

Forum: 1st Committee (Human Rights)

Issue: Ensuring the right to education for Young refugees

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Introduction

The problem of refugees has always been up to date. However, in recent years it became as significant as has never been before. Everyday more and more people are running away from territories of conflicts. Countries where they are trying to settle down are not able to accept all of them providing proper accommodation, food, and clothes. Education is also not provided for refugees. As a result, young refugees, who are mostly not involved in a conflict, suffer from this. Access to education is a basic human right and is linked to poverty reduction, holding promises of stability, economic growth, and better lives for children, families, and communities. Therefore, it is necessary to give them opportunity to get education.

Definition of key terms

Refugee

A person who is outside his country of citizenship because he has well-founded grounds for fear of persecution because of the race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and is unable to obtain sanctuary from his home country or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

UNHCR

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which was established by the UN General Assembly on December 14, 1950, and began work in Geneva, Switzerland, a fortnight later on January 1, 1951.

Unemployment benefits

A government welfare program where employable people, who are currently unemployed under no fault of their own, receive financial aid while they are searching for a new job.

Education for All (EFA)

A global movement led by UNESCO (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015.

Background information

The UN refugee agency is currently responding to the largest numbers of refugees since World War II. Half of all refugees are children under the age of 18 and the need for education for these young people, as well as stateless children and young people has never been more urgent. Only half of all refugee children are enrolled in primary school, and one in four are estimated to be in secondary school. According to the UNHCR's statistics only one percent of young refugees are enrolled in tertiary education.

There are three general conceptual approaches that guide the field of refugee education and education in emergencies more broadly. First is the humanitarian approach, which describes UNHCR's general institutional approach to refugee education at present. This approach views education as one component of a rapid response, providing immediate protection to children and preventing human rights violations. Second is the human rights approach, which emphasizes education as a human right to be realized and cultivated through education in any situation, including crisis. Third is the developmental approach, which recognizes education as a long-term investment for society and the lack of quality education in a crisis as holding back development potential.

Major countries and organizations involved

In the last years refugees are usually trying to get to the Europe, so all countries of EU, especially Germany, are deeply involved in this issue. Refugees prefer to settle down in countries with a high quality of life, so they can receive larger unemployment benefit. Arabic countries, where there is no conflict, are not less involved then European ones. Education for refugee children and young people is a critical aspect of UNHCR's international protection mandate.

Relevant treatments and UN resolutions

Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and entered into force in 1990 after the ratification of 20 Member States. It is a binding instrument and the only one, which addresses all basic human rights that a child has or should have everywhere.

Supported by UNESCO the "World Declaration on Education for All" was adopted in 1990. Together with the Millennium Development Goals, this Declaration is the most important instrument in achieving Education for All around the globe

Previous attempts to solve the problem

So far, many attempts were made to solve the problem. For example, countries of refugees' settlement bear large responsibility in promoting the right to education for refugee children and they are achieving this by organizing education activities after ensuring that refugees' basic needs such as shelter and food are available to them. The latest help of international organizations was Education strategy of UNHCR (2012-2016). It aims to increase access to a range of safe, quality education opportunities for refugee children and young people, from early childhood education to university. The UNHCR has signed a Letter of Understanding with UNESCO to tackle the educational problems and to ensure that Afghan refugees settled in Pakistan will return as educated as possible to their homelands. UNHCR focuses on specific countries too, emanating strategies according to the countries needs and education shortages

Possible solutions

It is obviously, that it is duty of the UN delegates to find ways of providing young refugees with education. However, before considering possible ways of solution of the stated problem, it is necessary to develop full awareness of different countries' refugee population and in what scale their rights are constrained. Moreover, it is important to consider all previous attempts of solving the issue undertaken by different Member States and their experience in this field.

Before focusing on education Member States should guarantee that all refugees are provided with the basic resources such as but not limited to: food and shelter. It would be helpful for Member States to identify the gaps all previous attempts had. The other actions which should be considered may include the following: training teachers, providing young refugees with opportunities and with a safe learning environment. Member States should recognize the Role of Education especially for the development of refugees and for the promotion of peace and should by any means try to achieve the Goal of Education for All (EFA).