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“Combating Polarization in Times of Global Crisis”

SA2 - Education

*Increasing educational opportunities
for adolescents living in crisis regions*

Ali Fadıl Sukan



RESEARCH
REPORT



Forum: SA2 - Education

Issue: Increasing educational opportunities for adolescents living in crisis regions

Student Officer: Ali Fadil Sukan - President

Introduction

Every individual has basic rights such as life, shelter, and food. Education is also another right of each individual, especially children. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education is a fundamental human right for everyone and should be accessible to people of all status. Unfortunately, not every child has access to the education they deserve, more specifically children in crisis regions. These regions can vary from conflict zones to refugee areas. Due to the lack of control and order, it is harder for governments to keep track of children who are provided education in crisis regions. During times of crisis, adolescents are seen as burdens by society but they must not be overlooked. Even though primary education of young children is very important, the need for better educational opportunities is present.

Definition of Key Terms

Conflict Area: A Conflict Zone is a place in the world where there is an ongoing battle hindering citizens ability to perform vital activities such as attending school.

Refugee: Refugees are those who have left war, violence, conflict, or persecution and crossed an international border in search of refuge in another country.

Exploitation: The action of making use of and benefiting from resources.

General Overview

When considering education in crisis areas, the main focus is often on ensuring the widest access possible. But educational content and quality is perhaps equally important for reducing the risk of conflict and promoting democracy and development.

In sub-Saharan Africa, where many countries are experiencing widespread conflict, UNESCO has calculated that 87 percent of primary and lower-secondary schoolchildren fail to acquire basic literacy skills. UNESCO describes this situation as a “global learning crisis”. Good quality education is often

linked to factors such as good teaching resources, mother-tongue teaching, and an adequate supply of qualified teachers. All these factors are often in short supply in crisis areas.

If teaching is of low quality, it can create false expectations about job prospects. The contents of textbooks and lessons can have a negative effect on children and teenagers by promoting nationalist ideologies or religious extremism. Such content can widen social divides and increase support for political violence. Accordingly, a greater focus on improving the content and quality of lessons can reduce the risk of conflict.

According to UNICEF, 27 million children are not attending school in conflict zones. The research emphasizes the importance of education for children who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence or natural catastrophes, noting that failure to provide learning opportunities for uprooted children has far-reaching effects for individuals and societies.

Children and teens on the road who have poor levels of education are more vulnerable to exploitation. In a recent poll of young individuals traveling via the Central Mediterranean route to Europe, 90% of those without education reported being exploited, compared to 77% of those with primary education and 75% of those with secondary education.

On the Eastern Mediterranean route, 23% of adolescents without a high school diploma reported exploitation, compared to 20% with a basic school diploma and 14% with a secondary school diploma.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UNICEF: In 2016, UNICEF assisted 11.7 million children in need. Efforts included delivering formal and non-formal learning opportunities and resources, as well as teacher training and life skills seminars. UNICEF alone covers 45 percent of children in need of emergency education programs. UNICEF is now hosting the secretariat of Education Cannot Wait, which has raised more than US\$113 million from government donors and a private-sector pledge of US\$100 million in both cash and in-kind support.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE): The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving education all around the world. GPE has been establishing programs for youths who are not in school, including programs for conflict-affected communities. These programs include devising methods for identifying the number of children who are absent from school and determining the primary impediment to education. GPE also performs assessments in order to develop strategies and plans to promote education within the governments of specific nations, as well as to engage in interaction with local education groups. The discussion between local education groups lends support to educational promotion decisions.

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA): GCPEA is a one-of-a-kind inter-agency collaboration that was founded in 2010 to address the issue of targeted attacks on educational institutions during armed conflict.

Nigeria: There are always dramatic educational inequalities between different groups in conflict areas. Typically, access to education is worse for girls, ethnic and religious minorities, the poorest children, former child soldiers and refugee or internally-displaced children. In Nigeria, Christian women in the south have more than triple the years of education of Muslim women in the north.

Norway: Through the new resolution on protecting classrooms from conflict, Norway is also furthering its efforts in relation to the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda. Educating girls contributes to economic development and can also increase girls' and women's ability to meaningfully participate and have an influence in peace-building and democratic processes. Measures to boost girls' access to education could include ensuring the provision of safe toilet facilities at schools, safe routes to and from schools, and female teachers and role models.

Treaties and Events

In 2007, UNESCO commissioned a research titled Education Under Attack. The goals of this groundbreaking effort were to describe the frequency of attacks on schools, teachers, and students, as well as to draw attention to the necessity for coordinated action to put a stop to them.

Unicef Guidance Note 2012 ‘‘Engaging Adolescents in Conflict Analysis’’

UN Security Council Resolution 2601 (2021) about Protection of Education in Conflict

Human Rights Council resolution 36/12, World Programme for Human Rights Education, A/HRC/RES/36/12 (28 September 2017)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Some strategies for improving education in war zones in African countries include involving and coordinating United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local governments to respond to conflicts and promote education. Another strategy to improve education in war zones is to develop youth-led initiatives that promote nonviolence and tolerance. Promoting peace among youngsters will motivate students to pursue an education while also teaching them how to foster peace for future generations. UNICEF, UNESCO and other UN organs have been working on this issue previously but due to the current situation it could be stated that those mentioned attempts were unsuccessful. The increasing

tensions in conflict areas, lack of qualified officials, insufficient funding were the main reasons of the failure while solving the issue.

Possible Solutions

Delegates must keep in mind that mostly the countries in need of education are LEDCs. While proposing solutions regarding the issue, the fact that most countries in conflicted areas don't have access to most resources.

With that being said, one of the solutions to the situation might be offering the parties of the conflict neutral zones in which children may experience normal education.

Also, economical aid to LEDC countries in order to form a necessary budget for a proper and secured educational environment can be a good solution. Other than that, the education quality should be augmented by developing the educational vision of countries with the aid of UN. Training teachers and implementing information and communication technologies with necessary infrastructure would highly benefit the solution process of the issue in hand.

Another solution that may be presented is integrating the UN personnel better to the situation. That way no matter the extent of the conflict at hand, children may continue their education even as refugees sometimes.

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