

**Forum:** The First General Assembly

**Issue:** Exploring Measures to Promote Education for Disarmament in War-Torn Areas

**Student officers:** Arwa Hassan and Farah Ashraf

**Position:** Chairs

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## Introduction

Throughout the world, there are countless countries experiencing armed conflict. Not only does such conflict completely demolish the country's present economy and infrastructure, it also destroys its future by preventing its children from getting an education. Those war torn areas are filled with weaponry and tension that causes stress and danger to the students. Students are risking their life to receive an education, constantly navigating through armed conflict for their education. The lack of education in such countries is extremely detrimental to the future of the country and prevents civilians from improving their situation. If the children are unable to gain a stable and adequate education, they will not be able to acquire higher education or a secure job. This will lead the current and future generations to stay in poverty, unable to improve their conditions and forced to withstand the conflict in the area. Even if the conflicts were to end, the civilians will be unable to rebuild their nation without further conflict since they lack the education to do so. Moreover, the loss of education in war torn countries increases the vulnerabilities experienced by their youth. Adolescents in such countries have increased possibility of being enlisted in rebel militias which increase the conflict, being forced into early marriage, and being used as child labor. Those children lack the education to know better, and can easily be influenced in the aforementioned sectors.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Armed conflict:** use of armed force between two or more organized groups.

**Disarmament Education:** education related to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.

**Militia groups:** organized groups of individuals who operate outside the regular military or law enforcement structures.

## Key Issues

### Children's Safety

Providing an education to children in war torn areas puts children in danger. Scholars are constantly threatened with the possibility of bombings, attacks on the learning environment, gender based violence etc. Moreover, it might be difficult for them to arrive to the learning environment either due to unsafe/ unavailable transportation, or due to forced displacement. Moreover, the schools or learning spaces may not be used for their intended functionality. Such spaces may be used as camps for militia groups or shelter spaces for civilians. Additionally, the lack of security in educational spaces increases the dangers of childrens' pursuit of education. Security measures are either nonexistent or lacking in schools which endangers students and staff.

## **Lack of Resources**

The situation in war torn countries dictates the amount of resources that are available for education. As aforementioned, educational centers can be repurposed into shelters which lowers the capabilities of using them for education. Moreover, during times of conflict, there is a shortage of educators and the ones available may be constantly displaced due to the tense situation. Textbooks are also extremely scarce. Without such basic requirements for education, it is an extremely difficult task to educate the youth while struggling to stay safe.

## **Armed Recruitment of Children**

Due to the tense environment and lack of education, adolescents may be influenced into becoming recruited by militant groups. They might see it as the only way to honor their country (due to the lack of education) or as the only purpose they can serve. Youth may be indoctrinated by the armed groups which will expose them to violence, exploitation and long term psychological and physical health consequences. Moreover, they will remain unable to gain an education which will perpetuate the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and dependence on the militia groups.

## **Major Parties and Their Views**

### **Congo**

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been experiencing armed conflict since the First Congo War in 1996. It has experienced major political instability and economic unrest which is further exacerbated by the lack of education received. About 750,000 children have been disrupted.

Between January of 2022 and March of 2023, at least 2,100 schools in North Kivu and Ituri provinces had to stop operations according to UNICEF.

### **Ukraine**

Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the situation has been unstable and education systems have been disrupted. The children of Ukraine have struggled due to that and are currently showing signs of learning loss in the Ukrainian language, reading and mathematics. Due to the vulnerable state Ukraine's children are currently in, it is imperative that support is lent to them and education systems are established in the war torn areas.

### **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

As a partnership between governments, the Global Partnership for Education is committed to ensuring quality education is received. That is achieved by mobilizing financing to allow countries' execution of their educational plans; strengthening educational systems by teacher training, curriculum development and school infrastructure improvement; promoting equity in education; and advocating for increased investment in education. Currently, the partnership supports education in over 70 countries.

### **The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund**

The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund was established in 2016 to ensure youth affected by crises (natural disasters, armed conflict etc.) are able to receive the education they deserve. The main focuses of the fund are providing rapid responses to novel crises to ensure education is

continued, investing for multiple years to ensure the advancement of education in the invested areas, and advocating for prioritizing education for resource mobilization.

## Timeline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1945	Education for All (EFA) movement by UNESCO	The EFA movement has successfully supplied countries, especially those in poorer regions, with clear goals and frameworks to ensure every child receives an education.
2002	Education for All Fast Track Initiative	This global partnership was greatly beneficial and was able to increase primary enrollment in ten out of eleven countries, increase completion rates and significantly decrease the gender disparity in education.

2012	The Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)	Its success has varied by country and is highly dependent on the political commitment and resource allocation of each country.
2015	Safe Schools Declaration	The declaration endorsed and brought the importance of a framework for education to attention

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### Education for All (EFA) Movement

The Education for All Movement is a global movement initiated by UNESCO that aimed to solve educational issues faced by adults and children by 2015. In 1945, the founding countries of UNESCO signed a constitution affirming that education is a right for all. The EFA Movement had 6 goals which ranged from ensuring that all children have equal access to quality education for free to achieving gender equality in education by 2015. The EFA Movement has been able to increase primary education's enrollment rates and make education accessible in many countries.

### The Global Education First Initiative (GEFI)

Launched in September of 2012 and led by United Nations Secretary-General United Nations Ban Ki-moon, the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) advocates for the

transformative power of education and its ability to shape a bright future. The aim of the initiative is to enable global action and political commitment to address the global education crisis. It focuses on ensuring every child is enrolled in school and that they are receiving a quality education. Its success has varied by country, though, and is highly dependent on the political commitment and resource allocation of each country.

### **Safe Schools Declaration**

The Safe Schools Declaration is an intergovernmental political commitment launched in 2015 that seeks the protection of children as they receive an education. The declaration emphasizes the importance of safeguarding education and ensuring it is constantly accessible especially during times of conflict. The declaration calls for the following measures: prevention of attacks on schools (by developing policies and guidelines to protect schools from military use and attack), mitigation of attack impact (ensuring continuity of education and providing support for teachers and students), uphold of accountability and justice (reparations for victims) and offer of international assistance. Overall, the declaration has increased the awareness of the importance of education in areas of conflict, as well as, the importance of preventive and protective safety measures.

### **Possible Solutions**

Due to the aforementioned importances of education to ensure the safeguarded livelihoods of today's youth and the future of the country, it is imperative that solutions are implemented in a timely manner. Such solutions include, but are not limited to, the following: prioritizing education in post conflict reconstruction plans and mobilizing resources towards it,

implementing disarmament education in the educational curricula, proposing and implementing measures to ensure military groups do not target or use schools for armed conflict and providing teacher training programs so teachers are equipped with the necessary skills for navigating education in conflict affect areas.

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