**The Issue of access to education for children in conflict zones**

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) envisions inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to an education and that richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.  However, for children and young people in conflict zones, access to education remains a significant challenge. Conflicts disrupt education systems, destroy infrastructure, displace populations, and leave millions of children without access to safe, consistent schooling. This briefing paper highlights the specific challenges faced by young people in conflict zones and explores how the global community can address these issues through the lens of SDG 4 targets and indicators (these will help guide your resolution):

Target 4.1

Ensure Free, Equitable, and Quality Primary and Secondary Education

• Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics.

Key Issues:

• Schools are often targets of attacks, or they are occupied by military forces, rendering them unsafe.

• Prolonged conflict disrupts schooling, leaving children behind in essential skills like reading and mathematics.

• Teachers in conflict zones face displacement or recruitment into armed forces, further depleting educational resources.

Key Questions for Delegates:

1. What measures can your country take to ensure the protection of schools in conflict zones?

2. How can international frameworks like the Safe Schools Declaration be strengthened to protect education?

Target 4.7

Promote Global Citizenship Education and Sustainable Development

• Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which global citizenship and sustainable development are mainstreamed in education.

Key Issues:

• In conflict zones, children are often exposed to ideologies that perpetuate violence, limiting their understanding of global citizenship and peace building.

• Education systems disrupted by conflict often fail to include lessons on tolerance, diversity, and sustainability.

Key Questions for Delegates:

1. How can global citizenship education be integrated into emergency education programs?

2. What strategies can your country adopt to prevent the exploitation of education systems in conflict zones?

Target 4.4

Increase Skills for Employment, Decent Jobs, and Entrepreneurship

• Indicator 4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with ICT skills.

Key Issues:

• Conflict zones often lack the infrastructure needed to support digital and ICT education.

• Young people in these areas face challenges in acquiring skills that are critical for modern job markets.

Key Questions for Delegates:

1. How can countries partner to provide mobile or digital classrooms in conflict zones?

2. What role can international organisations play in equipping young people in conflict zones with ICT skills?

Target 4.5

Eliminate Gender Disparities in Education

• Indicator 4.5.1: Parity indices for all education indicators.

Key Issues:

• Girls in conflict zones are disproportionately affected, facing risks of early marriage, trafficking, and violence that prevent them from attending school.

• Cultural norms in conflict settings often deprioritise girls’ education.

Key Questions for Delegates:

1. What specific policies can your country introduce to protect girls’ education in conflict zones?

2. How can international efforts address the unique challenges faced by displaced girls?

**Conclusion**

Delegates to the Youth Committee have a vital role in addressing the education crisis faced by children and young people in conflict zones. By focusing on the protection of schools, equitable access to education, and the inclusion of marginalised groups, delegates can develop actionable resolutions to advance SDG 4. Together, we can ensure that education remains a beacon of hope for young people, even in the most challenging circumstances.

**Sources of Information**

UN Make the SDGs a Reality

<https://sdgs.un.org/>

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

UN SDG 4

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#targets_and_indicators>

The Safe Schools Declaration

<https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/>

WarChild

<https://www.warchild.org.uk/>

UNICEF Education in Emergencies

<https://www.unicef.org/education/emergencies>

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack

<https://protectingeducation.org/>

Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

<https://inee.org/>

UNESCO 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report

<https://gem-report-2023.unesco.org/>