

Committee: United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees
Topic: Ensuring Refugees Access to Education and Employment
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Abstract:

Around the world refugees and many displaced people around the world always face an issue that impacts their lives, and futures heavily without access to education and employment it leaves children and families struggling and leaves them in severe poverty. Many refugee children cannot attend local schools because they lack official documents, do not speak the local language, or cannot afford the fees due to a lack of education which can leave children struggling in their futures and lives and struggle in life without a clear path or roadway. At the same time, refugee adults often face strict laws that prevent them from getting work permits which forces them to take low paying, unsafe jobs, or rely on illegal work that would impact them soon. Without education and workforce families soon start to struggle economically, leave children without a clear path to their futures, to fix and prevent issues like this the UNHCR , organizations, and other countries decided they needed to let let refugee children into public schools, and give adults the legal right to work so they can build stable, independent lives.

Major Countries/ Organizations Involved:

United Nations High Commissioner Refugees(UNHCR): The UNHCR was responsible for coordinating global efforts for the protection of refugees, and worked with the nations to break down administrative barriers, advocate for work rights, and run projects like the Refugee Education 2030 Strategy to increase education for refugee children.

International Labor Organization(ILO): The ILO focused on granting adult refugees the legal right to work to prevent poverty and any negative threat to the adult refugees.

United Nations Children Fund(UNICEF): UNICEF managed and handled the education issue by unifying refugee children into public schools to pursue education. UNICEF also funded programs for families to cover school supplies, and fees. UNICEF also worked with the government to enroll children who lack birth certificates or official transcripts into schools.

Colombia: Colombia handled the employment issue by introducing the Temporary Protection Status (ETPV) framework. This move gave more than two million displaced Venezuelans legal residency permits. The ETPV allowed adult refugees to fully join the job market. They can now sign work contracts and use banking services. This change gives them access to work and financial systems in Colombia. It also helps them build a stable life.

Turkey: Turkey handled the issue of education and employment by unifying Syrian children into its national public school while using language programs like PIKTES to help the Syrian children learn and understand Turkish. Turkey handled the employment issue by setting up a framework that allowed employers to apply for Syrian work permits. This had great influence and impact to the point that rules were expanded to reduce informal labor and make refugees access to jobs easier.

Jordan: Jordan also handled the issue of education and employment by signing the landmark Jordan Compact in 2016. This agreement reduced work permit fees for refugees in key areas such as agriculture and manufacturing. In return Jordan received trade benefits. In education Jordan allowed refugee children to attend schools without any cost making the lives of the children's family and the child's future much easier.

Past UN Action

Refugee convention: the law says that refugee kids should get the same access to public schools as normal citizens, adult refugees have the legal right to work so they can take care of themselves and their families.

Global Compact on Refugees: an agreement where countries realized that a few host nations were doing all the work, so it focuses on finding ways to help refugees become independent through job training so they don't always have to reply on charity

Sustainable Development Goals: a list of goals the UN wants to hit by 2030. This includes a goal all about making sure everyone gets a good quality education, and helping people find decent safe jobs for refugees

Stances / Country position

Host Countries (Colombia, Turkey, Jordan): These countries take in the most refugees because they are right next to conflicted zones. Their public schools are usually completely packed and jobs are hard to find. They try to help, but they constantly demand that richer nations send them more money to help cover the costs.

Donor Countries (US, EU): These countries don't host as many refugees but they write checks to fund the UNHCR and UNICEF. They usually pressure host countries to let refugees get work permits immediately.

Developing Nations: some countries are worried that if they open up their job markets to thousands of refugees, that it will take away from their own struggling citizens or decrease wages. So they are often strict about keeping refugees out of the normal workforce.

Why Education is hard to Access

Language Barrier: When kids flee to a new country, they often don't speak the language used in the local schools. Sitting in a classroom where you don't understand the teacher makes it almost impossible to learn.

Missing Records: families usually have to run away from danger with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They don't have time to grab birth certificates or school report cards. Many schools won't let kids enroll without this official paperwork.

Hidden costs: even if a public school is technically free, parents still have to pay for uniform textbooks, notebooks, and bus rides. If the parents aren't allowed to work, they simply can't afford these extras

Why Employment is Hard to Access

Unrecognized Degrees: if an adult refugee was a doctor or engineer in their home country, their degrees and licenses are usually not accepted in the new country. So highly skilled people are forced into low paying manual labor jobs

Law: in many countries its legal for refugees to live there but illegal to work

Exploitation: Because the refugees try to survive, they are forced to take illegal dangerous jobs, which bosses easily underpay them and force them to work long hours, putting them in dangerous conditions as the refugees cant go to the police for help.

Questions to Address

1. How can public schools quickly register refugee kids if they had to flee their homes without their birth certificates or school transcript?

2. What can we do to convince local companies to hire refugees legally instead of giving them dangerous hidden jobs?

3. How can international Organizations help host cities with overcrowded classrooms and shortage of teachers?

4. What are some good ways to help refugee kids learn the local language quickly so they don't fail any classes?

5. How can we make sure refugee women have equal access to safe jobs and are not exploited?