Forum: General Assembly 3

Issue: Developing the Prevalence and Quality of Education in Conflict-Stricken Areas

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Introduction

Since 2007, schools and universities have constantly been used for military purposes by national armed forces and armed groups with the purpose to make them into bases, barracks, firing positions, armories and detention centers in 29 countries. Education, societies way of teaching the youth about different concepts about our world. It is used in means by which societal and cultural values are transferred between the youths of different generations dependent on the values considered. Being in the 21st century with methods of international education, we reach a downfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a crisis where means of education had to be moved to a virtual platform.

However, there are more substantial issues that are occurring around the world, which grant great implications towards the quality and prevalence of education towards our generation's youth. Various nations around the world are conflict-stricken, which makes areas around the world perilous and unsafe for adults and children. This can bring attention to many different issues, affecting the environment and the well-being and state of people. The youth can be majorly affected by this as these issues can determine how children are taught, or how effective their methods are towards transferring valuable information to the minds of young beings. Schools and Teachers are increasingly targets of attack as international standards on warfare are neglected. Twenty-eight million children are out of school in conflict affected countries. Refugees and internally displaced people deal with drastic obstacles to education,

shown where conflict-affected countries acquire some of the lowest literacy levels in the world. Conflict in different nations set the basis of how many factors, including the quality and prevalence of education are affected, through the creation of crucial issues.

Developing the Quality and Prevalence of Education in Conflict-stricken Countries can be arduous to deal with, as the government is substantially affected through dispute present in the nation or area. However, discrete solutions can be implemented in order to suggest development strategies for improving the quality and prevalence of education towards children, in areas in need of aid. As these solutions won't only help the education at the present moment but will also assist in the future when situations get out of hand or heated between countries or a stricken area especially during political affairs.

Definition of Key Terms

Airstrikes

An hostile operation which is carried out by aircraft.

Antagonisms

An active opposition

Armories

It Is a special military building that houses arms and ammunition.

Barracks

Barracks are usually a group of long buildings constructed to house military or laborers. **Conflict**

A major disagreement or argument between more than one party.

Cycle of Poverty

A situation in which poor families are under the poverty line for at least

generations. **Decentralisation**

An event in which there is a transfer of authority from initially a central government to a local government

Emergency Support

Assistance given to people in a situation in which the effects could not be predicted and prepared for.

Humanitarian Aid

Logistical and material assistance that are given to people that require it.

Mental Health

A state of well-being which can affect social interactions, work and ability to cope with stress. **Militants**

A person that uses aggressive and violent methods to support a cause.

NGO

An organisation that is completely independent of any government involvement. **Pandemic**

It is defined as "an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people" and it is when there is a spread of disease worldwide that can be infectious and affect countries economically, socially and environmentally.

Refugee

Someone that is forced to leave their country due to war, risk of persecution, or

violence. **Rehabilitation**

It's treatment that will help you get back, keep or develop the skills you need for daily life. Those skills can be physical, mental and/or cognitive (thinking and learning).

Sanitization

The process of removing dirt and germs from any area.

Secessionist

Secession is the removal of a group from a larger entity, notably a political entity, but also from any organization, union or military alliance.

War

A intense violent conflict between parties that usually involves the use of arms

Xenophobia

A dislike towards people from other countries.

Key Issues

Conflict Sensitive Education

Learning is a medium from which people base their ideologies and thoughts about other people and countries from. Education sometimes acts as a mechanism for which both social and traditional values are passed down through generations therefore having a possibility that these values may be reflected negatively to promote abusive behaviours and encourage unacceptable attitudes. The research conducted by Bush and Salterelli in the year 2000 illustrated the negative effects of insensitive education on children such as, segregation education that creates differences between groups, unequal access to education and the manipulation of school books including textbooks and history books.

A number of major studies have highlighted the problems associated with education within conflict-stricken countries by further leading to stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms (Smith & Vaux, 2003; Buckland, 2005; Tawil & Harley, 2004). This had then fueled the concept of "Conflict Sensitive Education." Conflict-sensitive education (CSE) means understanding the framework in which education reforms / schemes takes place, evaluating the two-way interaction among both interpretation and education reforms / schemes, as well as acting to mitigate detrimental effects and enhance beneficial effects of education policies and conflict programming within the objectives of an organization. In recent times this has become an issue because conflict prone countries are not sensitive with the education that is being taught in educational institutions regarding what the country is going through.

Decentralisation of Education Systems

Decentralisation of Education Systems can be regarded through bringing more liability and ownership of schooling. However, it doesn't always follow the expectations of improving education systems, especially during internal conflicts where the government has severe apprehension towards losing control of schooling to secessionist movements (e.g. Indonesia, Columbia, Nepa, Sri Lanka). Decentralisation can be introduced as a segment of post-conflict peace agreements, in places like Herzegovina and Bosnia, severe fragmentation can enhance control of the educational system present by local political appeal and reinforcing ethnic parties if not abated by compelling institutes within a national level.

An agreement known as The Dayton Peace Agreement, introduced boundaries that brought attention for decentralization of political control in consecutive years. This means that the education

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system is drastically fragmented with 14 ministries of education. Two major countries affected through this severe issue are Bosnia and Herzegovina. Issues that are recognized include; The exorbitant fragmentation and politicization of the education system, the separation between ethnic parties, and assimilation processes based on ethnic motives. This is an issue that relates to the main topic here because the people who have authority over the educational

systems have a very important role in how the systems are maintained in times of conflict. If the authority belongs to the local government, the decisions would be more democracy based which would allow for the community to decide how to go forward in those unprecedented times.

Attacks on Education

Attacks on schools around the world in conflict-stricken countries have been occurring continuously and have proved to be a great danger to children. Attacks on schools and other educational facilities during conflict is known to be one of the 6 grave violations that have been recognized and condemned by the United Nations Security Council. School grounds should be seen as peace, where children feel protected at all times whether it may be within a conflict or not. However, we can clearly see an increase in risk of targeting schools causing harmful effects on the youth further adding to their traumatic experiences they have encountered.

Recently on the 25th of February 2020, 10 schools were attacked resulting in deaths of 9 students along with 3 teachers in north west Syria. Attacks on Syrian educational facilities still stand to continue, in the year 2019, 157 attacks were reported on syrian schools where 85% of the attacks took place in Idlib where 76% of all attacks were by the use of airstrikes as well as shelling. These severe attacks on schools have an immediate effect on children's mental health and ability to attend school, as they feel endangered and frightened to attend. Threats and the fear of invasion eventually lead to stress and loss which most communities will need to learn to endure during conflicts.

Children should have the freedom to be able to attend school without fearing for their life, including other staff members who should be able to work without feeling frightened. These increasing figures of attacks on educational institutes threaten and discourage students from exercising their right to education as mentioned in international human right treaties such as the convention regarding the rights of the child as well as the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. Education attacks definitely pose to be a violation of international humanitarian and criminal law.

Lack of Resources

The lack of resources causes students to not be able to receive quality education. Firstly, the

lack of staff and teachers calls due to the dangerous zones and the lack of trained people for this situation. The lack of teachers causes the question of who will provide this education and how can we ensure that **Research Report** | Page 5 of 16

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it is developed and of high quality. Secondly, the lack of stationary affects the students as they do not receive basic means of writing and reading tools due to the simple fact that they don't have the funds to afford that especially during times of conflict as people tend to save the most at those times. Thirdly, if a region is conflict-stricken it is more than likely that facilities and campus' have been destroyed leaving no area for students to be taught. Additionally, it would be dangerous for students to leave their homes if there is a chance of injury or worse, death. Therefore, the absence of these needs affect educational institutions which further doesn't facilitate the wants of learners who look to strive in their dream profession.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations Children's Fund is a United Nations body that works for the protection of children's rights to support for the basic needs and boarden opportunities to achieve full potential. The problem that has been identified by UNICEF is attacks on children around the world are continuing uninterrupted, as warring parties violate one of the most basic rules of war; child protection. Today's ongoing existence of conflicts impacts the futures of the whole generations of children to follow. A generation of children living in conflict without access to education will grow up without the resources they need to lead their countries and economies, alleviating the already precarious position for millions of children and their families. In conflict zones, a child's right to education can not be secured without the protection of education itself. Children out of school are easy targets for armed forces and organisations to manipulate, exploit and hire. Educational institutions should have a secure space to defend children from risks and crises. This also represents a crucial step towards breaking the crisis cycle and reducing the possibility of future conflicts.

In the situation to solve the problem the UNICEF came up with an international agreement called "Safe School Declaration" which looks to strengthen the security of

educational institutions even during an armed conflict. This initiative has been in action since 2015 and from then until November 2019 more than 100 countries have endorsed the declaration and have announced the attacks on schools or the military use of school is unacceptable.

United Kingdom (UK)

The UK has pledged to help an estimate of 600,000 children living in conflict-stricken areas that are unable to access education, supporting these children will allow them to construct a sustainable future for themselves. The Prime Minister, Brois Johnson declared during the G7 summit that the UK will be funding aid of £90 million. Alongside that, in 1995 an NGO known as "War Child" was introduced by

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the UK and they set their mission to protect, educate and stand up for the rights of the children in war zones. Single handedly in 2018, 84% of the money collected by War Child benefited 15,000 children from educational activities in Afghanistan and 4,000 children in Yemen.

Afghanistan

More than three decades of ongoing violence has destroyed Afghanistan's education system. Completing primary school remains a distant vision for many of the country's children – particularly in rural areas and for girls – despite recent progress in increasing enrolment. Enrolment rates in the country's poorest and most remote areas differ widely and girls often lack fair access. 3.7 million children are estimated to be out of school in Afghanistan and from which 60% of them are girls. The enrolment of girls is low and that may be partially explained by a lack of female school staff, particularly in rural schools. Only 16% of schools in Afghanistan are girls-only, and most of them lack adequate sanitation facilities, which only further negatively affects the attendance. Some socio-cultural factors and cultural traditions undermine the education of girls as well. As girls are still getting married very young - 17% before their 15th birthday. In certain regions of the country the main obstacles to education are a shortage of schools and insufficient transportation – a lengthy walk to school means less children go.

Physical barriers often make it difficult for children to get to the classroom , especially in mountainous areas. When children do so, they also obtain less educational quality, because only 48% of their teachers have the required academic qualifications.

Syrian Arab Republic

Syria's crisis has taken on a catastrophic educational toll; leaving more than 7,000 educational institutions damaged or lost, and about 2 million children out of school. Many of those children, including those recently displaced by instability, are the most vulnerable. Those attending school face daily obstacles of overcrowded classrooms, the psychological scars of traumatic events, possible teaching methods and language issues; inadequate teaching quality and a lack of essential learning materials. Such factors placed children at higher risk of dropping out and nearly one-third of those enrolled do not make it through to the end of primary school. Syria still remains a dynamic organizational environment with major challenges; in particular, delays in clearance for distribution of materials and lack of public transportation for teachers from the locations / shelters they have been relocated to the schools where they will be teaching.

Republic of Yemen

Since the start of the conflict in March 2015, attacks on school children , teachers, and educational facilities have had a devastating effect on the education system in the country and on the chances of millions of children accessing schooling. The disruption and closing of schools undermines the access of children to education and makes them vulnerable to serious questions about safety. One of the greatest problems was the shortage of wages for civil servants, which has and continues to have a profound impact on the quality of education for Yemen 's children. Nearly three-quarters of public school teachers in 11 provinces have not been compensated for over two school years , affecting the schooling in these governorates of about 3.7 million children. By the ongoing lobbying campaigns to find a temporary solution, UNICEF succeeded in securing USD 70 million for monthly cash rewards for Yemen's teachers and school workers. The investment is expected to encourage benefits for about nine months for about 135,000 teachers and school-based employees.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
15th April 1919	The Save the Children Fund was established in the United Kingdom.	It was founded to improve children's lives by providing better education , health care and economic opportunities, as well as emergency aid in natural disasters , war and other conflicts.
September 1972	The Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC) was founded in post-war Bangladesh.	BRAC is the world's largest non-governmental development organization, as of September 2016 in terms of number of workers. It works in different areas but in specific the economical development, education, public health and disaster relief.

20th November 1989	Convention on the Rights of the Children was signed	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international treaty agreement setting out every child's civil, political, economic , social and cultural rights, irrespective of race, religion or ability.
1990	Global Education For All movement	Education For All is a global UNESCO-led movement which aims to support the learning among all children , youth and adults by 2015. The Dakar Framework introduced EFA at the World Education Forum in Senegal, Africa in April 2000, with the goal in mind that by 2015 all children would receive primary schooling.

9th October 1995	The date War Child was established with the UK	War Child is a NGO established in the United Kingdom in 1993 which provides assistance to children in conflict areas and the aftermath of conflict.
30th May 2011	A report commissioned by UNESCO on "The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education".	The research has drawn on many individuals and organisations' support, advice and perspectives. The EFA Global Monitoring Report team thanks anyone who directly or indirectly contributed to the study and review expressed here.

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2015	Justice Rising was founded	The organization is a California based charity that works to ensure that the youth are educated, especially those in conflict stricken zones. Some of their work can be seen in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

29th May 2015	The day the Safe School Declaration was signed in Oslo, Norway.	The Declaration offers the ability for countries to demonstrate political support for the safety of students, teachers and schools during armed conflict times.
1st January 2016	Goal 4 "Quality Education" was initiated of SDG goals	Quality Education was the 4th SDG released in 2016 with aims to increase the prevalence of education in developing regions that seemed to struggle due to high levels of poverty, armed conflicts and other emergencies.
24th May 2016	Education Cannot Wait fund was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.	The Fund is under the United Nations and its agenda is to have a continuous flow of access to quality learning to prioritize for children and families affected by conflicts, natural disasters and displacement.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Safe School Declaration

The Safe School Declaration is an international agreement with the aim to protect

education during armed conflict. The declaration is a commitment that is endorsed to strengthen the protection of students, teachers and educational facilities during the time of tension within or outside the country. It is put in place to ensure the continuation of education, as well as to protect and stabilize boundaries to discourage military actions or the use of arms in learning environments.

Various countries have made specific plans in their military planning and policies to introduce security measures for schools to ensure protection from military violence. Militants in the Central African Republic that use schools are being pressured to leave so that students can go to educational institutions again. In Afghanistan, the Department of Education used the declaration to support eliminating military checkpoints and bases from schools. Nigeria is raising the quality of protection of the schools. Somalia's Ministry of Defense has expanded its child protection unit to ensure the health of the children. Monitoring and recording of school attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo has improved. The Safe School Declaration has ensured protection of educators, students and faculties that will help further provide education to children in conflict-stricken areas.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

In 2016, the world's first World Humanitarian Summit was convened by the former United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. They aimed to dissolve the concern for dignity, safety and well-being of the citizens as the Secretary General said, "They count on us". While concluding the summit, the United Nations brought front the first global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises NGO known as Education Cannot Wait (ECW). The agenda of ECW is a more collaborative approach that fosters funding to secure education and learning for children and educators in crisis.

There are five core functions that the ECW is articulated around. Firstly, to inspire political commitment in order for education to be viewed as top priority in a situation of a crisis by both governments and funders. The next step was to help close the $8.5 billion funding gap to reach out to the 75 million children and youth that are hoping to generate the additional funding. Third, and most important is to plan and respond collaboratively to support humanitarian aid and development actors to work together on common priorities. Fourthly, to strengthen the response to crises globally and nationally to secure the ability to coordinate emergency support. Along

with the points mentioned above, ECW also improves accountability by building and sharing information, including more comprehensive data collection to make more informed investment decisions and awareness of what works and does not.

War Child

Times during war and emergencies education is one of the things that is consistently compromised however when children in conflict-stricken countries are able to access educational **Research Report** | Page 11 of 16

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learning there are immense challenges - such as lack of teachers and services, overcrowded classrooms and violence on or off the way to the educational institutes. In order to overcome some of these issues an NGO was founded in 1995 within the United Kingdom known as "War Child".

War Child prioritizes the protection and security of children's rights to education in a state of response. They set up temporary learning spaces that are safe for children who have been displaced and are able to provide necessary learning materials such as books and pencils. Furthermore, help train teachers in order to support students who have been through trauma. Despite helping individuals War Child also contributes to the cycle of poverty inequality and social exclusion that impacts all countries.

As a result, War Child has proven to be a success due to its extended gratitude towards child's education projects that scaled up in 2018 where they have reached to afghanistan where they offered educational activities for around 15,000 children that had been affected by the conflict and were able to train 445 teaches within different provinces. Furthermore, in the Democratic Republic of Congo four preschool centers were developed to extend out to over 300 dislocated children and over 10,000 displaced children received child protection awareness classes for the next four years. Additionally, in Jordan access to education was provided to 1,981 refugee children for safer and secure environments whilst promoting the protection of physiological well being of teachers and the learners.

UNICEF Efforts

Bearing in mind the specific problem, UNICEF has come up with a solution for "providing quality education for the most vulnerable." A successful system of education is essential to bringing more children to school, maintaining them around and ensuring them to become educated and skilled citizens. UNICEF has been working in a close partnership with the Ministry of Education and other partners at the national , regional, community level. Their work focuses on the most vulnerable people in deprived areas , particularly girls, to address the lack of learning caused by poverty, discrimination and conflict. Afghanistan's government has embraced the Child Friendly Schools policy, based on inclusiveness, child-centered learning and a free, secure, and supportive learning atmosphere with active community involvement. UNICEF is also supporting the Ministry of Education in establishing a National Evaluation Framework for the primary education system, related to a national certification framework.

Given the massive scale of the education crisis in Syria that threatens the future of a whole generation of children, UNICEF has managed is to mobilize expertise and resources through a system building approach to improve the ability and flexibility of the national education system to tackle the challenges of access to and quality of education. This method provides the only realistic alternative for appropriate scaling of access to education and is the most effective and productive investment return for future resilience. Alternative educational programs for children out of school such as the Self Learning Program serves to transition children back into the education system with no access to formal education. Providing necessary learning resources helps to resolve the crucial shortage of education supplies and resolve the parents' economic obstacles to sending their kids to school.

Despite challenges imposed, UNICEF and its field partners have been able to initiate access to education for 204,340 children (49.7% girls) through significant rehabilitation of 18 affected schools and latrine rehabilitation in 218 schools. Furthermore, 4,055 teachers, supervisors and social workers provided psychosocial support training to help 133,356 students (41.6% girls). In addition, 41,907 students (49.08% girls) were provided with basic learning supplies including school bag kits (9% target). Moreover, the creation of a Transitional Education Program, funded by the Global Education Partnership, continued to be advancing in 2018. Teams from both educational authorities discussed the matter with UNESCO leadership which resulted in the completion of the evaluation of the educational situation in Yemen.

Possible Solutions

Intervention Centers

Given the ongoing crisis occurring in Syria regarding the education crisis which poses a threat to the future of our generations, intervention centers can be established in order to be able to maximize and enhance expertise and resources in order to combat the lack of professionals within educational facilities and further lack of assets. This approach helps accomplish the adequate scaling of education and the increased amounts of resources provided to students within the facilities in order for the students to have an opportunity in learning within a safe environment.

With the help of intervention centers, the quality of education will be improved through school rehabilitation, teacher training and the introduction of accelerated learning programmes such as the curriculum B where students will be able to catch up on topics in order to be able to re-integrate into a formal education facility along with their other peers. Furthermore, substitute learning programmes such as the self learning programmes serve to be able to help transitions out of school children into a formal setting where they are provided with basic education they will need to aspire both within school and the community further along in the future.

Education of Adults

While education is what we are striving for, the education of adults in terms of them possibly getting higher levels of education so that they are capable of getting higher paying jobs so that they need to

force their children to work must be addressed. Child labor is very common when it comes to conflict-stricken zones as families are stripped of their basic needs causing every member of the family capable fo working to work. If the adults are provided with higher quality of

education, children will be free to go attend school classes allowing for them to make use of the prevalence of education that is being towards. The contribution of children in a household's economic stability in conflict-stricken zones is central in terms of food security and more and in these education seminars held for adults, adults can also be taught of how detrimental that can be to a child's mental health and their future.

Setting a uniform standard

Every place in the world has a different standard of quality that varies from culture to culture and curriculum to curriculum. When it comes to it, the quality of education does not only lie in the content taught but much more. "Values such as equity and peace, non-discrimination and respect for individual integrity need to be reflected not only in the curriculum but also in admission policies, teaching and learning methods and in all policies and procedures to do with education" all are included as factors that effect the quality of education.

While all of these factors are ones that can't be met by a simple standard being set, the UN can collaborate with the ministry of education in countries that are more prone to conflict which would call for a uniform standard of quality in terms of content being set that would not only be achievable but also UN approved. This will allow for all children who are going through already tough times to receive education when required. While the newly developed curriculum will have to be adapted to the conditions, environment and more of everyone's conflict-stricken zone, this could also be possibly planned for by looking at previously conflict-stricken zones and the conditions of them and how education could have been implemented there. By analysing historical information and data that is available, places where education may need to be implemented due to the region being conflict-stricken can be planned for to the maximum ability that the country has.

In reference to the factors that can't be set by a standard, better training of the facilitators and teachers can be ensured where they are required, in the training, to also sit a course on how those specific factors can be met such as to minimize discrimination and maintain peace.

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Appendix

I.

https://www.warchild.org.uk/sites/default/files/link-files/20191015%20UK%20Government%20mu st%20protect%20children%20in%20Syria.pdf - This document is an example of how the warchild is helping the situation.

II.

https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/sites/unicef.org.afghanistan/files/2017-11/AFG_Education_an d_Healthcare_at_Risk_Report_Final_Draft_20160417.pdf - A education and healthcare risk report by the UN

III. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2d70/222ee64178d0f55718b92fac5e3fa495a490.pdf - This is a journal of the education rights of children in colfict-stricken zones released in India.

IV.

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12949&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201. html - This is the convention against discrimination in education from 1960