

UNICEF

A: International measures to promote and protect educational systems for children in latent conflict countries.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) was established on December of 1946, with the purpose of protecting and defending the rights of every child. UNICEF's work is based in 5 concepts, which are: survival and development of children, education and gender equality, childhood and HIV/AIDS, children protection and promoting policies, and alliances. For 70 years, across 190 countries and territories, UNICEF has defended the right of every child regardless of gender, race, religion, economic background and much more.

According to Smith, M. K. (2015), education can be defined as a respectful, wise and hopeful improvement of learning; this is started in the belief of everyone

being able to have the opportunity to share in life. Learning can be, initially, part of living in the world and an element of how individuals act, as a result a new understanding or appreciation of something. It's role is to operate with a purpose and to develop understanding, judgement and enabling action.

UNICEF works to defend children's rights, and education is without doubt one of the most important ones. Over the past years, we as an international community have witnessed an increasing number of conflicts that have spread across the world; and ,as a consequence of this rising number of crises, children have not been granted the opportunity to attend school and get proper education.

Since the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the creation of organizations, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA,1950), the implementation and creation of more organizations was unleashed to help with the lack of education in latent countries. These organizations have helped by introducing and applying educational systems in countries affected by conflicts.

According to UNICEF (n.d.) their role towards education is based on the believe that “every child has the right to education regardless of who they are, where they live or how much money their family has”. UNICEF works with partners so that together they can create educational systems for the children that live in unfortunate situations. With the learning opportunities that this programs offer, children will be able to build a more peaceful future and a sense of normalcy.

The most affected countries are located in Africa; such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Chad, South Sudan, Yemen, Burundi and Somalia. Countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan and Syria are also largely touched by this issue; since a large amount of the child population is not able to attend to school and receive education because of it being one of the first rights to deteriorate in times of conflict. Education should not wait for peace to return.

The challenges that this countries are facing are mostly because of civil military conflicts that may remain or are finished, but the repercussions still continue to affect them. For example, because of the civil military conflict in Syria, children are either physically harmed for

attempting to go to school, or their schools are bombed. Parents are afraid of sending their kids to school, and girls can be particularly exposed to sexual violence. (Tran M, 2013)

Children’s access to education has been harmed in latent countries. Education is usually the first service suspended and the last system to be restored; that, as a result, can lead to children being exposed to physical dangers, abuse, exploitation, recruitment, among others. Schools in countries with these type of situations can also provide stability like food, water, sanitation and health. (UNICEF, n.d.)

This problem has affected over 75 million children around the world, between the ages of 3 and 18. About 17 million children with schooling ages are refugees displaced in and out of their countries, of these 17 million only half of them still attend primary school, while less than a quarter attend secondary school. For the amount of children that are able to attend

school, the quality of education is very low and teachers are often unqualified. (UNICEF, n.d.)

In 2015, the United Nations brought together 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the purpose of achieving international peace and prosperity. Goal 4 of the SDGs focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Some of the goals for 2030 are: building and upgrading education facilities, providing safe, non-violent inclusive and effective learning environments, increase qualified teachers in schools, increase teacher training in developing countries, ensure all girls and boys can access quality early childhood development and pre-primary education, and much more. Many of these targets will provide an improvement in latent countries. (UN, n.d.)

Only 50% of refugee children are enrolled in primary school, while the global level is 90%, children in conflict affected areas are 30% less likely to finish primary school. 1% of refugees attend university. Girls living in these situations are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school, and 90% don't attend secondary school. Of all humanitarian funding, only 2% is allocated towards education and to close this gap \$8.5 billion is needed annually. (Education cannot wait, n.d)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, fundamental human rights have been displayed to be universally protected and respected. Article 26th of this declaration states that everyone has the right to education.

In 1950, after the Arab- Israeli conflict, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was created. This organization accomplished to create work programs for teachers and perform direct assistance for the kids in the area by providing them the necessary materials for a complete education. The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) was also established in 1950 to help with the Korean War and its aftermath. (INEE, 2004)

Later, from 1980 to 1990, guidelines for humanitarian education were developed by the UNHCR, the first one was the Refugee Education Network. In 1996 the Graça Machel

Report was presented to the General Assembly, the conclusions drawn from this report were to make a call

for urgent action, since millions of children living under these conflicts were reported from around the world. An Inter-Agency Peace education Program was also established between 1997 and 2005. (INEE, 2004) The Peace Education Program consists in giving training materials and facilitations to refugee camps, in order to let the youths and adults have the proper capacitation and education.

According to Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF Director of Emergency Programs, "Children living in conflict zones around the world have continued to suffer through extreme levels of violence over the past 12 months, and the world has continued to fail them"(Fontaine, 2018, p.2). Armed conflicts are completely eradicating, around the world, any possibility of a decent education for millions of children. A belic conflict has been defined as the "anti-developing" for many countries. These kind of conflicts can destroy the accumulated assets.

The Islamic Relief's country director for Sudan, Dr. Sayed Elzenary said that in Sudan, the statistics showed that more than 1.9 million children of school age are not in school as they should be, and 44% of these children are in Darfur. Darfur has been affected by a civil belic

conflict that destroyed the infrastructure and disrupted social services (water, health, education). This region doesn't count with the adequate learning materials, and teachers are often inadequately trained. Most of the schools lack permanent classrooms and, as a consequence, also pupils. (Islamic Relief Worldwide, n.d)

During 2001, Israeli soldiers shot around a hundred schools in the Occupied Territories; they used rubber bullets, live ammunition and tear gas. 71 schools came under attack through tank shelling or rockets fired from helicopters (DCI, 2002). In East Timor, the violence of September 1999 destroyed between 80% and 90% of school buildings and related infrastructure (UNDP, 2002).

Before the Syrian crisis began in March 2011, Syria could point to a healthy record in basic education. An estimated 97% of primary-age children were attending school, as were 67% of secondary-age children. (World Vision International, 2013)

The Education Report shows that two-thirds of countries in Africa that are recovering or experiencing a conflict have enrolment rates of less than half percent

(Watkins, 2000). Only 3% of refugee adolescents, 50,000 children, attend anything beyond primary school (Refugee Education Trust, 2002). In some regions of Angola, the Democratic Republic of

Congo, Somalia and southern Sudan it is minimal. It is estimated that in Somalia just a 9% of children that should go to school are actually attending to school. UNICEF has been supporting Sudan since 1952 (UNESCO, 1999). (Nicolai.S, Triplehorn.C, n.d)

Countries that are in conflict (such as South Sudan, Niger, Sudan and Afghanistan) are the worst affected countries. According to the recent agency (UNICEF) research, almost one in four children are growing up in conflict zones and are missing out on education, with the risk of losing their futures.

CURRENT RELEVANCE

Education gives individuals a general knowledge of what is happening around them; but how can we make a difference in the world when we are not even informed and updated in what is happening, its causes and consequence?. Just to know that the future of the world

depends on how the children are educated now is a very important responsibility, that means that if we as an international community cannot find a viable solution, children will continue being unprepared and with risks in their future. This topic must be known and attended immediately since the future of the world is in hands of these children.

This problem is affecting the most in countries that are going through an armed conflict, since children can't be safe on their way to school or maybe there is no school at all. That doesn't mean that the problem is only affecting such countries as Afghanistan, Syria or Yemen, that are in an ongoing armed conflict; but it's actually having an important impact around the world. Children can't know right now that the future depends on them, but it's a responsibility of the international community to help them finish school, and achieve all their goals; so that in the future, society can count with the adequate leaders running the world. Although this issue is currently affecting the countries mentioned before, it is a matter that we as an international community should solve together in order to reach the more viable solutions; if not, this will be in the future a

problem that will involve every nation.

In the majority of countries affected by conflict over the past years, fighting forces have used schools and universities for military purposes, such as for bases, barracks, weapon stores, and detention facilities. This practice can convert educational centers into objectives, exposing students and staff to the consequences of a bellic conflict. The presence of armed groups or armed forces in schools impairs efforts to ensure the continuation of education during the conflict (GCPEA, n.d). There are already programs for attending this issue and they are cooperating with the necessary resources and offering volunteers to give capacitations, in order to have teachers inside refugee zones. One example of these programs is " The Peace Education Program" that ,as mentioned before, it has the objective of providing the proper education to children and adults.

During the past years, the Islamic Relief has implemented some steps to ensure that people can be included and have the opportunity for receiving education. This humanitarian organization has repaired five classrooms in Jebel Mara, Central Darfur. Each has been equipped with seating, furniture and textbooks.

The Islamic Relief has also built toilets and installed plumbing that provides safe drinking water. People have received teacher training. More than three million of Sudan's school aged children are not in a classroom.

The UN has contributed and worked in order to reduce and eradicate this issue. UNICEF has provided safe, available and proper spaces for children that are equipped with sanitation facilities and water; advised and gave teachers training and learning materials for this types of situations; showed children skills to deal with their situation and how to reduce risk exposure. UNICEF has been a extremely helpful in countries like Iraq (2016), by building schools, fixing water and sanitation, supplying school materials. In Syria, UNICEF, made 120 prefabricated classrooms and sent 765,000 bags with school supplies in 2013. 267,588 children from Syria and other countries have had access to UNICEF education programs (2013).

In Afghanistan, violence and bloodshed continue to occur on a daily basis. 5,000 children were murdered or mired in the beginnings of 2018, children are about 89% of civilian casualties from remnants of a military conflict. In Somalia, more than 1,800 children were

recruited by parties to the conflict in the first nine months of 2018, with 1,278 children abducted. In Yemen, there were 1,427 children murdered and maimed during attacks in the country and at schools. Schools and hospitals have become victims of constant attacks, this denies children from their rights to education and health care. (UNICEF, 2019)

In schools at Cameroon, students and teachers are repeatedly under attack since the conflict has spread to the North-West and South-West regions of the country. In November, 2018, 80 people, including children, were taken from a school in Nkwen, in Cameroon, and released a few days later. 93 villages have been burned with children experiencing extreme levels of violence. (UNICEF, 2019)

In the Central African Republic, 2 out of 3 children have needed humanitarian assistance. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Kasai-region and eastern provinces of Tanganyika, South Kivu, Nord Kivu and Ituri have had a very bad impact on children. 4.1 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. Violations of children's rights include forced recruitment by armed groups and sexual abuse. (UNICEF, 2019)

In Iraq, since the civil military conflict in Sunnis and Shias (2014 to 2017), a big difference in education has been marked because 3.1 Iraqi children don't attend school regularly or at all. ISIS' behavior has also damaged education, since they have closed schools and used them as safe houses or completely took over them to teach radicalization. Death threats were made to children's parents so that they would send them there. After ISIS liberation, 300,000 children returned to schools. In 2016, half of Iraq's displaced children were out of school. (Lehewych.D, 2018).

The education of 3.5 million children in Chad is in risk due to an ongoing conflict and displacement attacks on schools, teachers and education facilities. In Northeast Nigeria, next to the Lake region of Chad, 1,041 schools are closed or not functioning because of violence, fear of attacks, among others. This affects about 445,000 children. Violence in the border region of Niger also left 1,478 schools closed. Armed groups, like Boko Haram factions, target girls who are used as 'human bombs', sexually abused or forced to wed fighters. In February, 2019, 110 girls were taken from a college in Dapchi. (UNICEF, 2019)

In Syria, about more than half school aged children, 2.2 million and 500,000 Syrian refugees are out of school. In the last years, approximately, 4,000 schools have been destroyed, damaged, or made into shelters for displaced people. Attacks through the country keep children from going to school. In Ukraine, hundreds of schools have been damaged, leaving 700,000 children with the option to learn in fragile environments, along with the dangers of fighting and things like unexploded weapons of war because of more than 4 years of conflicts. (UNICEF, 2019 and 2013)

Ecuador, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Liberia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Somalia, State of Palestine, Uganda, Colombia, the Philippines, Libya, Lebanon, Nepa, Yemen, Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Eritrea, United Republic of Tanzania, Djibouti, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Afghanistan, Chad, are other countries that also suffer from problems like these ones. The problem in countries like these is that because of the contending in the nations, many schools are forced to close, other schools are used as shelters and the ones that continue to run work for more shifts. Areas

where conflict is more frequent are not giving education a chance, since military activities do not refrain from places around schools; as a consequence, this endangers teachers and students.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

Apart from what the UN has done, work from other international foundations has been substantial. While these organizations are not directly associated with the UN, their work has had benefits on the victims of the conflict. While each organization has different objectives, what all of them have in common is the protection of children, and the promotion of their educational systems during times of conflict and difficulties.

Some organizations that have made contributions for the issue include the following:

Save the Children, has its headquarters in London and was founded in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton. Among their objectives, one of them is to bring education to children in countries at conflict. They believe education is key in establishing peace

on a conflictive country, and they trust that educating children will mitigate the effects of the conflict on children. Most of their resources go on rebuilding schools, or building new ones; they also work with governments to prioritize education.

War Child is another organization based in the United Kingdom and was founded in 1995. One of their many objectives is to bring education to countries in conflict. They provide quality education; and according to the circumstances, it may be formal or non-formal. They sometimes improvise school spaces to give education as soon as the children are displaced. They also give psychological support.

Mercy Corps is from the United States of America, and was founded in 1979. They believe that education is the foundation of progress, but it can be interrupted by factors such as poverty, crises, and military conflict. They have worked in countries such as Somalia, and South Sudan; their work has consisted on repairing and building learning spaces. They have helped in the opening of the only public secondary school in Somalia.

Educate A Child (EAC) is a programme from the

Education Above All (EAA) organization. It was founded by her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser from Qatar. Their main focus is to help children stay in school by eliminating obstacles that they may have, such as poverty, conflict and embracing sustainability. Another goal they have is to work with the governments of countries to keep the issue off children out of school at the top of their priorities. They believe that an armed conflict is a huge factor that keeps children out of school; since 42% of the total amount of children not in school, is because of armed conflict.

Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, (PEIC) is another programme from EAA. It was founded by her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser from Qatar, too. This organization seeks the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education), but taking places in conflict as a main objective. It has been a main advocate in the defense of education during conflict.

These organizations have really made an impact in the issue. They also have worked with governments to counteract the problem. For example, Save the Children, has worked with the Spanish government,

since it was a member of the Security Council. They asked to promote the protection of schools in countries at conflict. After two years of work, the "Guidelines to prevent the military use of schools and universities in armed conflicts." was presented to the UN in 2014. This document hopes to be a starting point, to protect the education of Children.

UN ACTIONS

The main actions that the United Nations performs in this type of situations, when children in a country are unable to attend school or receive proper education, are mainly to provide learning spaces that are safe, suitable and available. For example building schools, fixing water and sanitation systems within them, providing temporary learning places for children, creating safe environments, among others. UN programs have also provided training for teachers, not only in aspects of teaching, but in ways to support the psychological and social needs that appear in conflict affected areas. (UNICEF, n.d.)

UNICEF's page of education in emergencies states that their work in emergencies is to "deliver uninterrupted

learning for every child affected by humanitarian crises". What they do, so that they can achieve this, is to work to guarantee that while children are in school they can learn, despite what is happening in their surroundings. They also help children develop skills so that they can be able to deal with disaster along with how to reduce risk exposure; work with parents, teachers, and the community to make sure the children have a support system and to work with governments in order to include risk reduction programmes. (UNICEF, n.d.)

In 2012, UNICEF made a partnership with the government of the Netherlands and other governments of 14 countries and key supporters; it lasted until 2016, called the Learning for Peace Programme. This programme focused on education and peacebuilding, and has produced about 75 research products, manuals, guidance notes, and reports. (USAID ECCN, n.d.)

In Afghanistan, UNICEF supports the Community-Based Education programme. This programme establishes Community based schools and Accelerated Learning Centres within 3 kilometres of every child's community.

The focus in Afghanistan is the development of new policies, strategies and programmes for children, girl's education and early childhood development. (UNICEF, n.d)

In 2018, \$70 million dollars were given to UNICEF so that they can support education programmes in Yemen; mostly to give teachers their salaries since they haven't received them in about 2 years. The programme that is being made by UNICEF is focused on giving teachers monthly payments. In Iraq, along building schools and improving them, UNICEF managed to help train over 50,000 teachers, supply millions children with school materials and help about 682,000 children access education in 2016. (Lehewych.D, 2018 and UNICEF, 2018)

Because of the several actions the UN has performed around the world, regarding education, a considerable amount of aspects have changed. A large amount of the access to education in the countries affected by this dilemma have been restored and relieved. The UN remains working with country's governments and other partners, to sustain them with their situations and improve them. Without the actions taken by the UN in this circumstances, the outcome of what is happening

today could be very different in a unfavorable way.

POINTS TO DISCUSS

Trends

Current countries affected by this problem

Typical educational approaches

Crisis network

Prevention of school dropouts

Prioritization of the educational force

Reasons to drop school

Typology

Main reasons:

- i. Religion
- ii. Resources
- iii. Division

Educational strategies

UNICEF educational mission

International relationships and partnerships between

countries

Education and peace

Relation

Outcome of peacebuilding and practices looking forward the benefit of the educational system CIES

Rights

Is education a right? What corroborates this?

UNICEF statute

International rights

Violations

Keeping mission

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