



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
16 DÍAS DE ACTIVISMO CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO
16 JOURS D'ACTIVISME CONTRE LA VIOLENCE DE GENRE

16 يوم من مكافحة العنف القائم على النوع الاجتماعي

25 November – 10 December

<http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu>



Education in Refugee & Internally Displaced (IDP) Camps

Available figures reveal there are approximately 13 million refugees and 38 million IDPs¹ around the world. These numbers will likely grow considering the horrific and continuous violence in nearly every part of the globe at present, while the plight of refugees and IDPs remain relatively invisible from the global landscape. Education in camps often goes neglected and ignored leaving millions of children and young people without safe access to quality and free education. Education is undoubtedly a fundamental human right. Yet, international actors and camp administrators in refugee and IDP camps place this right in jeopardy by not prioritizing it.

Violent conflict, environmental disasters, and immense economic and social inequalities have led millions of people to flee their homes, with many ending up in refugee and internally displaced (IDP) camps. The number of natural disasters over the decade of 2003-2013 averaged 450 per year, which compares to the mere average of 90 disasters a year in the 1970s.² There are currently 41 active conflicts as reported by IISS Armed Conflict Database,³ and when the Institute for Economics and Peace surveyed 162 countries, they found only 11 countries could be said to be free of both internal and external conflict.⁴ States where conflict is present experience extensive issues with education quality, parity, and access because state institutions are at their weakest and any available funding is dedicated to military and defense budgets.⁵ However, within refugee and IDP camps there is opportunity to improve the lives and futures of its inhabitants and enhance their homelands upon repatriation through the development of education in the camps.

Unfortunately, safe and free access to education is not a guarantee. In 2008, UNESCO reported that only 69% of primary-school-age children were enrolled in primary school in camps operated by UNHCR; that number dropped to 30% enrollment in secondary school.⁶ Furthermore, access to education in camps is not always free, children are subjected to child labor, or girls may engage in early marriages or sex to afford schooling. Safe transit to and from school should be ensured as many children are exposed to physical assault or verbal harassment. Once in the school, the concern for safety of the children persists, as schools are targets for armed attacks or militant violence and can even serve as recruiting centers.⁷

Education in refugee and IDP camps does not garner a lot of attention often due to other circumstances which require

immediate assistance, such as access to food, water, and shelter along with ways to thwart rampant diseases and the need for security. Camps have become places of permanence as conflicts drag on or rebuilding from natural disasters fall to the wayside, and priorities often don't reflect long term goals.

The barriers to a quality, safe education are vast, and in the settings of camps, the ability to report malfeasance is limited.⁸ Violence also comes from within the environment of the school from teachers and other adults themselves. Displacement offers women and girls far fewer resources and opportunities, which can leave women unprotected from increases in sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, and other human rights violations. Schools have the potential to be protective spaces, especially from sexual and gender-based violence, but investment in schools is lacking. In 2010, education only received 4% of the United Nations' body entrusted with issues concerning refugees and internally displaced people, the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees' (UNHCR), budget.⁹

Some teachers are documented perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault. Additionally, teachers have an important hand in creating and regulating the classroom space. Teachers may utilize severe forms of punishment, discriminate against marginalized groups, and reinforce dangerous behaviors in students, like the sexual or physical harassment of other students. Girls can face violence and discrimination due to their gender, facing limits on their schooling due to cultural or family pressures, lack of safety specifically for girls, or lack of safe spaces within school areas. Teachers in these settings are vastly outnumbered by students and often lack any substantive educational training. This sets the stage for schools being an unsafe place.

Schools can provide additional support otherwise not found in camps. This includes structure, a safe space, and an opportunity for a better future. Tangibly speaking, schools can provide meals for children, helping to address the issue of malnutrition, and schools are able to provide instruction on the spread and prevention of diseases affecting camp life. The benefits of investing in and protecting education in refugee camps transcend the confines of the camp itself. Without prioritizing safety, security, and adequate resourcing of education in refugee and IDP camps, international bodies and State actors shortchange young people, especially of marginalized populations, such as women and girls, of their human right to education.

Resources

- *Plan International* works to promote the rights and interests of children throughout the world. One of eight topics of concern is education. They also conduct the “Because I am a Girl” campaign that illustrates the experiences of girls throughout the world. Their work can be found here: <http://plan-international.org>.
- *Education International* focuses on the rights of children in education, gender equality, safe schools, and enabling peace through education, among other topics. Their work can be found here: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/uaas/issues_actions.
- *Educate a Child* recognizes refugee status as a major barrier to education. Their work, partnerships, and projects can be found here: <http://educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/refugees>.
- *IISS* collects figures on active conflicts, fatalities in armed conflicts, and refugees while tracking global trends. The database can be found here: <https://acd.iiss.org/en>.
- *Vision of Humanity* measures and tracks the peacefulness of each country worldwide each year. The Global Peace Index can be found here: <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#page/indexes/global-peace-index/2015>.
- *The Global Partnership for Education* tracks the progression of education quality and access through different indicators in countries in which it operates by year. The data hub can be found here: http://datahub.globalpartnership.org/#/2012/access/gross_enrollment_rateger.
- *Education for All*, a UNESCO program, issues a yearly global monitoring report focusing on barriers to achieving universal education globally.
- In 2011, the *Education for All Global Monitoring* report focused specifically on the relationship between armed conflict and education. The report can be found here: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf>.

¹ UNHCR. Internally Displaced People Figures. 2014 <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c23.html>

² Plan International (February 2014) “In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters.” <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/biag-2013-report-english.pdf>

³ International Institute for Strategic Studies. (N.d) “Armed Conflict Database.” <https://acd.iiss.org/en>

⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace. (2015) “Global Peace Index.” Vision of Humanity. <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/2014%20Global%20Peace%20Index%20REPORT.pdf>

⁵ Plan International. (February 2014) “In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters.” <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/biag-2013-report-english.pdf>

⁶ United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2011) “Education for All: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education.”: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/gmr2011-UNESDOC.pdf>

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (June 2007) “Safe Schools and Learning Environment: How to Prevent and Respond to Violence in Refugee Schools.” <http://www.unhcr.org/4677981a2.html>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Dryden- Peterson, Sarah. (November 2011) “Refugee Education.” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=4fe317589&query=education>