American Model United Nations
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Report to ECOSOC from UNESCO

on

Education in Areas of Emergency, Crisis, and Reconstruction

and

Literacy

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Introduction on Education

Education is defined by UNESCO as primary education described as five to six years of substantial study. Secondary educational systems should be supported with secondary education progress needed.

Education in areas of emergency, crisis, and reconstruction addresses the need and large capability gap member states face in the identified situations. Emergencies can destroy a member states education infrastructure; crisis can create a decentralized populace with issues of safety; and reconstruction suggests a lack of a pre-existing and legitimate educational structure. In keeping with the Dakar Framework and meeting educational goals set out by the General Assembly, the problem must be understood and action taken to improve education in an area where there is need.

In following with this approach, UNESCO will take the following approach: define problems that are not directly educational but have a profound effect on education, state the situations in which each area of the overall topic refers to with possible solutions, list the particular goals that the committee has reached which are relevant to all areas, and finally, include resolutions that have been brought to the Dias.

Education and Overarching Problems

Education is the gate through which the world must pass in order to become better through change and learning. Education has the power to decrease social and cultural injustice. Education is a right of every human. In all three specialized areas where education does not thrive there is a need for the United Nations to play a larger role and guide the world through periods of emergency, crisis, and reconstruction. All Member States hereby declare the following foundational blocks foremost in any system of education.

Health of a nation's people is paramount before education can succeed. The people must be able to go into the classroom in good health without any hindrance. Their drinking water must be clean and safe. Causes of diseases for which there are vaccinations must be combated. Awareness of AIDS is also a topic of great importance in emergency, crisis and reconstruction. Children or adults cannot go into the classroom with injury; pain decreases the effectiveness of educational efforts beyond repair. UNESCO urges ECOSOC to look at ways to increase conditions in this area especially for countries that are well below poverty levels.

Nutrition must also be a focal point in order to accomplish any type of education from literacy to areas of emergency, crisis or reconstruction. The World Food Program is a great example and we applaud the progress this program makes. A child or adult who are under nourished or suffers from famine will not be able to learn effectively. UNESCO urges ECOSOC to increase the resources of this program so that they may have a larger impact on education.

Economic issues should also stand in the spotlight. A nation not able to pay its debtors cannot allot money for education. Debt for poor countries stands as an obstacle in building member states educational systems. Aid for education that is limited to education must be increased as the world's population increases, increasing the demand for education. UNESCO calls upon ECOSOC to help create progress in the international community for economic issues and increase the budget of UNESCO for continued support for growing educational programs.

Social issues must also be recognized and addressed as they vary from country to country. The abuse of young women and their extortion along with mistreatment of women must be addressed. The social structures of individual societies must also be used in order to create the most effective solution to the educational problem. UNESCO encourages ECOSOC and member states to take a larger role in this area instead of relying on NGOs and other groups.

War and strife also affect the ability for people of member states to be educated. A classroom that is safe is a classroom in which education can occur. UNESCO strongly urges member states to push for peace in order to facilitate education.

Education in Areas of Emergency

Addressing education in areas of emergency is important to meeting the goals of the Dakar Framework and for continued education in the world. Emergency situations defined by UNESCO as natural disasters and acts of nature impose a force that can significantly stunt a nation's education system even if the system is well established. Examples of emergencies are the tsunamis of 2004, hurricanes through the Caribbean countries and the Gulf of Mexico, earthquakes, volcanoes, and any other unforeseen act of nature. UNESCO draws attention to the importance of immediately responding to these situations. The aid and efforts of member states to the 2004 Asian tsunami should act as an example of what can be done.

The first issue that must be addressed is the direct effects of emergencies. Construction material, money, and food aid must be immediately raised and given by member states that are not affected. The countries must be able to gain a sense of order before education can be rebuilt. UNESCO suggests that NGOs lead the front in raising awareness of areas where charity could play a large role in aid.

In addition to these efforts new approaches to education must be used in order to create an even more effective response. UNESCO calls on member states, NGOs, and Philosophers without Borders, an NGO, to lead the way through the retraining process. UNESCO urges the "teach the teachers" method be used with the "Teacher Emergency Package" model as a central tool. UNESCO repeats the importance of getting teachers, classrooms, and students back in the classroom no matter where it is or the construction.

Member states must also realize the ability of nations to fall backwards in their progress to increase education. All schools and education areas should have a place of shelter for their students to protect them from bodily harm. Member states must also take action to build supplies to prepare for such events. UNESCO urges member states to create a reserve to use only in emergencies in which the reserve will help re-supply classrooms in both supplies and materials to include books, paper, and writing utensils to maintain their education systems no matter how developed or under developed. UNESCO recognizes the difficulty of this in developing member states

The family and societal structure is of foremost importance and must also be central in the area of emergencies. Not only will familiar people and culture help facilitate the learning process but after an emergency it creates a structure that can be used to help children cope with what has happened.

The international community must also pull together, as they have in the past, in helping receptive member states recover from situations which are caused by unforeseen events.

Education in Areas of Crisis

Addressing education in areas of crisis allows UNESCO to address education in

areas of the world where education is forgotten. An area of crisis is defined by UNESCO as any man made obstacle to education such as war or genocide and cultural problems. It is important to address theses areas because they create an issue where a generation of children can lose out on education. This loss of a generation repeats itself with the children of those affected. UNESCO suggests that this is the most prevalent problem in education faced today.

War, genocide, and cultural problems all have similar problems: an environment that is hostile to a safe learning environment, an environment where survival takes precedence, an environment where the facilities are not available, an environment where people are living in substandard conditions, and an environment not in the control of those who wish to teach. Many solutions work in many situations and a central structure will lead itself to a focused effort.

The idea of crisis and education is starkly irreconcilable. However, UNESCO suggests that we not stray from this area as it is possible for the biggest turn around to take place here. Areas such as the Darfur region within Sudan are perfect working areas to take on this challenge.

UNESCO feels that it will be very hard to actually address education in countries currently in war or strife situations. The focus must fall on those who are displaced as this is the most likely area in which to effect change.

Change will come by utilizing the resources at hand and readily available. The large number of women who are displaced should play a central role. Teaching them to teach will create jobs to help sustain families, give peoples in areas of crisis a tool for furthering their development, and create a new arm that is forgotten especially in displaced and refugee problem solving.

UNESCO strongly recognizes that many member states have different concerns in the area of crisis, and a solution must be flexible.

Education in Area's of Reconstruction

Education in areas of reconstruction can be dealth with in many of the same ways as in education in areas of emergency. Education during reconstruction is defined by UNESCO as the period of time following a crisis in which an education infrastructure

must be rebuilt. An example would be the member states of Lebanon and Haiti in which crisis has receded and construction can now begin. For education to be sustainable, structures for education must be present.

UNESCO encourages member states to continue efforts in education aid. When a member state emerges from crisis volunteerism and financial aid for reconstruction must not forget about education. Member states must have classrooms to teach in and books to read. Education is necessary for a member state to be able to stand on its own and sustain itself in the growing global market.

UNESCO emphasizes the focus during reconstruction must fall on infrastructure. Electricity is needed in classrooms in order to introduce technology. Educational physical premises, that can become a central point of the community, are needed. Materials involved in teaching, such as books and notebooks, must also be in the classroom.

The debt of a country must also be considered when discussing education in areas of reconstruction. If a member state has limited funding, then education will not permeate as an area of focus. Debt relief of the member states with the lowest educational numbers, for the purpose of education, should be considered.

UNESCO also suggests developed member states with very high educational levels donate culturally neutral material, that are no more than ten years old, to help facilitate learning in countries with low education rates. Materials ten years old are still acceptable in situations where simply getting books and materials is a struggle.

Goals on Education in Emergencies, Crisis, and Reconstruction

- Create and sustain a program which urges member states, NGOs, and especially Philosophers without Borders, an NGO, to lead a program with a "Teach the Teachers" structure, using the "Teacher Emergency Package" resource as a tool, aimed at displaced peoples and refugees with financial

support and leadership from ECOSOC.

● Foster a movement to reduce debt for the member states with the lowest education rates and limit reduced debt to relief for educational purposes with reports on spending issued to UNESCO.

● Create an organizational structure to help focus relief after emergencies.

● Create a program in which culturally neatrual scholastic resources are shared from educated member states to member states with the lowest education levels.

● Urge ECOSOC to increase funding for the World Food Program.

● Urge ECOSOC to increase UNESCO's budget to better facilitate growth in education programs.

● Create motivation for member states, NGOs and other organizations to develop programs in education in the areas of emergency, crisis and reconstruction following the example of resolution UNESCO/I/1.

● Create and use educational systems to help decrease educational inequalities of women and children, which also fight social injustice.

● Urge NGOs to form organizations focused on rebuilding educational infrastructure in member states which are in crisis and post crisis.

● Further develop the "Teacher Emergancy Package" resource to increase its effectiveness.

● Meet the standard of primary education in every member state with growth to ensure secondary education access.

● Develop educational programs that address situations of education in areas of emergency, crisis and reconstruction.

Actions Taken on Education in Areas of Emergency, Crisis and Reconstruction

In passing resolution UNESCO/I/1, UNESCO takes the action of forming a Regional Emergency Education Partnership, a voluntary partnership specializing in regions that experience or have experienced natural disasters. The partnership will focus on, but is not limited to, teachers, school supplies, and reconstruction costs. This action

also establishes a reporting mechanism for member states to list needs. UNESCO will reserve the ability to have input in the processes established by this resolution.

In passing resolution UNESCO/I/2, UNESCO encourages educational systems to be reformed to better deal with refugee problems and displaced peoples. The resolution takes the action of increasing funding for mobile education programs that focus on the problems of refugees and displaced peoples. The resolution encourages member states within regional closeness to provide primary assistance when possible. Also, the resolution increases the coordination between the United Nations and other organizations.

In passing resolution UNESCO/I/3, UNESCO calls upon member states to provide basic transportation to educational facilities. The resolution allows for eligibility to be based upon request by the state, provided it is in an area of emergency, crisis or reconstruction. The resolution also calls for the transportation to fit the needs of the geographic region.

In passing resolution UNESCO/I/4, UNESCO supports the expansion of DDRR programs with an emphasis on formal and non-formal training targeted at the education of former child soldiers. The resolution encourages further funding of vocational and training programs in this area and urges the establishment of a special committee to oversee the funding of former child soldiers' education programs. The resolution also urges special focus be made on female former child soldier as many undergo sexual exploitation.

Introduction on Literacy

UNESCO feels literacy is an absolute prerequisite to accomplish sustainable development as outlined in The Millennium Development Goals. Literacy is 'a person's ability to read and write, with understanding, a simple statement about one's everyday life', as traditionally defined by UNESCO. To further define and attain a higher standard of literacy, UNESCO sets forth seven thermes most impacting literacy.

ʔGender Equality
> We believe equal opportunities in formal and non-formal learning should be available for all girls and boys, women and men.

ʔHIV/AIDS
> Given the impact of the epidemic worldwide, the role of literacy and non-formal education needs to be fully acknowledged and promoted as part of the overall response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

ʔInformation & Communication Technologies
> The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in and for education is rapidly expanding in many countries, and is now seen worldwide as both a necessity and an opportunity.

ʔLife Skills
> Integrating a life skills approach within non-formal education and literacy programms refers to a process, a new culture of learning, which fosters the acquisition of knowledge, values, and attitudes.

ʔMicro-finance
> Microfinance Institutions (MFI) have demonstrated in different parts of the world the potential power of well-directed, and well-managed micro-financial services in improving the lives of people in impoverished areas.

ʔNon-formal Education
> Non-formal education may take place both within and outside educational institutions, and may cater to people of all ages. It may cover education programmes to impact adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture.

ʔPoverty Reduction
> To respond effectively to the challenging task of poverty reduction, a holistic approach with concerted and coherent consultation, planning, and action is necessary at global, national and local level simultaneously.

Problems and Current Status

Illiteracy is a problem that currently plagues the world. There are 780,925,967 illiterate people in the world, of that 64% are female. Between the ages of 15-24, 139,013,662 people are illiterate, of which 62% are female. The regions of the world show different percentages of literacy as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1-What percentage of the adult population is considered literate in different regions of the world[1]
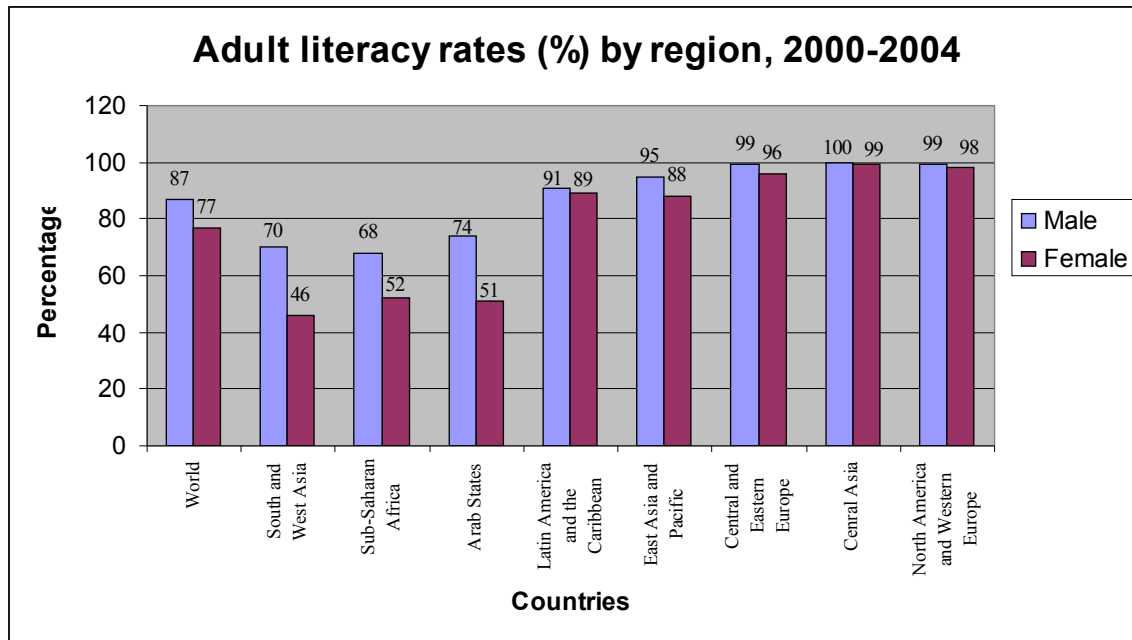
The South and West Asian region shows literacy rates lower than the world average and quite a great disparity between the literacy rates of males and females. Though this region is actively pursuing literacy programs, the member states face significant barriers including child labor, human trafficking, and unequal opportunities for men and women. This area has tried to implement food for education programs, stipends for bigger families, and plans of action against human trafficking to help increase the literacy rates.

The Sub-Saharan African region also shows a lower than average literacy rate and disparity between males and females. This is due to problems such as poverty, disease, war, limited teacher resources, and gender inequality. Some Sub-Saharan African states, such as Sierra Leon and Guinea-Bissau have failed at numerous attempts to correct literacy rates, while other African states, such as Namibia, Ghana, Algeria, and Congo have succeeded with support of the government and the United Nations.

Though Arab states show a lower than world average literacy rate and a disparity between males and females, these numbers reflect recent advancements in literacy. Disparity exists between the literacy in urban and rural regions and educating the people in rural areas poses a problem for this region. A disparity also exists between the

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1   UNESCO Institute for Satistics, literacy estimates, 2005

wealthier and poorer states, as shown with 83.7% literacy in Kuwait and the 51.7% literacy in Morocco. The Arab states believe in utilizing computer technology as a method of increasing literacy and are attempting to utilize neighboring states for support for financial programs to help increase literacy.

The Latin America and Caribbean region have an above average literacy rate and shows near equality between men and women. While it may appear the literacy is high in this region, there is great disparity between member states. While Costa Rica has a 96% literacy rate, Haiti has a 52% literacy rate. There is also a great disparity between the rural and urban areas of these member states.

East Asia and the Pacific region shows very high literacy rates and equality between males and females.

Though Central and Eastern Europe shows high literacy rates and equality between males and females, concerns involving disparity between rural and urban areas, adult illiteracy, an irregular education system due to many different languages, and gender inequality still exist in certain member states. The region has been trying to utilize local governments and national organizations to assist with problems and concerns that are encountered.

Central Asia shows excellent literacy rates and almost identical literacy rates between males and females.

North America and the Western European region shows high literacy rates and gender equality. This has been accomplished through programs that implement higher standards in the schools. They also promote teacher education as well as communication between students, teachers, and parents.

Solutions and Actions Taken

We call upon governments to provide at least six years of free and equal primary education, as well as the development of national education plans in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action. We urge for fuller implementation of information technologies to advance literacy and public education as well as draw attention and encourage assistance to the "$100 PC" project. Further we appeal for governments and economic and financial institutions to lend greater monetary and material support to the efforts to increase literacy[2].

We approved the formation of a committee to select the 45 member states with the lowest literacy rates and donate $80,000 to 15 of the member states every two years. One country from every region will be represented according to need. We do require the donated money be spent on teacher training, construction of schools, school supplies and other substantive educational funding and suggest teacher training be conducted with regional allies[3].

We call upon member states, NGOs, and private organizations to implement and support the Open Learning Network by providing needed supplies and equipment that will be allocated and monitored by UNESCO. We believe these Open Learning Networks will decrease gender gaps and increase education for women[4].

We call for the training of individuals for the purpose of increasing basic literacy and promote gender equality. We believe this is only possibly if we educate at the community level. The program recognizes the content involved while training the teachers must be culturally sensitive. The goal is that this program would become self-sufficient[5].

We endorse the native language literacy programs already in place and funded by NGOs and request the expansion of these programs[6].

We also would like to fund governments in their attempt to pay teacher salaries an build schools in their attempt to obtain other relevant literacy resources[7].

We believe that UNESCO should take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalyzing the activities undertaken at the international level within the framework of the Decade of Literacy. We also believe an emphasis should be placed on the Literacy Initiative For Employment program and urge member states to attend the meetings. Equal opportunities for women should be strongly stressed[8].

We urge a renewed partnership with the World Food Program to help provide nutrition to children, which is an important facet of education. We reinforce the necessityof nutritional programs in the formation of educational programs

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2   Resolution II/1
3   Resolution II/2
4   Resolution II/3
5   Resolution II/4
6   Resolution II/5
7   Resolution II/6
8   Resolution II/7