

GCMUN'24

Committee : *United Nations Children's Fund*

Agenda : *Ensuring Quality Education for all in
Crisis Zone*

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

I hope you have fun in the committee, engage in thoughtful conversations, deepen your knowledge on this significant topic with a worldwide impact, and leave the committee as global people with a global outlook.

We really look forward to witness the *original arguments, insightful discussion, and debate* you will provide! We want your time at GCMUN'24 to rank among your most treasured conferences.

Every member state is required to safeguard global peace and security (*a myth*) as well as guarantee everyone's respect and dignity. We anticipate that delegates in this conference will indulge in a *very technical and solution-oriented* discussion which address and cater to the *threshold* of the issue.

This study guide shall be a torch-bearer for you, to understand the basic concepts and to kick start your research, such that you can understand the agenda comprehensively and develop your own views to support the prerogative of the states which you shall be representing. While, the committee would delve purely into academic discussion and debate neglecting the rhetorical debate. Your primary duty is to understand the problem, propose a pragmatic solution that can be implemented under the powers and functions of UNICEF.

Overall, we believe that this problem is very endowed for global policy action and that it is one that is especially cognizable. We anticipate that every one of you will develop intellectually throughout the conference and meet new people. We are very thrilled to meet each of you!

ALL THE BEST!

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ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

UNICEF originally called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in full, is now officially United Nations Children's Fund. It is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. UNICEF's activities include providing immunizations and disease prevention, administering treatment for children and mothers with HIV, enhancing childhood and maternal nutrition, improving sanitation, promoting education, and providing emergency relief in response to disasters.

History: UNICEF is the successor of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, created on 11 December 1946, in New York, by the U.N. Relief Rehabilitation Administration to provide immediate relief to children and mothers affected by World War II. The same year, the U.N. General Assembly established UNICEF to further institutionalize post-war relief work. In 1950, its mandate was extended to address the long-term needs of children and women, particularly in developing countries. In 1953, the organization became a permanent part of the United Nations System, and its name was subsequently changed to its current form, though it retains the original acronym.

UNICEF relies on country offices to help carry out its work through a unique program of cooperation developed with the host government. The programs seek to develop practical strategies for fulfilling and protecting the rights of children and women. Regional offices guide this work and provide technical assistance to country offices as needed. Overall management and administration of the organization take place at its headquarters in New York City.

UNICEF also has national committees which are in 34 countries, each established as an independent local non-governmental organization. Their primary function is to raise funds from the private sector, as UNICEF is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions.

In essence, UNICEF accomplishes its mission through direct program implementation and collaboration with various partners, rather than through a network of subsidiary organs.

MANDATE: UNICEF, has a global mandate to **advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.**

UNICEF is a principal specialised agency under the UN SYSTEM. Thereby, it has its communication directly with member states on issues related to children's rights involving country level communication through field officers, reports and advocacy, and participation in international conferences related to children rights. While, ECOSOC and UN CEB do play a vital role in the inter-state and inter agency coordination respectively.

Lastly, to summarise the working method of UNICEF to achieve its objective, it incorporates Programmatic Work (country and thematic programming), Advocacy and Policy Change (research & data analysis and policy advocacy), Communication and Public Engagement (public awareness campaigns and community mobilization), Partnership / Collaboration and Monitoring & Evaluation.

What is a Crisis Zone?

A crisis zone is an area experiencing significant instability, hardship, or danger that disrupts the normal course of life. These zones can arise due to various factors, and the specific challenges will vary depending on the cause of the crisis. A crisis zone can be created due to an Armed Conflict, Natural disaster, Epidemic and Pandemics, Economic Collapse, Political instability. For example, Ukraine, Yemen, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria and many more do.

These crisis zone significantly leads to displacements, humanitarian needs, psychological needs, disruption in education, economic hardships.

To understand it in more simpler terms, imagine a place where things are really tough. Maybe there's been a big storm that flooded houses and schools, or maybe there's a fight going on between grown-ups that's making everyone scared. This kind of difficult and dangerous place is what UNICEF calls a "crisis zone."

UNICEF and EDUCATION

While almost all countries in the Region have increased their school enrolment rates, there are two key challenges remaining:

1. the lack of access to education for the most marginalized children and adolescents and,
2. the low quality of education.

The millions of children and adolescents missing out on school in the Region often come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, and face pressures such as poverty and discrimination that may curtail their learning. Regarding quality, too many children and adolescents are leaving school without the basic skills they need for employment and productive adult lives. Both of these challenges become more acute as children reach secondary-school age.

Aims: UNICEF works across the Region to ensure that all children are in safe and supportive schools, and receive a quality education. This demands inclusive, high-quality schooling backed by strong education systems.

Inclusive, quality education is not only about policies and schools that support access, learning and participation. It also means re-thinking what and how children learn by reforming the curricula and teacher training, investing in the effective measurement of learning outcomes, improving the availability and quality of learning materials and transforming the school environment.

EXISTING KEY CHALLENGES

Equity challenges:

- Every country in the Region has high enrolment rates for primary and lower secondary education, yet millions of children and adolescents are not in school. The biggest gaps in enrolment are seen at these two ends of the education spectrum, with 1.3 million children missing out on one year of pre-primary education, and 2 million missing out on secondary school.
- The rate of young people aged 15 to 24 who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) ranges from 12 per cent in Belarus, to 42 per cent in Tajikistan, representing a massive loss of potential across the Region.
- Violence and school dropout are closely linked with school dropout heightening a child or young person's risk of experiencing violence, exploitation and coming into conflict with the law, while violence at school or at home can lead adolescents to stop going to school.

Quality challenges:

- Conflict can displace or traumatize teachers, leading to shortages and a lack of qualified educators. Educators may not have the training or resources to address the specific needs of children who have experienced trauma.
- Existing mental health and psychosocial support services may be overwhelmed, leaving students without the support they need to process trauma and thrive in school.
- Curriculums may not be adapted to address the realities of conflict and displacement, limiting the relevance of education for affected children.

Safety:

- Schools are sometimes targeted in conflict zones, making them unsafe for students and teachers. Children out of school are more vulnerable to being recruited by armed groups or forced into child labour.
- Exposure to violence and displacement can cause trauma in children, hindering their ability to learn and concentrate.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY UNICEF

- ❖ To build on its strong and trusted relationships with governments to focus on entire education systems to improve – and where necessary transform – education policies, provision, inclusion and quality.
- ❖ To support innovative approaches to test and shape vital policy reforms.
- ❖ To expand the access to quality pre-schooling, working with partners to help ministries develop policies, and with teachers and communities to deliver good quality pre-schooling.
- ❖ To support governments to develop alternative, low-cost models for early learning the launch-pad for later education. By strengthening early learning for all children aged 3 to 6 through promoting pre-primary education, we help children arrive at primary school ready to make the most of their education.
- ❖ To support monitoring systems to identify the children who are out of school and those at greatest risk of dropping out. Monitoring is crucial for the development and tracking of policies and programmes to pursue universal school enrolment and completion.
- ❖ *UNICEF hosts four (4) funds and their respective secretariats. Education Cannot Wait for Fund (ECW), Fund for the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (EVAC), Sanitation and Water for All Fund (SWA), and Education Outcomes Fund.*

MEASURING SUCCESS & SUSTAINABILITY

Now let's understand in simple terms, how does measuring success and sustainability of UNICEF programmes and functions been undertaken by means like, Impact Measurement, Sustainable Programs, Reintegration.

Impact Measurement:

- Just like in any school project, we need to see if our education programs are actually working! We use different tools to measure this.
- We track things like **attendance rates**, how many kids are actually coming to school.
- We also see if their **reading and math skills** are improving.
- Most importantly, we ask the kids themselves! We see if they feel **safe and supported** in school, and if they feel like they're learning things that will help them in the future.

Sustainable Programs:

- We don't just want to help for a little while. We want to make sure these education programs keep going even after the crisis is over.
- This means working with local communities to train teachers and find ways to keep schools running, even if resources are limited.
- We also try to use things that are easy to find and fix, so schools aren't reliant on outside help forever.

Reintegration:

- Sometimes, kids have to leave their regular schools because of conflict. When things get calmer, we want to help them get back into the national education system.
- This might involve making sure their credits transfer or helping them catch up on any missed work.
- The goal is to make the transition as smooth as possible so they can continue their education without falling behind.

Key International Instruments

Key international instruments can be understood in the following manner: Imagine you're playing soccer with your friends, but someone keeps kicking the ball away or tackling too rough. It's no fun, right? International instruments are kind of like rules for countries, so everyone plays fair and helps each other. Further let's understand, treaties, and declaration:

- **Treaties:** Think of these like super important agreements between countries. They promise to do things in a certain way, like protecting children's rights.
- **Declarations:** These are like strong statements from many countries, saying they agree on something important, like keeping schools safe during wars.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007:

- Article 24 on inclusive education Recognizes the right of children with disabilities to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, and ensuring inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity.
- Children with disabilities have the right to free and compulsory quality and inclusive education, at all levels, on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; right to reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements.
- Urges state parties to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified and trained, including on disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

Safe Schools Declaration (SSD): This political commitment, endorsed by over 100 countries, aims to protect education from attack during armed conflict. It outlines concrete measures to ensure the safety of students, teachers, schools, and universities <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/>.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW): This global fund mobilizes resources to provide quality education opportunities for children and youth affected by emergencies and protracted crises. It focuses on building safe learning environments, providing teachers with proper training, and delivering appropriate learning materials <https://www.unicef.org/chad/education-cannot-wait>.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): This UN goal aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." While not specifically focused on crisis zones, SDG 4 serves as a framework for international cooperation on education, including in emergency contexts <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>.

Guidelines for Integrating Psychosocial Support in Education: Developed by UNESCO, these guidelines aim to equip educators with tools to help students cope with the psychological impact of crisis and trauma. This ensures a more holistic approach to education that supports students' well-being alongside academic learning.

The Geneva Conventions: These conventions, specifically Geneva Convention IV on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, prohibit attacks on educational institutions during armed conflict. This indirectly supports quality education by protecting the infrastructure that enables it.

CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child): The CRC outlines a comprehensive set of rights for children, including the right to education (Article 28) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/children>. The framework establishes a foundation for international cooperation on ensuring all children have access to quality education, regardless of their circumstances. As a legally binding treaty, the CRC compels countries that have ratified it to uphold the rights enshrined within it. This includes the right to education, placing an obligation on governments to provide quality educational opportunities for all children, even in crisis zones.

These instruments work together to create a global framework for supporting quality education in crisis zones. They emphasize not just access to education, but also the safety and well-being of students and teachers, along with the delivery of relevant and effective learning.

The critical issue in the International Law and its frameworks is its enforcements, unlike national laws, international human rights treaties don't have strong enforcement mechanisms. Countries can't be directly punished for non-compliance. Enforcement relies heavily on the political will of member states. Countries may be reluctant to admit shortcomings or face criticism.

CASE STUDIES

These case studies are like building blocks. They help us understand the challenges of education in conflict zones and the successful responses from the past. By learning from these examples, we can develop better solutions for today's situations. This allows us to find ways to ensure quality education with respect for the unique circumstances faced in conflicts around the world.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) in Colombia

Colombia's long-standing armed conflict, involving the government, leftist rebels, and right-wing paramilitary groups, has left deep scars on the nation. Millions have been displaced, and education, a cornerstone of a functioning society, has been severely disrupted, particularly in the most affected regions. Schools were damaged or destroyed, teachers fled the violence, and children faced unimaginable trauma and psychological distress. Traditional education approaches seemed inadequate to address the specific needs of a generation grappling with the realities of conflict. The impact of conflict on education in Colombia was multifaceted:

- Schools became casualties of the violence, with many buildings suffering damage or complete destruction. This created a shortage of safe learning spaces for children.
- The violence also led to a significant exodus of teachers, leaving many schools understaffed or lacking qualified educators.
- Children exposed to violence and displacement experienced anxiety, depression, and other forms of psychological distress. This hindered their ability to learn and participate in school activities.
- Existing education systems weren't equipped to address the trauma and unique needs of conflict-affected students. Rigid curriculum structures and teaching styles proved ineffective in this exceptional context.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, UNICEF's Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Fund emerged as a beacon of hope. Partnering with the Colombian government and local NGOs, ECW spearheaded a multi-pronged approach to restore quality education opportunities for children affected by conflict. To such a critical issue a multi faced response was launched, which involved:

- The curriculum was adapted to incorporate the cultural sensitivities and local context of conflict-affected regions. This fostered a sense of ownership and relevance for students, making the learning process more engaging and effective.
- Understanding the emotional toll of violence, ECW promoted the integration of psychosocial support into the educational system. This involved individual and group counselling sessions for children struggling with trauma and anxiety.
- Recognizing the crucial role teachers play, ECW invested in training programs. Teachers were equipped with skills to identify and address students' trauma, create safe and supportive classroom environments, and utilize innovative teaching methods suitable for a conflict zone.
- rebuilding damaged schools and constructing temporary learning spaces in conflict-affected areas. This ensured children had safe places to learn and rebuild a sense of normalcy.

The Colombian case demonstrates that even in the midst of conflict, education can be a powerful tool for healing, empowerment, and rebuilding a brighter future for children. The ECW model provides a blueprint for other nations grappling with similar challenges, offering hope for a world where all children, regardless of circumstance, can access quality.

Psychosocial Support in Education – Palestine

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict casts a long shadow on the lives of Palestinians, impacting all aspects of society, including education. Children, particularly vulnerable to the psychological effects of violence, displacement, and uncertainty, often face challenges in learning and reaching their full potential. Traditional education systems, designed for a more stable environment, often neglect the mental health and well-being of students in conflict zones.

The ongoing conflict in Palestine presents unique challenges for education and student well-being:

- Many teachers lack the training and resources to identify and address students' psychosocial needs, hindering their ability to create safe and supportive classroom environments.
- Formal mental health services are often scarce and inaccessible in conflict-affected areas, leaving children without adequate support to cope with emotional trauma.
- Children are exposed to violence, fear of displacement, and the loss of loved ones, leading to chronic stress and anxiety. This can manifest in difficulties concentrating, participating in class, and engaging in healthy learning behaviors.

Recognizing the critical role of mental health in learning, several organizations, including UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Palestinian Ministry of Education, have collaborated on a program to integrate psychosocial support (PSS) into the education system. This initiative aims to address the emotional needs of children and create a more holistic learning environment. The PSS in Education program in Palestine utilizes a multi-tiered approach to address student well-being:

- **Teacher Training:** Teachers are at the forefront of this initiative. They receive specialized training to identify signs of emotional distress in students, provide basic psychosocial support interventions, and create safe and inclusive classrooms. This empowers teachers to better cater to the emotional needs of their students.
- **Curriculum Development:** The curriculum is adapted to incorporate activities and resources that promote social and emotional learning (SEL). These activities help children develop skills like coping with stress, managing emotions, and building resilience.
- **Student Support Services:** The program provides individual and group counseling sessions for students struggling with more severe emotional difficulties. This allows students to receive targeted support in a safe and confidential environment.
- **Community Engagement:** The program recognizes the role of families and communities in supporting children's well-being. Workshops and resources are provided to parents and caregivers, equipping them with skills to support their children's emotional needs at home.

The PSS in Education program in Palestine serves as a model for integrating mental health support into education systems in conflict zones. Here are some key takeaways:

- **Holistic Approach to Education:**
- **Investment in Teacher Training**
- **Collaboration is Key**

By prioritizing student well-being and integrating PSS into education, Palestine is paving the way for a future where children can thrive despite the challenges of conflict. This model offers valuable insights for other countries grappling with similar situations, promoting a future where education fosters not just academic excellence but also emotional resilience and hope.

CITING HISTORIC / LANDMARK RESOLUTIONS

Citing prior UN resolutions and reports before developing solutions is crucial for UNICEF, or any specialized agency working on global issues, for several key reasons:

- 1. Building on Existing Frameworks:** Resolutions and reports establish international consensus and frameworks on important issues. By referencing them, UNICEF demonstrates its work aligns with the broader goals set by the UN. This strengthens their proposals and ensures solutions are consistent with existing international commitments.
- 2. Avoiding Duplication of Efforts:** These documents often highlight existing solutions and areas where progress has already been made. Reviewing them helps UNICEF avoid "reinventing the wheel" and allows them to focus on areas with the most significant gaps or challenges.
- 3. Identifying Gaps and Priorities:** Resolutions and reports often highlight areas where progress is lacking or specific needs remain unmet. This helps UNICEF prioritize its work and develop solutions that address the most critical issues related to quality education in crisis zones.
- 4. Legitimizing Advocacy Efforts:** By referencing relevant resolutions, UNICEF strengthens its advocacy efforts. They can point to existing international agreements to urge governments and other stakeholders to fulfil their obligations regarding education in emergencies.
- 5. Building Collaboration:** Resolutions and reports often involve collaboration between various UN agencies and member states. Referencing these documents fosters a sense of shared responsibility and encourages collaboration in developing solutions for quality education in crisis zones.

As a specialized agency focused on children, UNICEF would likely focus on resolutions and reports that specifically address children's right to education, especially in emergencies. They might also consider reports and resolutions from other UN agencies (e.g., UNESCO on education) to ensure their solutions are comprehensive and address all aspects of quality education.

Lastly, citing prior UN resolutions and reports is a crucial first step for UNICEF in developing effective solutions for quality education in crisis zones. It allows them to build on established frameworks, identify gaps, prioritize effectively, and advocate for stronger action from the international community.

- 1. United Nations Security Council Resolution [2601](#)** – global agreement on the right to education in conflict situations.
- 2. General Assembly Resolution 66/132 (2011):** This resolution emphasizes the right to education in emergencies.
- 3. Security Council Resolution [2258](#)** – This resolution condemns attacks on schools and hospitals in armed conflict.
- 4. The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action – the CCCs** – are the core UNICEF policy and framework for humanitarian action. [https://www.unicef.org/media/130411/file/CCS%20\(English,%20full\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/130411/file/CCS%20(English,%20full).pdf)

These are just a handful of citations kindly feel free to cite any UN / Inter governmental organisation resolution and report (ensuring you understand the idea and come up with efficient solution)

How to Prepare for the Committee:

At an MUN conference, **analysis** is a very important aspect when it comes to you playing the role of a delegate in a committee. Most delegates get confused by the term analysis and are not able to improve the quality of their analysis overtime.

In very simple words, “Analysis means **interpreting the research** you have from your perspective such that you incorporate the national views and interest of the portfolio you shall be representing”. The reason analysis is an important aspect of a MUN is because, without analysing the current research you can’t progress towards development but can only dwell upon the already existing research. *When you begin with your research, you need to keep the following things in mind:*

- **MANDATE** – What exactly is the mandate and working method of the committee is the most critical factor for any delegate to analyse and understand in order to have his discussion and solutions under the committee Mandate.
- **CONTEXT** – What is the context of your analysis? Basically, what are you analysing? What is it related to?
- **STAKEHOLDERS** – Who/What are driving your research and playing a major role? Who are the relevant members to your research?
- **IMPACT** – What impact will your research have on the agenda? What role will it play on the stakeholders of the research you have regarding the agenda?
- **Scope of Solution Space** – What all solutions can be formulated to tackle the problem?
- **Constraints within solution** – The solutions formulated in the solution space would have a few constraints, what are those? And can they be tackled or is there any way around?
- **Key Insights** – What is the final conclusion or key takeaways you have from the analysis you’ve done regarding your agenda?

Lastly, can your solutions be incorporated under the ambit of the resolution and paperwork been made in the current committee, and the validation of the solution in pertinence of the existing frameworks and in the geopolitical pragmatic world.

If you are able to find answers to the above points regarding your research, you’ll have an easier time going with the research and trying to understand the agenda.

In simple language, *to interpret and understand what you’ve researched and being able to present it* as an argument in the committee will help in the flow of the debate. Arguments substantiated by facts and case studies. At the end of the day, in our committee there’s no room for RHETORICAL DEBATE and logical / pragmatic points and solutions shall have more value in the committee.

CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES

These are a few sources that come highly recommended for use in research. Do not, however, stop there. Feel free to critically evaluate and use any more knowledge that may be presented to you.

The below shared priority order of sources which shall stand credible in this committee:

1. *Any United Nations-owned or affiliated website*
2. *Any INTERNATIONAL TREATY, CONVENTIONS* shall stand legitimate as to validate (any point if backed with substantial points, correlation & prove factual inaccuracy)
3. *Government-owned websites*
4. *Well-reputed independent organisations*
5. *News Sources* (provided more than three news sources provide the same information)

Sources in the committee are merely required in scenario of a factual inaccuracy. As a matter of fact, no source of information shall be deemed **invalid or null and void** however, as we shall set a hierarchy to the sources (*as mentioned above*) which shall stand in committee in case of contradiction in facts, and figures.

KINDLY NOTE

- ✚ At no point in the committee shall the background guide be used as a source. While, the background guide shall only stand as a guide of references, and not the ultimate research.
- ✚ Do not restrict yourself with content provided in the background guide and further enhanced, independent research by delegates shall be appreciated
- ✚ *The mentioned points in the study guide **does not challenge** the position or stance of any nation and is only meant as a **source of kick-starting research** by understanding the basis of the agenda. The position, perception and view of the country/delegate can/could vary from the background guide and is acceptable.*
- ✚ The questions to consider serve as a basis for driving your research and should be utilized well for drafting of sub-topics and resolution. Moreover, it should be adhered that they are mere suggestions for researching and arranging the points.
- ✚ Develop **technical** understanding towards the agenda and be well researched.
- ✚ To note, we shall *adhere* to the **UNA-USA** rules of procedures in the committee.

UNICEF as a specialised agency is mandated to draft Strategic Plans & Policies, and Reports which shall be the mere documentation for our committee. Kindly do not worry or focus on this at this point in time, it shall be explained in detail in the committee.

Sample Plan: https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/7331/file/2021-25-Strategic_Plan_2022-2025-EN-ODS.pdf

Questions to Consider

1. What are effective strategies for ensuring safe and secure learning environments in crisis zones?
2. What are best practices for integrating psychosocial support into education programs in crisis zones?
3. What is the role of national governments in ensuring education access and quality in crisis zones?
4. How can education programs be designed for long-term sustainability beyond immediate crisis response?
5. How can the international community work more effectively to address the global education gap in crisis zones?
6. How can children and youth be empowered to participate in decisions about their education in crisis settings?
7. What are the biggest challenges to delivering quality education in crisis zones?

To note:

These are certain questions that are expected from the delegates to address in the course of discussion. Furthermore, we will not provide additional reference links as we anticipate discussions and debates to occur on the basis of understanding towards the agenda addressing the very threshold of the matter at hand. While, at no point shall we wish or desire to restrict your course of discussion.