

LmunA 2024

# Research report

Forum: The Third General Assembly  
Issue: Exploring the challenges faced by refugees in  
accessing education  
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Position: President



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Lorentz Lyceum  
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### Introduction

The UNHCR states that there are more than 120 million forcibly displaced people in the world in May 2024. A large part of this group is internally displaced, but over 40 million people are refugees living in a different country. 73% of all these aforementioned people come from just five countries. (UNHCR, “Refugee Statistics | USA for UNHCR”) They are faced with several challenges, all as they look for the same safety and security we all guaranteed. An example and the main focus of this research report is education.

Education guides people as they grow up and learn to manage and navigate society. It plays an essential role in the process of life and is important for all people. It also helps with a country's economy and general situation. Sadly, quality education is still not accessible to everybody, and a large portion of the world's population is left behind in this aspect. (Charizze Abulencia)

It is, however, incredibly important everybody has the same access to this way of ensuring their safe future. Especially refugees, already a more fragile minority, deserve and should be provided with the opportunity to have proper education. Sadly, they face many challenges in their struggle, varying from lack of money, material or availability, and the 40% of the refugees that are children are not guaranteed to have proper education. (“Starting out - Why Education for Refugees Matters”)

Hopefully, this research report will provide the delegates with enough information to help them get started on their research and guide them during the debate weekend.

### Definitions of key terms

#### Refugee

Refugees are people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.

#### Education

The process of teaching or learning, especially in a school or college, or the knowledge that you get from this.

#### Asylum seeker

A person who has left their home country as a political refugee and is seeking asylum in another. The difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is the refugee status. This is provided by governmental bodies to asylum seekers if they meet certain requirements. They then receive more rights, like the right to look for housing and education outside the refugee camp.

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## Refugee camp

Temporary facilities built to provide immediate protection and assistance to people who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution or violence.

(Cambridge Dictionary)

## General overview

Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to education. It also says that elementary education should be free and compulsory. Naturally, this did not pass without reason. Education is incredibly important in the lives of children and young adults, shaping them to become strong individuals. Not only helping with the development of social skills but also ensuring the creation of critical thinking skills and other abilities necessary for a long and wealthy life, education is fundamental in the early stages of people's lives. (UNHCR, "Education")

Taking this into consideration, refugees need to be provided with quality education. Already set back in their lives several steps, education is essential for their further development and future. People with proper education are more likely to find a job that pays enough while also being enjoyable. Overall, it simply improves people's lives as they learn about themselves and the world. For refugees, it is extra important that they receive education from the host country. The education they already have is usually of a different standard, and not viewed in the same manner. Following education in the host country helps when entering the country's ordinary society, as they are more independent and self-sufficient. Learning both the language and culture is essential to thrive in a new environment. (Benveniste et al.)

Considering the importance of education for this minority, it is sad to realize how little this facility is available. Half of school-age refugee children are not enrolled in school systems. Organisations simply cannot fulfil the demand. Though the best solution appears to be the inclusion of refugee children in normal schools in the host country (explained further in possible solutions), there are several challenges both the children and their parents face.

For one, there is a clear language barrier. This comes with a social and cultural barrier, as refugee children are used to a completely different way of life. The fact that they do not speak the local language complicates integration further, as it will take time for them to understand the curriculum and voice their requests. This social tension can cause discomfort for many of the parties involved, especially as there are not many figures that illustrate the consequences.

Furthermore, money is also a problem. Refugees usually come with only the clothes on their back and minimal luggage, which makes it difficult for children to have the right supplies to participate properly in the education provided for them. There are educational structures in place already aimed at refugee children which take most of these challenges into consideration, which makes transferring to a 'normal' school environment even more complicated.

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The responsibility to provide the money to make education possible needs to be taken up by governmental organisations. The cost is definitely not as high as one might expect, representing less than half of one per cent only of the public spending on education in a high-income country. Long-term plans should be agreed upon on a national and international level, using whatever means possible.

To conclude, there are many challenges refugees face in their battle to follow the same quality of education available to everybody else. It is incredibly important nations do their best to facilitate this process, especially considering the vast number of positive consequences not only for the individual but also for the host country.

Hopefully, this general overview has explained the issue enough so that delegates may conduct more precise research in their preparations for LMUNA 2024.

### **Major parties involved**

#### *UNHCR*

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the main organisation responsible for the rights and protection of refugees worldwide. They are therefore at the centre of this issue and possess a large amount of power to change this situation for the better. Policies created by nations in this body have a large influence on the global situation, which is why it is so important the organisation and its participating members prioritize this issue.

#### *UNICEF*

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund is the main organisation that makes it open itself to look after the forgotten children in the world. Their focus lies on the education provided to them and the obligation countries have to the minors in their care. This organization and its agreements should also be respected by nations globally, so the issue can be looked at with the necessary focus.

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#### *Afghanistan, Syria, Venezuela and Ukraine*

These four nations together are the source of most refugees in the world, all having around 6 million individuals in need of international protection. The many children that come from these countries miss out on quality education and are unable to form a better way of life. These countries have a certain interest in the topic and the delegates might want to focus on conducting thorough research, to properly present their views.

#### *Iran, Türkiye, Colombia, Germany and Pakistan*

Contrary to the aforementioned nations, these are the nations who take in a large part of the world's refugee population. They are also posed with the challenge of providing these refugees with all they might need, including education. The nations all view this topic in a different manner, and delegates might find it helpful to investigate what their country is doing to assist refugees in their struggle.

(Refugee Council of Australia)

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## Timeline of Key Events

1951                      The first Refugee Convention was accepted by the United Nations, encouraging member nations to assist any person fleeing due to events before January 1951. The Convention was accepted as a consequence of the Second World War, which had caused displacement on an incredibly large scale.

1967                      The Refugee Convention was adapted to include people fleeing events that took place from 1951 onwards, protecting a great deal more refugees.

1980s onward            After the fall of the Soviet empire, nations saw a large wave of immigrants moving away from the Eastern nations to Western countries.

2020                      During the COVID-19 pandemic, many children were set behind education-wise. This is reflected everywhere, but especially in refugee children. Some systems that had been set up are still not recovered, and many children are left with a large setback.

2022                      After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a new flood of refugees found their way into other European countries. The issue became one talked about on a large scale, bringing the discussion back to life.

(“Timeline”)

## Previous attempts to solve the issue

The UNHCR works together with many different governments with refugees under their care, doing its best to ensure all children have access to education, but sadly the goal is still far from reached. However, there are many agreements establishing the importance of education and encouraging governments to do all that lies in their ability. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is an example of such an agreement, as it points out the importance of education for refugees. The Fourth Sustainable Development Goal is targeted towards inclusive and quality education globally. (“Starting out - Why Education for Refugees Matters”)

Despite the effort that is definitely put into solving this issue, it remains unsuccessful. Many nations and organisations seem to have reached a consensus, believing that the integration of refugees in national school systems is the best way out of this situation. It has many good consequences and upsides, providing children with the necessary means to build a life in their host country while sparing the country's resources.

The solution is however not foolproof, as children likely need to learn a new language. Additionally, not all children seeking asylum in a country will be recognized as refugees. However, they still deserve quality education, so the country will have to create policies for this

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as well. Furthermore, how the local population views refugees may also have an impact, as children may not feel safe in the school environment.

To conclude, this attempt has many upsides and definitely deserves to be investigated more thoroughly. If delegates find a way to resolve the issues that arise, many more refugee children may find the education they need and deserve.

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## **Possible solutions**

As mentioned before, currently a very probable solution seems to be the inclusion of refugee children in national school systems, despite the many hurdles. Delegates should look at what these problems are and do their best to find solutions their countries might agree with. For example, language barriers can be solved with language courses, or a specific teacher, as children learn other languages much quicker at a younger age. Local opposition to the integration may be soothed with informative campaigns advocating for the rights of refugees. (Shuayb)

Resources and money are things refugees often do not have access to, which makes it harder for them to follow education. They may have trouble keeping up on the homework, as they do not have a place for these tasks. When they do not understand a subject, it will also be harder for them to get help. Delegates could think about where these things should come from—the government or international organisations. Perhaps there could be donation centres set up.

We look forward to seeing all the ideas you have come up with. We wish you the best of luck with all your research and look forward to seeing what ideas you have thought of.

## **Further reading**

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education>

This link leads to the official UNHCR website on education for refugees. It shows what they do to improve the current situation, while also providing access to more in-depth articles on different aspects.

Delegates might find the site a good place to start from after this research report, before researching more specifically after. When they do start that process, a recommendation is to look up their country in the UNHCR website. It should look like this: <https://www.unhcr.org/countries/south-sudan>, but with the delegate's country instead of South Sudan. It provides basic information that is reliable and may help during the debate.

Additionally, there may be some interesting sites in the bibliography as well, depending on the delegate's interest.

We wish you the best of luck during your preparations and look forward to seeing you at LMUNA 2024!



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