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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)



Study Guide

Agenda Item: *Barriers to Education in Conflict-Affected Countries*

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Letter from the Secretary-General

Highly esteemed participants of Junior Nesibe Aydın Model United Nations 2022 Online Conference, JNAMUN'22,

I am more than honored to welcome you all to the second session of JNAMUN. This year, unlike usual conferences, JNAMUN'22 will be held online due to the ongoing pandemic. Our conference has been attempting to encourage delegates both socially and academically through an inclusive simulation of the United Nations with unmatched committees and agendas to increase our delegates' eagerness and enthusiasm to speak up.

Both our academic and organization teams have been working very hard to give you the best JNAMUN experience. We did our best to make that online conference similar to face-to-face conferences as much as possible. Therefore; we could not discard some characteristics of JMUN such as fun activities in breaks.

This year in JNAMUN'22, we have four committees which are UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), WHO (World Health Organization), UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council), and last but not least UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). All of our committees' agenda items had been decided according to the original organization committees' policies. Additionally; all of our committees', are focusing on debating upon Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

It is my biggest wish to see all those who attend will reach their aims with remarkable knowledge and memories. Additionally, I would like to thank every participant for supporting JMUN conferences with their contribution and determination during the pandemic and staying safe.

We as the JNAMUN'22 team are looking forward to meeting all of you!

Secretary-General of JNAMUN'22

Duru Aşar

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1. Introduction to UNESCO

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, sciences, and culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

As early as 1942, in wartime, the governments of the European countries, which were confronting Nazi Germany and its allies, met in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME). World War II was far from over, yet those countries were looking for ways and means to rebuild their education system once peace was restored. The project quickly gained momentum and soon acquired a universal character. New governments, including that of the United States, decided to join in. Upon the proposal of CAME, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization (ECO/CONF) was convened in London from 1 to 16 November 1945. Scarcely had the war ended when the conference opened. It gathered together representatives of 44 countries who decided to create an organization that would embody a genuine culture of peace. In their eyes, the new organization was to establish the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" and thereby prevent the outbreak of another world war.

Education transforms lives and is at the heart of UNESCO's mission to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development. UNESCO believes that education is a human right for all throughout life and that access must be matched by quality. The Organization is the only UN agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education.

UNESCO provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens the education system worldwide, and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with gender equality an underlying principle.

It works to encompass educational development from pre-school to higher education and beyond. UNESCO educational themes include global citizenship and sustainable development, human rights and gender equality, health and HIV and AIDS, as well as technical and vocational skills development.

2. General Overview / Timeline

Exposure to conflict affects children in several ways, ranging from direct killings and injuries to more subtle, yet persistent and irreversible effects on schooling, health, nutrition, future opportunities, and well-being. Children's educational attainment is particularly compromised by exposure to violence. Conflict-affected countries include over 20% of all children of primary school age and half of these children are out of school. The likelihood of young children dropping out of school is also significantly higher in conflict-affected countries than elsewhere in the world: Only 65% of children in these countries attend the last primary school grade, in comparison to 86% across low-income countries.

These findings call attention to the importance of reforming the education system in conflict-affected countries. This is, however, a major challenge for countries emerging from years and sometimes decades of armed violence. On one hand, the destruction of infrastructure, social institutions, and markets may create important barriers to the supply of schooling and the creation of enabling environments in which education systems can be rebuilt. On the other hand, changes in economic and social structures within families and communities, alongside persistent insecurity, may create demand-side barriers to children joining schools during and after violent conflicts.

2.1. Refugee Education Statistics: Issues and Recommendations

Refugee education has been, until recently, a largely overlooked issue, and encompasses a vast array of data producers, fragmented tools, and data sources, along with non-standardized ways of measuring and reporting education indicators for this particularly vulnerable population.

This review highlights key challenges with regards to:

- Identification of refugees, especially using proxies such as nationality or native language.
- Absence of disaggregation by refugee status in existing data sources that may cover refugees, such as EMIS.
- Over-emphasis on data on access to education, especially enrolment and attendance, while excluding other measurements such as retention, dropout, learning, and safety.
- Poor integration of refugee education data into national statistical frameworks.

In order to address these challenges and improve data on refugee education, this paper suggests that governments and organizations:

- Prioritize the safe identification of refugees in existing data collection tools, such as EMIS, using unique IDs or nationality as a proxy where it is not feasible or politically sensitive to ask about refugee status.
- Disaggregate data on refugee education, not only by refugee status where protection risks are low, but also by age, gender, disability, education attainment, pre-displacement, and socioeconomic status.
- Optimize the added value of enhanced identification and disaggregation to expand coverage on indicators beyond enrolment and attendance, to measure dropout, retention, learning, and safety measures. This may provide a more comprehensive assessment on refugee children's learning and overall development, while better reflecting the education needs and informing education responses for displaced populations.
- Coordinate and set standards for refugee education data collection to avoid duplication, using models such as the UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Data Reference Group for Education in Emergencies (EiE), as models for better data-sharing and coordination.

2.2. Education in Emergencies

One in four of the world's school-age children - more than 500 million - lives in countries affected by humanitarian crises such as conflicts, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks. About 75 million children are either already missing out on their education, receiving poor quality schooling, or at risk of dropping out of school altogether. Without safe places to learn, they are at risk of child labour, child marriage, exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups. There were more than 12,700 attacks on schools between 2013 and 2017 - harming over 21,000 students and teachers in at least 70 countries.

When a conflict or natural disaster erupts, education is generally the first service interrupted and the last resumed. Governments are often overwhelmed by the needs and relief aid traditionally focuses on populations' basic requirements – food, water, shelter, and protection – with only 2 to 4 percent of humanitarian funding allocated to education. The annual funding gap in education in emergencies is US\$8.5 billion.

If education is one of the most underfunded sectors in humanitarian aid, higher education in emergencies is often considered a luxury. Today, only 1% of the world's more than 65 million people displaced by war and conflict attend university, compared to the global average of 34%. However, the need for higher education is especially acute in places of conflict, where it is crucial in rebuilding societies and maintaining stability. Higher education is strongly linked to increased opportunity, strengthened economic development, improved public health, and safer communities. It offers young people hope and a path towards a sustainable and independent future.

3. Major Parties Involved and their Views

3.1. UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF works to provide uninterrupted education for every child affected by the humanitarian crisis – especially girls, children with disabilities, internally displaced children, refugees, and migrants. Their work builds capacity by training teachers, supplying learning materials, and supporting Governments to reduce the risk of disaster. UNICEF strongly advocates for a child's right to education and a protective learning environment, forging partnerships at the national and global levels to safeguard learning for every child. UNESCO also supports Governments as they implement the Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.

3.2. UNHRC (The United Nations Human Rights Council)

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, protects people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. They work in over 130 countries, protecting millions of people by responding with life-saving support, safeguarding fundamental human rights, and helping them build a better future. Of the 20.7 million refugees under UNHCR's care, 7.9 million are refugee children of school age. Their access to education is limited, with almost half of them unable to attend school at all. UNHCR partners with governments and international organizations to ensure quality protective education for refugee children and young people everywhere.

3.3. Nine NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) Advocating for the Right to Education

1. Childhood Education International
2. Plan International
3. Save the Children
4. Roma Education Fund (REF)
5. African Education Foundation (AEF)
6. The Education Trust
7. Asha for Education
8. Education Development Center (EDC)
9. CARE

4. Relevant United Nations Document

- **OOSC (Out of School Children) – 2014 – Conflict and education – final**

Exposure to conflict affects children in several ways, ranging from direct killings and injuries to more subtle, yet persistent and irreversible effects on schooling, health, nutrition, future opportunities, and well-being. Children's educational attainment is particularly compromised by exposure to violence. Conflict-affected countries include over 20% of all children of primary school age but account for around half of all out-of-school children of primary school age. The likelihood of young children dropping out of school is also significantly higher in conflict-affected countries than elsewhere in the world: only 65% of children in these countries attend the last primary school grade, in comparison to 86% across low-income countries. Research has highlighted in particular the causal adverse impact of conflict exposure in terms of reducing the number of years children spend in school and restricting grade progression. These effects have been shown in turn to affect considerably future life prospects of affected children, including access to the labour market, earnings, and health outcomes in adulthood, which may aggravate risks associated with the outbreak or renewal of violent conflicts.

These findings call attention to the importance of reforming education systems in conflict-affected countries. This is, however, a major challenge for countries emerging from years and sometimes decades of armed violence. On one hand, the destruction of infrastructure, social institutions, and markets may create important barriers to the supply of schooling and the creation of enabling environments in which education systems can be rebuilt. On the other hand, changes in economic and social structures within families and communities, alongside persistent insecurity, may create demand-side barriers to children joining schools during and after violent conflicts. The objective of this paper is to build on this emerging body of research on the impact of violent conflict on child educational outcomes to identify and examine key supply- and demand-side bottlenecks that may prevent the expansion of education in conflict-affected countries, and suggest policy interventions that may break barriers to the implementation and effectiveness of education systems that support positive social transformation in conflict-affected contexts.

Retrieved from the introduction section of "BARRIERS TO EDUCATION IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES AND POLICY OPPORTUNITIES".

5. Questions to Consider During the Study

1. What measures should be taken about the education of children in those conflict-affected countries?
2. How to strengthen the education system so the countries provide high-quality learning opportunities for children in host communities?
3. What changes should be done for the children, who have arrived in countries where their families plan to stay, to help them entering public school systems?

6. Conclusion

While researching for the committee issue please remember that different countries have different challenges and different opportunities. While writing your position paper try to see the issue from different perspectives.

The UNESCO should focus on barriers to education in conflict-affected countries. Your research and work will contribute a lot to your working knowledge of the United Nations and the way human rights affect the world we live in.

Let's work towards making this global village a better place for all.

7. Concluding Statement of the Committee

When writing your papers take a look at how your country protects and provides for educational needs for all. Find innovative and creative solutions to this issue. Rather than repeating what the United Nations has already done. Also, make sure you don't focus too much on one aspect of the issue. Moreover, it will be to your benefit to know about your allies and who you are opposing. The quality of the debates, working papers, and final resolutions will be a reflection of the level of your effort and participation.

8. References

www.unesco.org

<https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>

<https://www.unhcr.org/education.html>

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OOSC-2014-Conflict-and-education-final.pdf>