mental health of a person, in turn, decreasing their chances of a solid education and later on, a healthy work style. Not only that, but it can lead to a lack of ability to build strong and meaningful connections with others, which would help them later on in college and work.

College may not be the right path for every single person, but there is no doubt that a degree can significantly improve one's employment prospects and salary. Those in poverty often cannot pay for college and all the expensive fees that come with². They need scholarships that can take the burden of having hefty student loans. But my idea is not just another scholarship program that NorthSouth can start -- we need to go beyond that. We should start a mentoring service that helps the child know exactly what they need to do to be successful in their pursuit of a college degree. In school, most of us are taught how to keep our grades up and have extracurriculars that make us desirable to admissions committees -- but the underprivileged are not. A free mentoring program run by volunteers who are prestigious alumni and have a passion for helping the impoverished, can assist in creating and giving their mentees strong career developmental tools. If we can pair every child in the program with a mentor who would provide

priceless, customized career advice, then we can work towards aiding the development of those students in need³. This program would allow some kids to have a better future, and offer them a way out of the pervasive and harmful ‘the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor’ cycle we see in America today.

My second idea is to create a standard curriculum that not only includes quality education, but is available to the less fortunate. Hands-on material at school is always a great way to learn, but it isn’t affordable for families that lack financial stability⁵. If NorthSouth could partner with magnet schools and suppliers, they could deliver the same level of education to those who have the talents but not the money. The curriculum’s basis would be the same standardized math, science, language arts, and history material available in all American public schools, but it would also include a sort of Montessori teaching style. This would allow them to develop natural interests, and allow them to be less concerned about their economic status compared to others. Looking at statistics given by the United States Census Bureau, you can see that COVID-19 has hit education hard, leaving many poor children to experience learning loss. Half of Americans aged 16-24 lack reading proficiency beyond a 6th-grade level, 54% to be exact. NorthSouth already has created scholarships for those in India who need financial help, but we need to focus on the youth in America too. In order to do this, we need to look at their education and make sure they have the same opportunities other kids have, no matter their situation.

In conclusion, promoting education for the underserved is a crucial undertaking to which we must devote time and resources. We should aid students with socioeconomic disadvantages in the pursuit of academic achievement by starting mentorship programs and partnering with

magnet schools and suppliers. The youth is our future, and what better way to help them, than make sure they have quality education?

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