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Forum: Youth Assembly

Topic: Ensuring access to Education and Protection for Children in Crisis and Conflict Zones

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Position: Co-Head

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Iria Christopoulou and I am honoured to welcome each and every one of you to the 5th SCMUN conference. I am an IB1 student in St Catherine's school and I am excited to serve as your Co-Head in the Youth Assembly. My participation in multiple MUN conferences, both in Greece and worldwide, have shaped my passion and enthusiasm for the diplomatic procedure of MUN, driving me to create an equally positive introductory experience for everyone in this committee.

I am hoping that this excitement and appreciation of MUN will translate itself to the way that you approach this new experience, allowing everyone to develop an appreciation for current affairs, and encourage an interest in the world of diplomatic relations. As your Co-Head of Youth Assembly, I strongly hope that this conference will become a positive starting point to your MUN journey, encouraging you to become a member of this community, and make friendships and memorable experiences along the way!

If anyone has any questions, feel free to contact me on my email (iriachristopoulou@gmail.com) or feel free to contact one of the Heads of the Youth Assembly on her email (arianmit@yahoo.com). I am very excited to get to know you all in person!



TOPIC INTRODUCTION

In a world tainted with political conflicts and uncertainty, the rights of multiple vulnerable individuals continue to be placed under threat. With the number of children who lack access to schooling having increased from 6 million to 250 million since 2021¹, increasing amounts of individuals are expected to face the future consequences associated with a lack of access to adequate education, raising the potential for exposure to various risks and vulnerabilities. Namely, denial from one's fundamental right to attend schooling doesn't only violate the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also increases susceptibility to threats such as child labour, early marriage and the ability to provide for their own needs, putting their capacities for future independence to question.²

Areas in Northern and Central Asia, as well as multiple regions in Sub Saharan Africa, are especially affected by a lack of literacy. According to UNESCO's most recent data, 1 in 5 children (19.7%) of the total youth population of African children are not attending school. In the words of the Unicef Country Representative of Sudan, Mandeep O'Brien, in response to the conflict of 2023 between the SAF and RSF, "Sudan is on the brink of becoming home to the worst education crisis in the world"³, as "children have been exposed to the horrors of war for nearly half a year. Now forced away from their classrooms, teachers, and friends, are at risk of falling into a void that will threaten the future of an entire generation". Moreover, according to the Sudan Tribune, Sudanese

¹ UNESCO. "250 Million Children Out-of-School: What You Need to Know about UNESCO's Latest Education Data." *Unesco.org*, 19 Sept. 2023, www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data.

² United Nations. "Convention on the Rights of the Child." *OHCHR*, United Nations, 1989, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child.

³ "19 Million Children in Sudan out of School as Conflict Rages on – Save the Children, UNICEF." *Save the Children*, 2023, www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2023-press-releases/19-million-children-in-sudan-out-of-school?. Accessed 19 Nov. 2025.



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teachers warn that a lack of school recruitment fuels forced child marriages.⁴

Similarly, following the 2021 Taliban attack in Afghanistan, secondary and higher education for all girls has been restricted, despite the fact that over 92% of Afghans are in support of women's education according to a new UN women report. This doesn't only hinder their learning, but an overwhelming amount of NGOs are expressing concern on the fact that it limits their ability to reach women and offer them certain vital services. Furthermore, proper education also provides households with financial stability, which allows individuals to escape generational poverty. Therefore, since half of the Afghan population is already living beneath the poverty line, this regulation only perpetuates the poverty cycle and worsens the pre existing problem and inhibits national progress.⁵

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Conflict Zones

"Areas experiencing sustained armed hostilities or severe political instability."⁶

Crisis Zones

"An area experiencing severe difficulties or danger, often due to conflict, natural disaster, or other emergencies, requiring urgent attention and assistance."⁷

Child Labour

⁴ Matiullah Qazizada. "The Continuing Ban on Girls' Education in Afghanistan - Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre." *Devpolicy Blog from the Development Policy Centre*, 26 Mar. 2025, devpolicy.org/the-continuing-ban-on-girls-education-in-afghanistan-20250327/.

⁵ UN Women. "Four Years after Taliban Takeover, Afghans Overwhelmingly Back Girls' Education | UN Women – Headquarters." *UN Women – Headquarters*, 29 Aug. 2025, www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2025/08/four-years-after-taliban-takeover-afghans-overwhelmingly-back-girls-education.

⁶ "Conflict Zones → Area." *Lifestyle → Sustainability Directory*, 2025, lifestyle.sustainability-directory.com/area/conflict-zones/. Accessed 1 Oct. 2025.

⁷ *Yacktack.com*, 2025, yacktack.com/words/crisis%20zone. Accessed 6 Oct. 2025.



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“Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, that is harmful to physical and mental development”⁸, including minors engaging in any form of activity performed with a profit driven objective

Child Marriage

“Any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child.”⁹

Formal Education

“Learning from experience that takes place outside formally structured, institutionally sponsored, class-room based activities”¹⁰, which differs from traditional education as it lacks formal guidelines and standardised testing.

Literacy Rate

“The percentage of the population of a given age group that can read and write.”¹¹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

Following the devastation caused by WW2, there was a recognition of the need for support for children in areas which were affected by conflict. This phenomenon inspired the founding of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) association, designed to provide relief and educational support for children in conflict zones. Efforts to support children's right to education have been further advocated for,

⁸ibid.

⁹ UNICEF. “Child Marriage.” *Unicef.org*, UNICEF, 2023, www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage.

¹⁰ “Informal Learning: Definition and Application.” *The Oxford Review*, oxford-review.com/oxford-review-encyclopaedia-terms/informal-learning-definition-application/.

¹¹ ---. “UNESCO.” *Unesco.org*, 2025, www.uis.unesco.org/en.



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resulting in the establishment and adoption of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child¹², which has been accepted by almost every country. As various crisis situations continue to emerge however, humanitarian agencies have made new efforts to uphold these rights, inspiring initiatives such as the creation and adoption of the Education In Emergencies framework¹³. This ensures the continuity of schooling during difficult periods. Furthermore, as of 2016, the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund was established, which secures the continuous provision and allocation of finances to support the cause of guaranteeing the access to learning for those in emergencies¹⁴.

Causes of limited education

Socioeconomic reasons

Despite being universally recognised as a fundamental right, education has been historically limited and challenged for various socioeconomic reasons. In the context of conflict zones, underlying causes explaining why armed conflict leads to individuals not being able to attend school are inherent safety concerns, which inhibit one's ability to access classroom settings. Moreover, conflict reduces the state's capacity to fund education systems, which leaves the burden of allocating funds for schooling to the families. It has therefore been common to witness cases of gender discrimination, as the education of males has been historically prioritised over the education of their female counterparts. This leads to the rejection of multiple individuals from this opportunity, and widens the gap between different social groups. Poverty and deprivation may also compel children to enter child marriages or forced labour as a means of financial contribution, but also child recruitment may exclude them from schooling.¹⁵

¹² UNICEF. "About the Convention on the Rights of the Child." *UNICEF Canada : No Child Too Far*, 2000, www.unicef.ca/en/policy-advocacy-for-children/about-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child.

¹³ ---. "Education in Emergencies." *Www.unicef.org*, UNICEF, www.unicef.org/education/emergencies.

¹⁴ "Education Cannot Wait | EAA Observatory." *Educationaboveall.org*, 2024, policy-hub.educationaboveall.org/solution/education-cannot-wait. Accessed 28 Oct. 2025.

¹⁵ Allison Academy. "Lack of Education: Causes and Effects." *Allison Academy*, 23 Sept. 2021, www.allisonacademy.com/students/education/higher-education/lack-of-education/.



Lack of protective legislation

Legislation is also an important aspect as to why certain individuals may not have the ability to access an education. In certain host countries, refugees have been historically prevented from being educated, as displaced populations of children may be unable to attend formal lessons due to legal barriers from other nations. Currently, school enrollment in host countries is tied to various legal documentations, such as residence permits and official refugee registration. This leads to refugees being effectively denied an education, and being excluded from the opportunity to learn.

Militarisation of schools

On a different level, destruction of schools, as well as their use as military facilities, may hinder the ability of certain establishments to perform lessons. When armed forces occupy school buildings for uses such as bases for operations, weapon storage or accommodation for army personnel, they inhibit the ability of said facilities to be used for educational purposes. Restricted government funding due to an increased cost of national protection and military resources also limits the capital allocated to educating children, as they lack necessary resources which are complimentary to schooling.

Consequences of Lack of Education

Being denied from receiving an education can have far reaching consequences for victims, which can significantly affect their future prospects and wellbeing. Firstly, lack of schooling largely correlates with lack of representation in work settings, which reduces one's potential and limits their voice. This is because they have a restricted ability to advocate for themselves, as they have less authority and negotiating power, resulting in them becoming increasingly dependent on other individuals, which in most cases results in exploitation due to vulnerability. Moreover, individuals may result in various forms of exploitation in order to sustain their livelihood or provide for themselves in unethical ways, which increases the tendency for illegal activity, as people



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lack skills to pursue most careers. This has been seen to perpetuate the cycle of poverty, as children grow up lacking the skills and knowledge to improve their own circumstances. Another concerning implication of educational deprivation is the lack of information on one's psychophysiological wellbeing, commonly taught in schools through subjects like biology, PSHE, or health education. This can also lead to marginalisation and social isolation, further adding to the challenges faced by uneducated children in conflict affected areas.¹⁶

Case study: Civil war in Syria

The Civil war in Syria brought detrimental consequences to the education of children affected. With 7000 schools damaged and over 2 million children out of school, the number of children who have or will receive a formal education has decreased significantly¹⁷. Such circumstances, in turn, restrict their long term opportunities, which can result in various consequences concerning their future prospects and current wellbeing. There has also been observed a decline in the number of children who complete their primary education, as a manifestation of the fact that there is an evident lack of individualised learning due to the oversaturation of classrooms. Consequently, individuals lose motivation and are more prone to dropping out of school, which has led to almost one third of children doing so. On a separate note, educational attacks have become an increasingly large concern. Governments have attacked four schools with three active classes, and other armed forces have attacked schools which were not used for military purposes. In addition, no public transportation access to refugee camps challenges the access of teachers to schools, which results in the disruption of the educational process. Moreover, there have also been multiple cases of students having been subjected to beatings and other forms of violence during school hours by teaching

¹⁶ Adabala, Srihita. "5 Consequences of Not Having Access to Education." *The Borgen Project*, 11 Jan. 2020, borgenproject.org/5-consequences-of-not-having-access-to-education/.

¹⁷ UNICEF. "Education." *Unicef.org*, 2018, www.unicef.org/syria/education.



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personnel due to their political beliefs¹⁸. Fortunately enough, Syria has indicated its commitment to providing appropriate psychological support for children who are victims of hardship due to prolonged conflict by adopting the Safe Schools Initiative, which trains educational personnel in order for them to be equipped for this purpose¹⁹. This initiative supports the psychological and emotional needs of children and also aids in creating temporary learning spaces where necessary and taking actions to prevent the militarisation of schools.

Case study: Ukraine and Russian Conflict

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 is one of the main examples of areas where political conflicts and instabilities have had detrimental effects on education. Children in the front lines have been reported to have spent the equivalent of 7 months sheltering in underground basements from potential attacks, which has had a severe disruptive impact on their education due to their inability to access a safe schooling environment²⁰. There has also been an evident lack of facilities which has led "The Ukrainian government to report that from February 2022 through October 2023, 3428 educational facilities had been damaged and 365 destroyed", resulting in 40% of children being unable to take classes. The restoration of schools will require lots of time and resources, which prolongs the return of children to schools. Fortunately, following Ukraine's acknowledgment of the detrimental effects of utilising school environments to serve military objectives, the country has adopted the Safe Schools Declaration, which inhibits schools and universities from being used for military purposes²¹. This,

¹⁸ "Making Sure You're Not a Bot!" *Unesco.org*, 2025, education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/index.php/en/resources/2013/safe-no-more-students-and-schools-under-attack-syria. Accessed 26 Oct. 2025.

¹⁹ "Creating Safer Learning Environments in Syria." *Unicef.org*, 2025, www.unicef.org/syria/stories/creating-safer-learning-environments-syria. Accessed 26 Oct. 2025.

²⁰ "Ukraine." *UNICEF Australia*, 2024, www.unicef.org.au/media-release/ukraine-two-years-children-in-frontline-areas-spend-up-to-5-000-hours-equivalent-to-nearly-7-months-sheltering-underground. Accessed 26 Oct. 2025.

²¹ Yulia Gorbunova. "'Tanks on the Playground.'" *Human Rights Watch*, 9 Nov. 2023, www.hrw.org/report/2023/11/09/tanks-playground/attacks-schools-and-military-use-schools-ukraine. Accessed 26 Oct. 2025.



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alongside a military order which was sent in order to restrict the military use of schools, ensure the safe access of children to school environments free of any relation to armed warfare. Moreover, there have been several attempts for schools to increase the number of students attending each educational facility due to an overwhelming number of schools being destroyed in war. This increase in student numbers is achieved largely via shifts or shortened school days, which ensure that despite a lack of facilities, maximum usage of available resources is accomplished. Moreover, distance learning has been introduced to accommodate those who lack access to formal education, and there have been multiple efforts for the restoration of certain schools which had been previously damaged²².

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of the Event	Event
December 11, 1946	Following the devastation caused by WW2, there was a recognition for the need for support for children in areas which were affected by conflict. This phenomenon inspired the founding of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) association.
August 12, 1949	Signing of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which ensures that in times of instability where certain human rights are suspended, the fundamental right to education is sustained.

²²"UNICEF Renews School Protection Call in Ukraine amid "Deadly Reality" of Attacks." *UN News*, 6 Sept. 2024, news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154021. Accessed 26 Oct. 2025.



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November 20, 1989	The Conventions of the Right of the Child were established in order to protect and promote the rights of all children during circumstances where their freedom is put at risk.
August 25, 1999	UN Security Council Resolution on the Conventions of the Rights of a Child which applies legal pressure to protect infrastructure which is necessary for education. Moreover, it orders for the demobilisation of child soldiers in order to allow them to be reintegrated to the educational environment
2002	Global Partnership for Education was established, which is a global fund dedicated to providing quality education to children in lower income countries.
March 15, 2011	The civil war in Syria has resulted in almost one in three children dropping out of school due to fear of violence and lack of school facilities.
May, 2016	The Education Cannot Wait fund is an initiative which aims at upholding the right to education for youth in emergency situations, mainly by providing funding to ensure the appropriate functioning of schools and other educational facilities in times of crisis.
February 24, 2022	The war between Russia and Ukraine has forced over 40% of children out of schools, as people in



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	the front lines have spent approximately 7 months sheltering from expected attacks.
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MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The United States of America have made various helpful contributions in order to enable and facilitate the access of children to education, as well as ensuring the appropriate functioning of schooling facilities during times of armed violence. One of their major works is the establishment of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) program, which has helped low income countries improve their education systems by allocating significant funds²³. Not only have they created designated bodies to rebuild damaged schools, supply school materials and support teacher training, but have also facilitated the efforts of existing committees such as the International Rescue Committee, to allow them facilitate efforts to prioritise education in countries suffering from conflict. Furthermore, their partnerships with organisations such as Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), assist in “helping meet the educational needs of children and adolescents affected by crisis”²⁴, which are essential in tackling the issue proposed before us. More specifically, the GPE helps governments in fragile states to strengthen their funding towards education systems, and ECW takes immediate measures to facilitate the immediate reintegration of children to schools right after a crisis event.

France

²³ United States Government. “U.S. Agency for International Development | USAGov.” *W*www.usa.gov, www.usa.gov/agencies/u-s-agency-for-international-development.

²⁴ “How Are Children and Their Education Affected by Crisis? | International Rescue Committee (IRC).” *W*www.rescue.org, www.rescue.org/article/how-are-children-and-their-education-affected-crisis.



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France has also been a major contributor to resolving this issue and supporting the well being of vulnerable individuals in conflict zones, via various humanitarian aid strategies and other initiatives. Significant contributions have been provided in the form of humanitarian aid strategies from AFD (French Development Agency), as they allocate funds for children in conflict ridden areas to encourage their participation in educational programmes²⁵. France is also a permanent member of the security council, which advocates for more developed mechanisms to protect the education of children in areas which experience armed conflict. Therefore, their advocating for legislation which supports children's education and their partnerships with international organisations prove the country's commitment to the support of the fundamental right to education.

United Kingdom

Via financial initiatives and their collaboration with global organisations, the UK has exhibited its dedication to aiding the continuation of all educational procedures in pressured situations. Namely, its commitment to raising money for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has allowed over 175 million children to have the opportunity to earn access to education. This has been a part of a 15.7 million pound project, which aims at targeting certain African regions which have an estimated 3 million refugee or internally displaced children²⁶. The UK also played an important role in setting up the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund in 2016, and has recently donated 90 million to aid 600,000 children in conflict settings to get an education²⁷.

Germany

²⁵ ---. "French Development Agency." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Oct. 2025. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Development_Agency

²⁶ Reliefweb. Report on children conflicts in nigeria <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/new-uk-funding-boost-education-children-conflict-zones#:~:text=New%20UK%20funding%20to%20boost,in%20conflict%20zones%20%2D%20Nigeria%20%7C%20ReliefWeb>

²⁷ "About Us." *Education Cannot Wait*, www.educationcannotwait.org/about-us.



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Through strategic planning and multiple other funding strategies, Germany has indicated its dedication to providing children with access to all necessary services in order to maintain welfare of individuals affected during armed hostilities. They have proven this by providing aid to places such as Libya, where they fund child provision services, psychological support and education to children where conflict is present. Germany has contributed over 1.5 million in order to allow 60,000 children to gain access to schooling, and is considered as one of the most important UNICEF partners in regards to the aid of children in LEDCs²⁸. As of 2013 the German government had already contributed 210 million for giving children access to supplies²⁹, and has increased drastically as of 2024, where that value has more than tripled to 679 million³⁰

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Education, being recognised as a life saving mechanism for students during emergency situations, is heavily supported by the UNICEF fund in the form of various political commitments and other agreements, with the aim of “working to provide uninterrupted education for every child affected by humanitarian crisis”. Specifically, it works with states who have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, and plays an active role in countries which are affected by conflict to restore children's participation in education. According to the official UNICEF website, the Safe Schools Declaration is defined as a “political commitment to better protect students, teachers, schools and universities during armed conflict, to support the continuation of education during war, and puts in place concrete mechanisms to help make these efforts possible. To achieve this, they train teachers and distribute supplies which are essential for supporting

²⁸ DevelopmentAid. “Germany Announces €200 Million Funding for Education Cannot Wait.” *DevelopmentAid*, 24 Jan. 2022, www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/136842/germany-funding-for-education-cannot-wait?. Accessed 28 Oct. 2025.

²⁹ “Germany's €250 Million Contribution Will Reach Children in the World's Most Volatile Conflicts - UNICEF - World.” *ReliefWeb*, 2 Dec. 2015, reliefweb.int/report/world/germany-s-250-million-contribution-will-reach-children-world-s-most-volatile-conflicts. Accessed 28 Oct. 2025.

³⁰ “Germany.” *Unicef.org*, 2023, [www.unicef.org/partnerships/germany?](http://www.unicef.org/partnerships/germany?utm_source=chatgpt.com) https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/germany?utm_source=chatgpt.com



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learning, and aid is finding alternative teaching methods to encourage learning when the traditional manner is impossible. They also create and distribute “School in Box Kits”, which contain necessary school supplies for children. These are distributed immediately after an emergency or prepositioned in zones where conflict is expected, which allow them to pursue their education despite circumstances which may limit their available funds for stationary and other equipment.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is set in place with a goal of protecting the interests and rights of individuals who have been forced to flee their homes. As an organisation, they aim to make sure that all individuals, regardless of their differences in educational requirements or age, are included in the educational curriculum, even if they had been denied education in the past and are of older ages. They have achieved this by designing interventions and mechanisms to eliminate certain barriers which may lead to certain minority groups being excluded from an education (e.g. disability, ethnicity, gender etc.)³¹. This has included the creation of short term programs to allow the smooth transition of children back to formal education systems, or more accelerated programs for individuals who have been excluded from school for longer periods of time³². In addition, they work with the Ministries of Education to ensure that children regain their access to education right after conflict is over³³.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

³¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*. UNHCR, 9 Sept. 2019, www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5d651da88d7.pdf. Accessed 23 Dec. 2025.

³² Ibid.

³³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Education*. UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/media/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education. Accessed 23 Dec. 2025.



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The Education Cannot Wait fund is an initiative which aims at upholding the right to education for youth in emergency situations, mainly by providing First Emergency Response (FER) funding to areas which are in immediate need of finances, in order to ensure the appropriate functioning of schools and other educational facilities in times of crisis. To assure that funding in these areas remains consistent, they have established Multi Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs) in impoverished nations and zones experiencing ongoing conflict and are in need of sponsorships in order to ensure adequate educational opportunities and other forms of humanitarian relief. This has helped improve the education of a total of over 8.8 million children in crisis zones and 2.1 million refugee children, and has raised over 1.5 billion in funds³⁴ to support the learning of youth and other vulnerable individuals who have been previously denied this fundamental right. Moreover, they have funded the training of almost 150,000 teachers in 43 crisis affected countries in order to facilitate efforts to educate children in said areas. 75,000 teachers were trained to manage various psychological and mental health related issues which could arise in situations where learners have trauma responses³⁵.

RELEVANT UN TREATIES CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted in 1989, and was established in order to protect and promote the rights of all children during circumstances where their freedom is put at risk. Particular articles written in the convention are especially crucial to be upheld during periods of conflict, as they provide the necessary framework for governments to prioritise the rights of children, including

³⁴ *Education in Emergencies, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.*

³⁵ "Education Cannot Wait | EAA Observatory." *Educationaboveall.org*, 2024, policy-hub.educationaboveall.org/solution/education-cannot-wait?utm_source=chatgpt.com. Accessed 28 Oct. 2025.



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the right of access to education, in order for their development and protection to be sustained under any circumstance³⁶. Namely, Article 28 encourages the creation of different forms of education in order to ensure that education is available and accessible to every child, by ensuring the presence of free education or additional funding to support existing evidence. The dignity of children during conflict periods are further advocated for in Article 38, which also supports that Humanitarian law should be mandatory and respected even during times of armed conflict, to make sure that measures are being taken to protect children during those times³⁷. Even though Articles 28 and 38 encourages the creation of different forms of education in order to ensure that education is available and accessible to every child, there is a limitation in enforcement. By ensuring the presence of free education or additional funding to support existing evidence, there's no actual punishment or sometimes even a consideration about these educational rights, and non-state armed groups aren't legally bound by the convention, meaning that children's rights still end up being ignored in practice despite all attempts.

Fourth Geneva Convention

The Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted in 1949, was established in order to ensure that in times of instability where certain human rights are suspended, the fundamental right to education is sustained. It sets out the framework for guaranteeing humane treatment for all vulnerable minority groups, to make sure that the well being of non-combatants isn't sacrificed³⁸. Article 25 of said convention advocates for the continuation of education for children in crisis and conflict zones, as it is considered to be a key service and right which should be preserved even during periods of war.

³⁶ UNICEF. "About the Convention on the Rights of the Child." *UNICEF Canada : No Child Too Far*, 2000, www.unicef.ca/en/policy-advocacy-for-children/about-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child.

³⁷ [Icrc.org](http://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-50/commentary/1958?activeTab=), 2025, ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-50/commentary/1958?activeTab=. Accessed 28 Oct. 2025.

³⁸ Wikipedia Contributors. "Fourth Geneva Convention." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 1 Oct. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Geneva_Convention.



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Unfortunately, the enforcement power of this convention is relatively weak, as it is applicable to only areas which are occupied, and exclusively if the occupier is willing to agree³⁹.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Formally agreed upon on the 16th of December 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognises the importance of education in upholding and strengthening human rights, as well as contributing to a more equitable society. It emphasises the need for education to be non excludable to all individuals, ensuring the absence of any form of discrimination. Article 13 of the covenant states how education must be accessible to all, and available in all circumstances. Among the key limitations of this treaty is the broadness and lack of specificity concerning its provisions on education, due to the fact that the guideline on how to deal with challenges isn't specific to varying situations where action is needed.

Security Council 1998 Resolution

Formally ratified in 1998, this security Council resolution recognises how armed conflicts can have detrimental effects on children, as they present a challenge for the proper functioning of educational systems. Specifically, it severely criticises purposeful attacks on schools which in turn results in legal pressure to protect infrastructure which is necessary for education⁴⁰. Moreover, it orders for the demobilisation of child soldiers in order to allow them to be reintegrated to the educational environment. Regrettably, the resolution is largely voluntary and therefore less effective, due to the fact that there is no binding legal consequence on anyone who fails to appropriately comply with the standards it sets.

³⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross. "Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949." *Icrc.org*, 12 Aug. 1949, ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949.

⁴⁰ United Nations. "Security Council." *Main.un.org*, 2025, main.un.org/securitycouncil/en.



UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations

Lastly, the UN resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency situations deeply resonates with the issue proposed, as it recognises the importance of upholding the fundamental right to education during conflict periods. It achieves this by encouraging states to allocate sufficient resources in order to support the right to education, as an effective strategy to support the continuation of schooling in situations where the government prioritises the allocation of funds and other resources for other purposes⁴¹. Furthermore, this resolution calls for the adaptation of curricula and the adequate training of teachers in order for them to be able to cater to the specific educational and psychological needs of children during conflict periods so that their education is sustained and improved⁴².

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Save the Children

Save the Children is an NGO organisation, founded in the UK in 1919. The main goal of the organisation is to raise funds via various initiatives to contribute to the improvement of opportunities for children worldwide. This finance is allocated to creating better educational, healthcare, and economic opportunities to children affected by conflicts, Its key objective was to "provide relief to children suffering the effects of war", and their impact spanned across millions of nations. Examples of previous initiatives included but were not limited to funding in impoverished areas, in

⁴¹ United Nations. "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." *OHCHR*, United Nations, 16 Dec. 1966, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

⁴² "Document Viewer." *Un.org*, 2025, docs.un.org/en/A/RES/64/290.



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order to build schools, provide training for educational personnel, and psychological support for students. ⁴³Although having provided some of the most important and influential initiatives, the organisation has been rumored to have faced multiple internal challenges, for example financial mismanagement in the form of “fraud, bribery and theft”⁴⁴. They largely dependant on donations, which were often reactive to specific instances that gained worldwide attention, rather than having more steady and reliable funding. This limits their ability for strategic cohesion, as they can’t ensure their ability to support certain projects in the long term. ⁴⁵

Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education, founded in 2002, has since become the largest global fund dedicated to providing quality education to children in lower income countries. It largely directs its funds to “countries characterized by extreme poverty or conflict”, in order to improve “access, learning and equity” to promote long term resilience rather than short term relief⁴⁶. As of October 2023, had raised over \$20 million in funds to support education of over 280,000 children in 6 of Sudan’s most affected states for the course of 18 months after the conflict⁴⁷. Although constituting an impressive amount, these funds are quite limited considering the scale of disaster, and there are multiple issues concerning the ability of these resources to reach populations in more remote areas. Also, since this amount only accounted for accelerated funding, it does not ensure future continuation of education.

⁴³ Wikipedia Contributors. “Save the Children.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Mar. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Save_the_Children.

⁴⁴ Save the Children International. *Global Accountability Report 2016/2017*. Save the Children International, 2018, www.savethechildren.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads_Dokumente/Berichte_Studien/2018/StC-Global-Accountability-Report2016-2017.pdf. Accessed 23 Dec. 2025.

⁴⁵ *ibid*.

⁴⁶ “About GPE | Who We Are | Global Partnership for Education.” *Www.globalpartnership.org*, www.globalpartnership.org/who-we-are/about-gpe.

⁴⁷ “Sudan: \$20 Million to Support Emergency Education Needs from the Global Partnership for Education | Global Partnership for Education.” *Global Partnership for Education*, 2023, www.globalpartnership.org/news/sudan-20-million-support-emergency-education-needs-global-partnership-education?.



The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC, according to its own definition, is “an independent organisation ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for people affected by armed conflict and other violence”. Their primary focus is humanitarian protection, but they also have educational support programmes aimed at the restoration of schooling in conflict ridden areas. They view education as a necessary variable for protecting human dignity in warzones⁴⁸. In 2021, the ICRC launched the “Access to Education” strategy which spans from 2021 to 2026, which aims to improve and facilitate access to education in conflict zones. The aims of these initiatives are to change the attitudes of individuals who have influence over military affairs on a national level to reduce the amount of attacks which occur in schools, assure vulnerable individuals a right to education, and aim to prioritise education in legal proceedings⁴⁹.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Remote learning strategies

In areas which are affected by conflict and other forms of violence, access to educational facilities may be disrupted, making traditional schooling methods inaccessible and unattainable. Therefore, it is essential that children are able to retrieve their education in other ways so that they can continue to pursue their learning. Moreover, displacement from one's home when considered necessary may impede upon their ability to access a school environment, setting a geographical barrier for one's education. Therefore, virtual learning strategies could be seen as ideal for those who are unable to attend a physical learning environment, as it gives them the opportunity to benefit from acquiring the same knowledge and information from a

⁴⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). “About Us.” *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 17 Dec. 2023, www.icrc.org/en/about-international-committee-red-cross-icrc.

⁴⁹ “ICRC Launches Its New 2021-2026 Strategy on Access to Education.” *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 9 Sept. 2021, www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-new-strategy-access-education?



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safer setting. While forms of online learning which require accessibility to a personal device may be seen as an ideal strategy for remote learning when funding is available, it may be seen as impossible or unreasonable for certain governments to make this large scale investment during vulnerable periods. This means that solutions like having radio or television broadcasting educational channels could be a more scalable and accessible mechanism of distributing information to a wider variety of audiences. In addition, remote learning doesn't have to be restricted to only technological means. Governments could introduce new mechanisms to deliver textbooks, worksheets or other resources to homes or shelters in order to reduce reliance on internet access. Therefore, all individuals will be given the opportunity to acquire an education despite adversity or socioeconomic differences.

Protecting schools from attack

The destruction of educational infrastructure in conflict zones may cause significant disruptions to the educational procedure, which is especially negative due to the fact that schools are increasingly targeted during periods of armed conflict. When schools are continuously attacked, children are prevented from attending, causing a decline in the number of individuals who continue to pursue their education. In addition, schools don't only give children foundational knowledge and fundamental understanding, but they also educate them on their rights and privileges. Therefore, being able to physically attend a school setting may decrease the number of child marriages and underage army recruitment as they are now able to achieve financial independence, giving the opportunity to students to continue pursuing an education. In order for this to happen, multiple measures need to be taken in order to ensure that schools do not become military targets. Initially, it is crucial that military facilities are located at a distance from educational ones, in order to avoid any possible attacks. Moreover, governments should refrain from using school buildings as locations for military headquarters or other similar uses, as well as providing possible protection for academic institutions which could be in risk of possible attacks.



General community involvement in education

One of the major challenges surrounding the pursuit of education during times of emergency is its continuation in periods of time where conflict appears to be more intense. This is due to the fact that the momentary lack of involvement may result in individuals missing out on crucial aspects of schooling, which may in turn decrease their motivation to engage in any other form of academic advancement (including pursuing higher education). Therefore, general community involvement could be a crucial manner of ensuring that there is sustained engagement with learning material. The efforts of entire groups of people in ensuring that children continue to regularly attend school even during difficult times could be seen as a form of resilience from the education system to ongoing disruptions.

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