



Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Education in Conflict Zones

Head Chair:

Educate. Empower. Engage.



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Policy Dilemma

In 1997, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group goal number four highlighted that quality education is a right for all peoples.¹ The seventeen sustainable development goals (SDG) were set out to be accomplished by 2050, meaning, underdeveloped and developing nations are in dire need to play catchup with the timeline. The United Nations (UN) SDG supports the idea that every individual, regardless of race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic class is entitled to a quality education. To support this education initiative, the UN has organized numerous partnerships that advocate for the rights of children in nations struggling with high illiteracy rates. The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), has been a longstanding collaborative action that teaches children how to read and write based off of literacy data tests to cater to specific regions.²

While the United Nations has made a strong effort to enhance education on a multilateral threshold, there is still a severe lack of quality in the education that children receive across different zones of conflict. Due to political instability, economic devastation, and armed militia, children in conflict zones are left to face the consequences. Long term effects of civil conflicts force families to flee the region in search of safety, shelter, and basic necessities. School children faced with displacement either cross national borders and become refugees, or to stay within their homelands and be classified as internally displaced peoples (IDPs). Thus, resulting in loss of infrastructure, insecurity, and barriers that prevent IDPs and refugee children from receiving quality education.³ Children in schools are not only facing infrastructure destruction in their education systems, but also have to balance gender disparities. Girls have a more difficult time accessing education in conflict zones due to numerous factors related to social norms, cultural appropriations, and safety concerns. The Women's Human Rights and Gender Section (WRG) reported that 3,600 attacks on all girl student and teacher buildings have been attacked in 2012 alone, while targets ranged across 70 different countries. Gender data specialists claim that these aggressions against young

schoolgirls cause ripple effects and send messages to families in local communities that school is not a safe place for girls to be.⁴ This ideology uprises fear in marginalized communities, ultimately deciding that their young daughters should take on more ‘gender appropriate’ roles such as cooking, cleaning, and housework.

Following the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, children in education zones face limited opportunities to learn age-appropriate curriculum due to the ongoing teacher shortage. The pandemic called for a new style of learning, essentially causing educators attempting to reach across the digital divide. The digital divide is a term used to explain the lack of technological advancements in some communities that doesn't allow for students to receive equal opportunities to attain quality education. Data collected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) primarily in underdeveloped and developing nations show that the world needs 69 million more teachers to satisfy the UN SDG number 5, quality education.⁵ Teachers in conflict zones are overpaid, overworked, but extremely undervalued, causing them to leave their jobs in search of new methods of income.

Antonio Guterres, the current United Nations Secretary General, made his support for quality education clear during his Transforming Education Mission Statement in 2022, proclaiming that “Education is a fundamental human right”.⁶ Despite the safety, insecurity, and displacement challenges that citizens face in conflict zones, an education should continue to be incorporated in these children's lives. Access to quality education is a societal investment to transform children into strong willed, independent thinkers, and leaders of future generations.

Chronology

1924: Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child

Measures taken to protect education in conflict zones date all the way back to the early twentieth century. In 1923, British social reformer and political activist Eglantyne Jebb

drafted the first resolution of the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The resolution was first adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. The purpose of the draft was to ensure that all children are protected, fed, sheltered, and safe from workforce exploitation. The Geneva Convention brought attention to protecting children rights for one of the first times in the setting of an international assembly.⁷ Decades after the creation of the United Nations (UN), Polish ambassadors introduced the first Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) draft in 1978. After ten years of the UN attempting to agree on a legally binding document, the final resolution was adopted in 1989. Its fundamental principles are non-discrimination, commitment to the child's best interests, the right to life, survival, and development, and respect for the child's opinions.⁸

Article 38 of the Rights of the Child Resolution makes it clear on its stance to protect children in conflict zones from harm. The resolution describes that states parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.⁹ This section of the resolution directly states the responsibility to protect children of the negative effects of armed conflict. More so, article 32 states that a child is to be protected from exploitation or any work that will interfere with their ability to attain education: highlighting the importance to preserve a child's health, physical, mental, and educational development.¹⁰ The CRC also caters directly to protecting rights of education in article 28, as it holds nations responsible to provide free primary school education to all children. This article promotes secondary school education by sources of vocational and technical learning as well. The CRC is a testament that acknowledges the well-being of all children in society. Every nation except The United States of America and Somalia, has ratified the Convention of the Rights of a Child as a treaty of human rights.¹¹

1951: United Nations Refugee Convention

The United Nations Refugee Convention (UNRC) is a framework that strives to protect the rights of individuals who were forced to flee their home countries in search of

safety, freedom, or shelter. The creation of the Refugee Convention was a result of the severe number of displaced individuals due to the first world war in the early twentieth century. After the second world war, millions of more individuals were forcibly displaced, calling for the need of international guidelines. The League of Nations began their draft of the Refugee Convention in 1921, and thirty years later the United Nations officially adopted the convention in 1951.¹²

Efforts to protect education in conflict zones have been demonstrated by the United Nations, highlighting sections of the Refugee Convention. Article 22 of the refugee Convention urges nations to offer public education to refugees in host nations by giving them equal treatment as national students attaining education.¹³ Access to education for refugees is limited and uneven amongst regions of displaced individuals. Refugee education quality is drastically low compared to students in their home nations. Noting that refugee teacher-pupil ratio is 1:70. In most circumstances, teachers do not have the proper degrees that would qualify them as “trained.”¹⁴ The United Nations Children’s Fund strives to integrate refugees into national education systems by working in partnerships with ministries of education; this initiative will not only benefit refugee students, but improve the quality of education for national students.¹⁵

More so, The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) follows the framework of the Refugee Convention and promotes quality education for refugee students specifically in conflict zones. In 1950, The Relief and Works Agency began their organization by partnering with the State of Palestine. UNRWA provided over 74 school buildings with a total of 35,700 Palestinian students, just in the first two years of operations. By 1954, UNRWA was responsible for running about 300 elementary schools in Palestine, accounting for 155,000 students.¹⁶ The Relief Agency is a multifaceted organization that created quality curriculum, teacher training, physiological support, and infrastructural development for Palestinian refugees; all in favor of protecting quality education for children in regions of armed conflict.

2015: Safe School Declaration

The Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) is an intergovernmental commitment dedicated to keeping students, teachers, and faculty safe in school communities affected by armed conflict. In 2015, the Norwegian and Argentinean governments spearheaded the effort to create political agreements to protect education, particularly in areas of conflict. This proclamation limits the use of schools and universities as combat zones. Together, 118 countries have made the effort to gather information about attacks on school zones, prosecute war crimes involving educational institutions, and provide necessary resources to victims of attacks.¹⁷ The key principle of SSD revolves around the idea that every student has the right to education without the fear of attack or violence. The efforts of the declaration include collecting reliable data on attacks against universities, developing conflict sensitive approaches to school curriculum, and supporting the United Nations agenda on children in armed conflict. The United Nations Safe School Declaration uses the guidelines for 'Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict' by incorporating this agenda into domestic policies and operational frameworks. The Safe School declaration has proven to be beneficial to combatting crises in education zones. In 2015, about 150 schools were reported to have military usage on campus, after the enactment of SSD, that number reduced to 80 schools in 2018.¹⁸ More so, the Safe School Declaration was proven to be beneficial in different conflict zones across the globe. Since 2002, The Nigerian Boko Haram group has made consistent attacks against school buildings with bombings and kidnappings.¹⁹ The Safe School Declaration has provided a framework for responding to incidents of violence in Nigeria while encouraging efforts to protect educational institutions and guarantee access to education.

2016: Education Cannot Wait World Humanitarian Summit Initiative

The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Initiative is an organization that upholds

principles to support education in protracted crisis zones and nationwide emergencies. ECW raises money and donatable resources to increase the speed of response for education affecting children by setting a “long term vs short term” response timeline. The foundation raises money to support education affected by natural disasters, internally displaced peoples, and poverty-stricken regions. Executive Director Yasmine Sherif points out that 19 million Sudanese children are out of school today, 2.5 million girls lack education in Afghanistan, and 300,000 Ukrainian children are at loss of education during the Russian takeover.²⁰ To help combat the lack of education crisis, ECW stresses the importance of raising awareness for gender equality in schools and universities multilaterally. Addressing the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups including children with disabilities, students facing mental traumas, young girls, and refugee students is all a part of the inclusivity that EWC actively promotes.²¹ The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund works directly with Education Cannot Wait by implementing uniquely crafted education programs in crisis affected areas. UNICEF supplies aid such as textbooks, stationary supplies, and technology equipment. Not only do they offer material aid, but UNICEF works in partnership with Teachers Across Borders to send qualified educators to areas that lack in specialized staff.²² The Education Cannot Wait Initiative is an important aspect of the timeline because it ensures that the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies are prioritizing education for children, even during challenging and unstable environments.

2021: Implementing Security Council Resolution 2601

On October 29, 2021, the United Nations Security Council unanimously endorsed Resolution 2601 on ensuring the security of education during conflict, the body's first resolution addressing the subject specifically. This resolution condemned acts of violence and intimidation against schools, learning institutions, and civilians associated with them. It emphasized the importance of facilitating the continuation of education in times of

armed conflict.²³ The resolution, co-sponsored by 99 countries, demonstrated a strong political commitment to safeguarding, protecting, respecting, and promoting the right to education, during armed conflict.²⁴ The resolution recognizes the need for states to foster a secure environment to ensure a safe learning environment, further reminding nations of their duty to recall international humanitarian law involving the protection of school facilities in armed conflict zones. The resolution stresses the responsibility of governments in providing and protecting relief to all children affected by armed violence, essentially by strengthening national capacities. More so, resolution 2601 highlights the significant increase of attacks against schools and education infrastructure facilities.²⁵ The events leading up to the creation of resolution 2601 includes the rising cases targeting learning institutions for abductions of children and teachers, the use of schools for military purposes, and the negative impacts of attack on student safety.²⁶

Protecting education in conflict zones is a duty to protect *all* students undergoing the negative effects of regional violence. Girls living in conflict zones are 90% more likely to be deprived of a secondary school education than girls in nations where there are no crises.²⁷ Thus, resolution 2601 notes that girls and women are potential targets in crisis zones, endangering their rights to attain a quality education in a safe environment. The security council points out the importance of protecting female students from being victims of child labor, sexual assaults, and forced marriage - all whilst promoting their need to attain education without violence.²⁸

Actors and Interests

Students

Students are the main group that is being directly targeted during education in conflict zones. Over 240 million children have had their education disrupted by war and violent conflict globally.²⁹ The quality of education for students living in crisis zones is declining, as the nation's focus turns to surviving and sustaining resources during war.

Students are unable to be physically present to learn in schools, as wars destroy infrastructure. Roughly 20 school buildings have been attacked every day since the beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine.³⁰ Regardless, if the school buildings stay running during a war, the quality of the learning environment can be harmful for a child. All children have the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, highlighting the importance of food, protection, and safety. Access to safe water is frequently disrupted in fragile contexts and conflict zones; infrastructure is damaged or deteriorating, pipelines are in disrepair, and water collection is hazardous. Without access to safe water, children become ill, schools and hospitals collapse, and disease and malnutrition spread.³¹

Additionally, with the fear of school buildings being a target for bombs or attacks, parents will be reluctant to let their children go to school during a conflict. Children are often kidnapped from classrooms and forcibly recruited into armed groups. About 250,000 children are currently working in militant groups across 20 nations, while 40% of these children are victims of sexual abuse.³² Parents often feel the need to seek refuge in neighboring countries to provide their children with a quality education, however, refugee students have a difficult time gaining access to free education. The growing population of refugee camps cannot cater to the needs of students, resulting in an insufficient amount of teachers and resources.

It is vital for educators and administration to gatekeeper the spread of misinformation during times of war. Parents of students in primary schools fear that their children will be exposed to harmful ideologies or political propaganda if they spend most of their day at school. The significant rise of fake news as propaganda in recent years necessitates that students acquire the ability to identify truth and discern bias. Bias curriculum may target specific ethnic, religious, or social groups that make it difficult to foster inclusivity during the education crisis in war zones. The spread of misinformation, especially to children between the ages of 6 and 15 can be dangerous to develop radical ideologies in the future.³³

Conflict in education zones can have severe effects on students' mental health. Exposure to violence and disturbing experiences such as airstrikes, demolitions, brutality, and bombings can cause mental illnesses such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Studies have shown that children living in conflict zones develop mental aggressions towards themselves, family members, and classmates. Psychologists explain that children need to grow in an environment that is welcoming and age appropriate; students develop aggression because they have no playground time or leisure time at schools.³⁴

Host Nations Education Systems

The Global Compact on Refugee framework addresses the importance of host nations contributing resources to expand and enhance the quality of education for displaced students. Highlighting that host nations should not separate refugee students into their own buildings but should integrate them into the nations' education systems. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) accumulated data that shows 38 percent of preprimary level students enroll at schools in host nations, while 65 percent of students at the primary level, and 41 percent at the secondary level.³⁵ These numbers go to show the major responsibility host nations have when assimilating displaced students to receive a quality education in their country.

Host nation education systems offer several forms of specialized programs for displaced students such as language support, reading and writing classes, and mental health resources. The Language Connects Group (LCG) is an organization who partners with education systems in hopes to uplift language educators to ensure a diverse, well-prepared, and highly effective workforce for students in the future. The LCG focuses on professional development mentorship and scholarships for displaced students looking to explore new career paths. The group also focuses on research initiatives to examine if host nations are doing their part in providing appropriate accommodations for refugee

students. Curriculum adaptations are vital to offer displaced students a comfortable, welcoming, and effective educational experience. Host countries can adapt curriculum to accommodate the academic experiences of displaced students. This entails acknowledging previous education levels, providing catch-up programs, and allowing for flexibility in educational avenues.³⁶

Physiological support is one of the elements that make host nation education systems for displaced students so advanced. Host nations will often offer in school support groups and counseling services who are able to speak multiple languages. It is important for administrators and educators to recognize the conditions that students have faced during war conflicts in their home countries. Specialized school therapists work to revive and strengthen community support systems to promote positive coping mechanisms of affected individuals and their families.³⁷

Governments

Governments are major players in protecting education in conflict zones. Their participation is critical for providing stability, ensuring access to high-quality educational experiences, and investing in the long-term development of affected communities. Governmental relations between other nations can determine the outcome of a conflict or war, essentially putting the responsibility of a humanitarian crisis on the government's hands. Under international law, governments are responsible for adopting legislation that criminalizes and prevents acts of terrorism that can alter the wellbeing of their citizens.³⁸

Under circumstances in conflict zones, governments were unable to protect their citizens from war crimes, famine, or even lack of education.

In war zones where students are being directly targeted, governments are at fault for creating policies that fail to adhere to the unique challenges that crisis zones face. Improper allocation of funding and resources can result in inadequate infrastructure, insufficient learning materials, and a teacher shortage.³⁹ It is important to note sustainable

development goal number 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” and number 9 “Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure”. These goals set by the United Nations to accomplish by 2030, examines the vital role governments have in providing their citizens with resilient infrastructure.⁴⁰ School systems are commonly targeting buildings during times of war; rebels believe by destroying schools, they will reduce the governmental influence on the younger generation. Thus, the government’s lack of rebuilding efforts can disrupt the quality learning time a child needs in school.⁴¹

Armed Forces and Militant Groups

Armed forces and militant groups are key actors in the education crisis in war zones. These groups significantly impact the access to education for students, highlighting the detrimental effects on student safety, mental wellbeing, and future development. Militant groups often target education systems as a strategy to brainwash students to agree with their extremist ideologies. According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, at least 29 countries have had the usages of military forces on school grounds since 2007. The armed forces may occupy school buildings to use as hiding spaces or militant bases.⁴² Militant groups attempt to forcibly recruit high school students into joining their forces, making it easy to blackmail money from families in exchange for their child back. Gender bias and discrimination is demonstrated by armed forces in several instances. Girls are becoming more frequently recruited, and their trajectories may differ from those of boys in terms of recruitment processes, forms of exploitation, and perceived benefits by recruiting groups. The extremist groups target all-girl primary and secondary schools to cater to the needs of militia soldiers. Forms of sexual abuse, forced marriage, and involvement in military groups are common for girls in crisis zones. The Convention on the Rights of a Child works against militant extremist groups and is actively creating a framework that will protect young girls from exploitation.⁴³

Protecting students from the militarization of schools is vital to ensure a healthy

and safe learning environment to grow. Militant groups attempt to tear down education systems to achieve their extremist agenda, but with the correct legal framework and resources, students' education can be protected and preserved.

Possible Causes

Violence and Insecurity

Violence and insecurity can contribute to the lack of education in crisis zones, as individuals face cases of displacement and disruptions to normal day activities. Families are forced to flee their communities to seek safety and shelter from armed militant groups. These armed groups have a vested interest in persuading or grooming students to believe in their radical ideologies and oppose the current government. Armed groups cause a shake of insecurity in education systems by using schools as military bases, limiting the time students are able to learn in classrooms.⁴⁴ Safety insecurity is a main cause of the lack of quality education in crisis zones, as parents choose to keep their children home from school.

Armed groups commonly known to coerce or abduct children by the recruitment of illegal child soldiers. For example, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Paramilitary Rapid Reaction Forces caused a major strain in Sudan's education system. As per October of 2023, 19 million students are out of school due to the violence between military groups. The government needs restructure, and the Sudanese people need humanitarian aid before parents would think it is safe to send their children to school again.⁴⁵ Prolonged exposure to war leads to students being victims of toxic stress syndrome. Toxic stress syndrome is a child's response to prolonged adversity, such as physical or emotional abuse.⁴⁶ Young children and teens have seen their families torn apart and separated, hospitals burned to rubble, and schools being used as military bases. War violence takes a psychological toll on students' mental health, restricting them from being able to learn in a healthy environment.⁴⁷ Case studies on children in Syria have

shown intense Psychosomatic Symptoms; high levels of mental stress causes physical symptoms of difficulty breathing, migraines, and temporary loss of movement in limbs.⁴⁸

Inadequate Teacher Support

Teachers and administrators are the main supporters of education systems; without these leaders, school systems fall apart. The lack of teachers can exacerbate the quality of education in crisis zones. Just like students and families, teachers are fleeing conflict zones to seek shelter and security. The city of Bauchi in Nigeria shows that the student to teacher ratio is 1 to 78, while Nigeria's national average is 1 to 48.⁴⁹ These numbers demonstrate that the number of qualified teachers is insufficient for a student's ability to learn in classrooms.

Additionally, inadequate teacher support affects the national education quality. A shortage of experienced educators may result in significant consequences on the quality of education in conflict zones. Overcrowded classrooms, high student-teacher ratios, and a shortage of trained faculty can all impede students' ability to develop their skills and progress academically.⁵⁰ Conflict zones limit the number of opportunities teachers get to participate in professional development conferences. Without access to yearly training sessions, educators may have a hard time effectively teaching students substantial material in an environment of instability.⁵¹ More so, children with learning disabilities and mental health issues face additional struggles in conflict zones. The inadequate teacher support in these areas make it almost impossible for disabled students to receive the appropriate assistance they need. The limited number of inclusive programs, trained staff, and assistive devices places high burdens on children with disabilities.⁵²

Being an educator in conflict zones is a risky profession, which may result in their jobs being taken away at any given moment. Teachers are often displaced, targeted by armed groups, or recruited into forces. Educators have a hard time looking for replacement jobs to support their families financially after losing their jobs in education.

Disruption of Social Services and Infrastructure

As per United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 9, sustainable infrastructure is important for the success of a society.⁵³ The lack of basic infrastructure, safe transportation and clear roads make it difficult for students to access school buildings in conflict areas. Without suitable public transportation methods, parents will be reluctant to send their children to schools in fear of their safety. An estimated one billion individuals lack access to an all-weather road in communities impacted by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV).⁵⁴ This alarming number goes to show the amount of people who do not have access to safe infrastructure, which can make the transport to school difficult. Conflict zones are likely to disrupt social services and social support networks that play crucial roles in supporting a student's education. Noting that without adequate social services, vulnerable populations and marginalized groups such as refugees, internally displaced students, and disabled students may struggle at higher rates. The lack of funding and investment for the improvement of school systems is a barrier to quality education for students in crisis zones. Governments and humanitarian aid services often prioritize health care, food, shelter, and security, leaving education being severely underinvested.⁵⁵ Specifically, the lack of infrastructure investment directly targets the quality of education in conflict zones. Building new infrastructure in conflict zones would be beneficial to society, as will creating more job opportunities, bolsters economic growth, and repairs school systems from scratch. Governments play a main role in obtaining funding for education building projects. They prioritize conflict de-escalation and military tactics, rather than focus on the betterment of citizens in the education sectors. Post conflict zones often face budget constraints, leading them to partner with public private corporations and sustainable financing mechanisms.⁵⁶

Comparison of Causes

Without a doubt, violence and insecurity, inadequate teacher support, and disruption of social services and infrastructure are all main causes of the education crisis in conflict zones. These three causes overlap one another and connect in several ways. Violence impacts education directly by creating safety concerns while the lack of proper infrastructure plays a similar role. Both causes create a physical barrier that prevents students from going to school, whether that be through transportation methods or safety concerns. The disruption of social services creates major resource constraints. The disruption of social services causes schools to be the least prioritized sector of society during armed conflict. The absence of these services and infrastructure deprives students of necessary support systems that attempt to address their physiological, physical, and emotional needs. Additionally, the absence of teachers and disruption of social services leads to similar effects. Without the appropriate services and programs in school systems, children with disabilities face persistent barriers to education. Similarly, teachers who are not given the opportunity to participate in annual training programs will end up losing their jobs due to high turnover rates and budget cuts. Both disadvantaged groups are directly connected in the lens of inequality and lack of resources.

After examining each cause, these factors create a chain of reaction leading into other causes such as poverty, economic hardships, and population crisis.

Projections and Implications

There will be numerous negative consequences if the status of education in crisis zones is not addressed. Children need quality education for lifelong learning and development.⁵⁷ Without access to quality education, children and youth in crisis zones will be missing out on necessary chances for growth. This can result in a lost generation with less knowledge, abilities, and opportunities for growth. The negative effects of no quality

education will be evident for future generations in society. Without education, children are prone to continue cycles of poverty. Education leads to children having higher paying jobs, families, and steady lives in the future. If a child is deprived of a quality education, their opportunity to earn income decreases, while their chances of poverty increases.⁵⁸

If young students are taken out of schools, their chances of joining armed forces dramatically increases. A rise in extremism and continuation of armed conflict is a result of the education crisis not being addressed. Without quality education, students are vulnerable to exploitation by militant groups. The rise of extremism ideologies continues, and the cycle of conflict only tears down the local community even more. It is important to note that if nations do not actively attempt to protect education in conflict zones, there will be major long-term repercussions. Instability, poverty, failing economy, and conflict are all examples of long-term effects. The psychological well-being of students are also taking major hits as war leads to anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and other mental health problems.⁵⁹

The protection of education in crisis zones ensures a positive future for students' well-being. If students are protected and safe, their learning will only benefit themselves and their society in the future. Education is the key to a steady society; education must be protected, especially in regions of conflict.

Committee Jurisdiction

The United Nations General Assembly Social Humanitarian & Cultural Issues Committee (SOCHUM) specializes in protecting human rights, social matters, and humanitarian affairs. The Committee discusses issues such as women's advancement, child protection, indigenous issues, refugee treatment, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through eradicating racism and racial discrimination, labor standards, and the right to self determination.⁶⁰ SOCHUM also addresses important issues related to social development including youth, family, aging, individuals that have disabilities, crime prevention,

criminal justice, and international drug policy.⁶¹ SOCHUM and the other general assembly committees hold responsibility for a variety of actions, including conducting financial assessments of member states, implementing proposals for international peace, as well as encouraging international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational, and health fields.⁶² However, other general assemblies and specialized committees such as United Nations Children's Emergency Fund and The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization have addressed the issue of quality education in conflict zones in their agenda. The Social Humanitarian & Cultural Issues Committee uses their unique stance to partner with these committees by focusing on education related policy. SOCHUM focuses on the rights of refugees and internally displaced peoples. With that, quality education reform must be addressed to properly address the rights of specific groups.

Conclusion

Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights claims that every individual has the right to an education. Despite this, 244 million students are still reported to be out of schools worldwide, with a large proportion of this phenomenon being caused by the difficulties students face in conflict zones.⁶³

The United Nations have taken several measures to solve education quality in conflict zones, starting with the 1924 Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention highlights the importance of protecting children from harm or violence during times of war. The convention addressed the need for quality education in high-risk zones, and was the first time the UN came together to address the rights of a child. Past solutions to the conflict highlighted the importance of protecting students, teachers, and educational infrastructure to allow for a safe learning environment. Due to instability and insecurity during armed conflict, students and their families are forced to flee their communities in search of safe shelter. The 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention aimed to protect

refugee students, who are often overlooked and forgotten groups of this education crisis.

It is important to understand that violence and insecurity contribute to the lack of quality resources to support education. The high possibilities of militia groups influencing young students in schools is a risk causing parents to unenroll their children. Likewise, the safety of teachers is compromised, leaving educators no choice but to quit their jobs. Without teachers, sanitary school buildings, or protection from armed groups, students are being deprived of their right to a quality education. Students affected by conflict are in dire need of immediate rapid-response aid, as well as long term solutions. All in all, it is crucial to implement feasible and effective solutions that examine all factors of the education crisis. Sustainable Development Goal seventeen calls for ‘partnership for the goals’; stressing the importance for nations to work together in order to protect the wellbeing of students and their access to quality education in crisis zones.

Discussion Questions

- What factors make an education system successful? In what ways can this system be implemented into conflict zone nations?
- What are the long term and immediate effects of disrupted education in conflict zones?
- What roles can local communities play in protecting students during ongoing domestic conflicts?
- How can educational technology be used as a tool to improve learning curriculum whilst ensuring safety of students?
- What factors do educators and administrators play in conflict zones, and how can their safety be ensured to safeguard quality education? How can we protect host teachers from harm?
- In what ways do culture and gender affect education in conflict zones?

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