

Forum: Economic and Social Council

Issue: Enhancing educational opportunities for youth in areas of conflict, including refugee populations

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Introduction

Education is the most prominent component needed for individual development, for it facilitates human growth through skill development, knowledge expansion and comprehensive perspective attainability. Many other factors of life rely on the level of an individual's education and can determine the rate of success that an individual may achieve throughout their life. However, it is also widely acknowledged that an immense portion of people around the world are not presented with the same educational opportunities as others. Reasons for this may include: poverty, sickness, political conflicts, war etc. Scenarios such as the outbreak of political conflicts within a nation results in the imperative requirement to let go of luxuries such as education in order to properly accommodate their needs to survive. With many goals in mind, the United Nations took into consideration these situations and has set goal 4 of their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

Political conflicts arise through several different catalysts and come in multiple different forms, including: Civil wars, multi-nation war, refugee dispersal, genocides, poverty or even a mere lack of governmental justice. As a result of the conflicts arising through these political quarrels, individuals of the community are prevented from attaining the full potential of their human rights, which includes the right to education. The shortage of educational opportunities presented within a community apply to several communities, including local and refugee societies. This becomes especially harmful when these long term conflicts prevent the youth from obtaining these educational gains.

Conflicts are a leading cause of disruption in a child's education, and statistics show that many have lost the opportunity to gain an education due to these political disputes. Approximately 35 percent of kids have not received an education due to political encounters, such as war. According to research conducted by UNESCO, there are 68.6 million refugees worldwide and only 50% of children attend primary school, while only 25% are in secondary school. Their research has also proved that 57 million children are uneducated merely because they have no school to go to, stating that "some areas could take 70 years before there are enough primary school places for every child."

With the vastly differentiating catalysts of the prevention of educational opportunities for the youth, solutions must be created that will help to address the situation in all its circumstances. The civilization's future is dependant on the youth, and the level of their skill and knowledge will drive the future into success or into corruption. Education is an important key in unlocking the youths potential so that they may build a bright future together.

Definition of Key Terms

Warfare

A state of armed conflict between different nations or states or different groups within a nation or state.

Conflict

To be opposed or contradictory of beliefs, leading to serious disagreement through armed struggle.

Declaration

A formal or explicit statement or announcement issuing a new condition or state.

Forced Displacement

The enforced withdrawal of people from their homes, particularly due to war or persecution or political conflicts

Refugee

A person who has been forced to leave their home due to matters such as war, persecution, political conflicts or natural disasters.

Absolute Poverty

A financial condition where members of a household's income is below the poverty level that allows them to maintain the basic living standards.

Violent Insurgencies

A condition of revolt against a government through violent and armed forces.

Background Information

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The basic human rights that apply to each and every individual around the world were established by the United Nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This universal declaration was adopted on the 10th of December, 1948 as Resolution 217 in Paris, France. This declaration was established shortly after the end of World War 2, an event which saw the complete deprivation of all human rights to the whole civilization, including soldiers and civilians. A total of 30 human rights were established, in which article 26 addressed the basic human right to education.

Right to Education (Article 26)

Three fundamental rules were formed in relation to the people's right to education, all of which include the following:

The rules stipulate that everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Political Conflicts

Political conflicts within a nation significantly influence the people's access to any proper education or even to any educational facilities. Political conflicts range from several different varieties, all of which result in the same deprivation of education for the youth.

Political conflicts are also a major cause in the issue of the youth not being presented with educational opportunities. The living circumstances and the environment that a child grows up in is a great determining factor in the pathway that the child takes in the future. Should the political conflicts revolve around governmental injustice, many people end up leading or following violent insurgencies against these governmental powers. An example of these insurgencies would be in Nigeria, where the Boko Haram was a rebel group who rose in 2009 to fight against the Nigerian government. Thousands

were killed during these disputes, many of which were only teenagers. Nigeria's education system is also known to be very poor, where majority of Nigerian citizens cannot receive a basic education. Due to a lack of proper teaching in addition to the political uprisings in a country, many youthful individuals find themselves following rebellion groups and adding to the conflict, and ultimately resulting in the deaths of many.

Warfare

Refugees

Globally, there are approximately 68.5 million people who have been forcibly displaced and are acknowledged today as refugees. According to the UNHCR, this amount is the highest value since World War II. Living as a refugee means that the person, as an individual or as part of a group or a family, will have no secure area to refer to on a common basis. This means having no secured home and in correspondence, no secure educational facility to access.

Of this population of refugees, over 50% are children. Among these children, only 50% attend primary school and only 25% attend secondary school. Reasons as to why such low amounts of refugee children attend school can vary. The most common reason would be the forced fleeing that families are subjected to, where 25.4 million people around the world have fled to other countries as refugees. As a result, the child no longer has access to continue attending their current school, and with the hurried decision made by the family to flee the country, the priority for these family members would be to secure a home in a safe environment before securing their education. Cases of these refugee families vary according to how the family members dealt with their quick transfer of countries, however for most families, after finding a safe and secure environment to settle in, they are faced with many other issues that prohibit the children from gaining educational opportunities. These issues include the family's financial state, where most refugee families leave behind most of their possessions and wealth in the conflicted area before fleeing, and thus, upon settling into a new area they would not be able to afford for their child's education. This is especially the case when considering the fact that the parents had not been working throughout that period of time of displacement. The Syrian Refugee crisis can be taken as an example of an event in which the displacement of families has taken an affect on the children's education. There are nearly 6 million Syrians displaced in their own country and 5 million refugees across Middle Eastern and North African nations. One million of these refugees are children who cannot gain an education due to various factors concerning the political crisis, and several organisations worry that this generation of children missing out on educational opportunities will become what they call a "lost generation."

In addition to the issues that prohibit children from educational opportunities, the political conflicts that resulted in the populations displacement also resulted in the destruction of schools and educational facilities. According to a report published by UNESCO, “Millions of children have had their lives torn apart and their schools destroyed by conflicts.” Fundings to rebuild this school are not easily accessible or obtained, and thus majority of these schools cannot be rebuilt. As of June 2016, studies show that 2.1 million children and adolescents were left out of school due to these various reasonings, with majority of these children being girls. In response to these harsh circumstances, most children are either forced into early marriages or are sent off to work while having to face harsh treatments such as intolerance, aggression, xenophobia and much more. Studies show that there is a direct relationship between education and child marriages, where a lack of proper education for girls in South Asia resulted in a 45.4% total of child marriages.

Governmental Injustice

Governments hold great responsibility and power in determining the current and future states of the citizens of their nation. This includes the political situations that are created, the financial states of their citizens, their national healthcare and education services and many more. Many factors that the government has complete access and control over, such as healthcare, political relationships and many others, determine the educational opportunities that are presented to the youth. There are many components that prohibit a young individual from gaining an education, one of them being healthcare. In 2013, it was estimated the 6.3 million children under the age of 5 died of disease. This is equivalent to 5 children dying every minute. Two-thirds of these diseases, such as diarrhea and pneumonia, are preventable causes, however due to inefficiency in governmental healthcare and extreme poverty levels, no preventative measures were taken and no cures were attempted. These children were not given the opportunity to acquire an education due to the expenses going towards their healthcare and their inability to go to school due to weakness. As a result of this, millions of children facing the same circumstance passed away. Studies conducted by UNICEF show some suggested preventative measures can decrease child mortality rates by large amounts. Statistics showed that if these children are given supplements of vitamin A every 4 to 6 months, it can reduce child mortality rates from all causes by 23%. Even cases such as deaths from diarrhoea can be decreased by 33% with only the addition of vitamin A supplements.

Poverty

Poverty and education are interrelated, leading to significant effects on the youth depending on how each of these factors are managed. A proper education may bring individuals out of poverty, and poverty may lead to the lack of an individual acquiring an education. The effects of poverty on the youth are significant and can lead to lifelong struggles. This is amplified

if the youth cannot receive full educations. In many nations, young children cannot be sent to school to learn due to the unavailability of funds for the family to pay for their education. Others are pulled out of school because they are no longer able to afford it, and thus the children are sent to work instead. This becomes a domino effect, where their lack of basic education forces them to work in low-budget jobs that will prevent them from being able to pay for their children's education in the future. This becomes the lifestyle for generations to come, and until the cycle of not acquiring an education is broken, many individuals will be subjecting their own families to the same futures for generations to come.

The cost of providing a child with 13 years of education in a developing country is equal to around \$1.18 per day. The average income of families within these developing countries is equal to approximately \$1.25 per day. These amounts are used to pay for the families expenses such as shelter, clothing, food and other basic life necessities. Living off this minimal amount means they will not be able to afford an education for their children, and thus would send them off to work instead. These individuals are categorized as living in 'absolute poverty', which is a formal term used to describe families living in extreme poverty.

Statistics show that education can actually improve the financial status of a family, for a study conducted by The Borgen Project, which is a national campaign that works to make poverty a focus of U.S. foreign policy, shows that with each year of schooling that an individual acquires, their income potential increases by around 10%. This shows to prove that although poverty is the reason for the youths inability to acquire an education, education is also the key to bring those individuals out of poverty. In addition to this, education proves to be the key to solving many other issues that LEDC citizens face, such as child marriages. The Borgen Project collected statistics that prove that the number of child marriages could decrease by 14% if every girl had access to an education.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Child Fund

With the prominent issue of poverty prohibiting many individuals and children worldwide from acquiring their education, ChildFund aims to help families to achieve a proper education through programs. ChildFund is a child development organisation based in Richmond, Virginia, USA. Its foundational goal is to provide assistance to "deprived, excluded and vulnerable children." This organisation listens to communities and examines what their needs are in order to work specifically to fulfill them. ChildFund is established in a total of 30 countries worldwide, including multiple nations in the African, Asian and American continents. They provide free schooling within these nations, and they also attend to many negative matters children face in order to provide as much opportunities for them as

possible and increase the child's potential. This organisation appeals to even the minor details that may help increase a child's potential through the initiation of several projects that differ in focus, and an example of this would be their literacy campaign. The Indian based branch initiated a literacy campaign in regions where books were not available in majority of the households and had no access to electrical power. As a result, ChildFund India distributed approximately 40,000 solar powered lamps so that children would be able to read at night time. This organisation's involvement in enhancing educational opportunities for youth in areas of conflict focuses on poverty related conflicts rather than warfare crises. Seeing as poverty can be considered a type of political conflict, due to its relation with inequality and governmentally catalyzed issues, this organisation aims to establish the basic education that millions of children are not able to receive due to major or minor reasons. The techniques instituted by this organisation to achieve this goal would include their funding of a large range of books for the children and allowing them the opportunity to learn basic skills, such as reading, through their distribution of solar powered lamps to give them the opportunity to self-enhance their skills.

The Global Citizens Corps

Mercy corps is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and is also “a global humanitarian organisation empowering people to recover from crisis, build better lives and transform their communities.” This organisation works towards helping many suffering individuals worldwide in many different aspects of crisis, and their program which is known as the Global Citizens Corps, was designed by this organisation in order to aid the youth in specific. The aim of the Global Citizens Corps is to shift the lives of young people living in environments that face conflict from one of negative future to a positive one. The program addresses the risks and outcomes associated with living in these areas of conflict, mainly concerning the youths joining of extremist groups. The program educates these young individuals through training, action-taking and dialogue, in which throughout this program these kids acquire both the necessary knowledge needed to veer away from these extremist groups as well as beneficial skills, including leadership, organisation, communication and advocacy skills. Since its establishment in 2007, more than 11,000 young individuals have benefitted from this program. This includes children in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, the West Bank, United States as well as the United Kingdom. Being provided with a proper education surpasses the basic literacy skills that an individual needs to acquire, for it is also of utmost importance to be educated on the risks that may come forth while living or being surrounded in areas of conflict.

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a network of members ranging from NGO's, UN agencies, donor agencies, governments, academic institutions and more. The network is led by representative ranging from many major human rights organisations, predominantly including UN branches such as UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR. The organisation works towards bridging the gap

between members of the global community in order to help provide those in need with necessary tools in education while also working towards benefitting those who invest in the cause. Its focus on providing an education for the individuals of the community applies to those living within areas of conflict as well. INEE launched a “Conflict Sensitive Education Pack”, which is a program that consists of tools and resources that will ensure an effective implementation of the conflict-prevention message for the youth. This occurs through the integration of these tools and resources within other education policies and programs in order to teach students how to deal with conflicts as well as how to prevent them. With more than 13,000 members in over 170 countries, the organisation continues to grow to provide education in emergency situations, providing the youth with various tools, such as information and valuable contacts, to build a positive future despite the conflicting circumstances.

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a specialized agency based in Paris. It is a branch stemming from the United Nations in charge of taking care of several human rights matters relating to education, research, equality and much more. Founded in November 16 of 1945, UNESCO has developed and initiated many projects in order to help improve several circumstances, many of which aim to tackle education issues. UNESCO has been entrusted to lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda through the execution and focus on the Sustainable Development Goal 4, which has 10 targets that encompass many different aspects of education. The organisation “provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens education systems worldwide and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with gender equality an underlying principle.” The Education of Children in need program was created and launched by UNESCO in 1992, and since then, over \$33 million has been raised for over 332 projects in 92 different countries worldwide.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Education for democracy, 28 November. 2012 (A/RES/67/18)
- United Nations Literacy Decade: Education For All, 18 December. 2008, GA/10801 (A/RES/63/154)
- UN Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, GA/9690 (A/RES/54/161)
- Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees, 18 February. 2000 (A/RES/54/72)
- The right to education in emergency situations, 9 July. 2010 (A/RES/64/290)
- Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, 19 December. 2011 (A/RES/66/135)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Temporary Teaching Programs

The earthquake that struck Nepal in April of 2015 resulted in the destruction of millions of homes as well as thousands of schools. In response to this, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) developed 1000 temporary learning centres to support the children who lost their school facilities. Over 93,000 students were enrolled into these learning centres and were provided with recreational materials, temporary latrine and handwashing facilities. Teachers were also trained to provide counselling for students through any signs of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or any other further assistance through this time of conflict. USAID will construct 250 transitional learning structures and train communities to use data to make informed decisions on their reconstruction plans.

Non-Formal Learning Centres

Nigeria's education system has faced struggles to provide the youth with basic education. One third of primary school aged children in the country are not enrolled into formally recognised schools, which equals to 10 million children. The nation also faced massively unpredictable violent insurgencies, which comes as a result of poor education. A lack of proper education due to the governmental injustices change the youth's future from a positive one to one that follows violence and involvements into more conflicts. In response to this, USAID created 400 non-formal learning centers which allowed 14,300 students to enrol and learn basic literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills. The organisation works with the government by providing funds for education as well as assisting the education systems to adopt new features that will strengthen the basic learning delivered to the students.

Possible Solutions

Designate schools along each refugee border

Political conflicts result in many families being forced to flee the area, with many of them choosing to flee the country in its entirety. In association with this, the common case is found to be that many schools are destroyed due to these political conflicts, so whether or not the family chooses to flee they would have lost their existing educational facility. A solution to this would be to designate schools along refugee borders to accommodate for these students. Ensuring that the schools are built out of the conflict zone would provide a safe environment for the youth to attend school. In the worrisome scenario that these schools may be subjected to militant attacks, some measures must be taken in order to prevent this. The first measure would be to build some of these schools in the refugee camps and to establish it under the name of the United Nations with the announced expectation that the UN will not show any signs of violence towards the initiators of the existing political conflict. Establishing that reputation of

peace for the UN should be similar to the peaceful reputation associated with the Red Cross, where the Red Cross is largely protected from attacks primarily from its mere reputation of peace.

Increase funds on primary education rather than secondary education

Statistics show that there is an extreme decrease in the amount of students living in areas of conflict that acquire a secondary education, mainly including refugees. A reason for this would be the inability of the students to progress to secondary level learning due to their inability to acquire a primary level learning. As a result of this, through the increase of funds for primary education, it would therefore provide the youth with at least the basic necessities of learning, such as literacy skills, to be able to progress further in learning.

Create temporary learning centres on site in the cases that any schools are destroyed in conflict

Through the creation of temporary learning centres, it would compensate for the multiple schools that are lost in the process of the conflict and/or war. These learning centres are to be built in a transportable manner, where time for construction would be set to a minimum and the funds put into the construction of these learning centres are not a primary fund focus. This will ensure that these learning centres can be transported throughout many different areas and nations facing these political conflicts, making it portable and thus improving the efficiency of providing educational opportunities for the youth in areas of conflict in terms of the speed of provision. Students will be provided with the necessary education until new solutions are found to provide a more permanent source of education for these individuals.

Assist Refugee Families with Fulfilling their Priorities

Seeing as many refugee families focus their priorities and private incomes towards finding shelters and acquiring healthcare, they are not able to afford an education for their children. As a result of this, many young individuals miss out on acquiring an education and grow up without basic knowledge. Through the redirection of funds from being focused on creating educational facilities to focus on fulfilling the families priorities, it may help families to establish their new lives and provide for themselves and for their children. Priorities that refugee families have mainly include safe shelter and healthcare. By providing these families with proper medical facilities to rejuvenate their personal health, it will give parents the opportunity and the strength to start working to establish a basic income, which will ultimately provide their children's education. Helping the families to establish a safe shelter in a safe environment will also be extremely beneficial for these families, for they will no longer be obligated to continue running and fleeing and can start focusing on rebuilding their lives.

Distinguish Between Schooling and Education

Popular global beliefs suggest that in order to be educated, an individual must acquire proper schooling. This is a popular misconception that is believed by majority of people around the world, however it is important for all nations, organisations and educational facilities to distinguish between schooling and education. In order to be educated, it is not necessary to receive schooling. The immediate association between these 2 factors creates the conception that if an individual cannot afford schooling then they cannot receive an education. Popular role models around the world have proven that schooling is not necessary in order become successfully education, of which include Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. Upon changing the mindsets of the people, and the organisations and the educational facilities, the society will become more open to the idea and start working towards other ways to educate the people, particularly those living in areas of conflict.

Launching Programs for the Youth to Decrease Ignorance on Rebel Groups

The leading cause in the increase of members in rebel groups is due to the peoples ignorance on the extent and severity of the matter. Due to harsh circumstances in the individuals environment, the young feel the need to follow by what is right for the state of the people and the nation, however due to a lack of proper education and information, the youth is brainwashed by rebel groups to think that becoming a member of the group is the right decision to make. In order to prevent this, the youth must be educated on these matters specific to their nations political matters in order to be able to recognize the right from the wrong. This can be executed through the creation of programs that provide the youth with this information as the minimum level of knowledge that they must have. This way to go about executing this solution could be through the creation of workshops that is mandatory for every child and individual to attend, and this will be a beneficial and efficient way to educate the generation in the circumstance that they feel intimidated to get an education because of these rebel groups . The ideal technique to execute this would be through the installation of this program into the current education system. As the students begin to acquire their basic education, it should also become part of their basic education to be informed about these

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