



## United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Topic:** *"Providing education to children in conflict zones"*



**Moderator:** Ramón Francisco Velázquez López

**President:** Miel de María Meneses Hernández

Dear Delegates,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 8th edition of the NICMUN, specifically to the UNICEF committee. This is going to be the first MUN for many of you; that's why we encourage you to go beyond your limits and take the position of a whole nation. Finding and noticing the current problems of our world may be an easy task, but to be able to analyze, reflect, and understand them is not as easy. It is expected that the delegates will show these skills, while being able to contribute and propose solutions to real-life problems.

The following days that we will be spending together will not only be about debating and participating in a discussion about a random topic. It's also about learning about it and seeing how, with small actions, we can change the world, facing these real-world problems through the Model of the United Nations; this document will be a guide for you to follow, and be able to understand and find your country's position regarding the topic. Feel free to contact your moderator or your chair if you have any questions. And remember, "Education is a superpower. It helps children to thrive not only in times of stability, but even more so in moments of fragility."

Background Paper of UNICEF NICMUN 2025



## Committee History

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The history of UNICEF's supporting committees began nearly at the same time as the organization's official founding on December 11, 1946, as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, giving the UN system a genuinely unique structure. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF was founded in 1946, marking the beginning of the idea of local, independent fundraising

organizations to aid the global endeavor. This showed that the business sector was immediately and critically committed to supporting the first post-World War II relief operations for children in China and Europe. The network of UNICEF National Committees expanded significantly when the organization's mission changed in the early 1950s, focusing on the long-term needs of children in developing nations and becoming a permanent member of the UN.

There are currently more than 30 National Committees in the world, each of which was founded as a stand-alone non-governmental organization (NGO) in a developed nation. These committees are the public face and committed voice of UNICEF in their individual countries, and they do much more than merely raise money. Since they raise almost one-third of UNICEF's yearly revenue only through voluntary donations, their main role is to raise money collectively, which is crucial. More than six million individual donors, businesses, and civil society organizations provide the majority of this vital funding, making them a special source of support for the organization. They have collaborated with popular figures like Shakira, BTS, and even on September 7, 2006, we collaborated with the football team “FC Barcelona”. Additionally, under the direction of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Committees persistently advocate for and raise awareness of children's rights while ensuring their global visibility.



From the day of our foundation to the present world, we have helped over 500 million children from around the world, and made every possible change, every possible moment for a better world for the children.



## Introduction to the Topic

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When we talk about places caught in fighting, like war zones or conflict zones, we know children desperately need food, water, and safety. But there is another problem that no one likes to talk about: Education. Every child, no matter where they live, has a fundamental right to go to school and learn. Today, this right is under attack around the world, and the current crisis in Gaza shows the devastating scale of the problem. As of recent reports, over 660,000 school-age children in Gaza have been forced out of formal education, missing years of learning. The damage is not just limited to missing class; nearly 95% of all educational buildings have been damaged or destroyed.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory (...) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.” Nevertheless, this human right has been placed to test many times, essentially in Gaza.



## Background Information of the Topic

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On the 7 of October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups launched a surprise attack on Israel, starting a war that has not yet finished. Since then, around 500 schools have shut down, and around 625,000 students have lost education for more than 6 months (Save the Children, 2024). This single, recent event serves as a stark reminder that when political and military crises erupt, the right of a child to learn is often the first casualty. While the news focuses on the most visible conflicts, millions of children globally in places like Ukraine, Yemen, and the Democratic Republic of Congo face the same dire reality—their futures are being disrupted by violence they did not start.

### *The Fall of Educational Infrastructure*

A conflict zone is defined by ongoing hostilities, which immediately transform schools from centers of learning into targets or temporary shelters. The physical infrastructure of education is systematically eroded. Schools may be directly damaged or completely destroyed by shelling and aerial attacks, rendering them unusable for years. Alternatively, in the desperate search for safety, these buildings are often repurposed as emergency shelters for displaced families, meaning that even if the fighting temporarily subsides, the classrooms are unavailable for teaching. Crucially, the simple act of traveling to school becomes extremely dangerous due to fighting, landmines, or the presence of armed groups, which amounts to an indirect but equally effective closure of the educational system. Furthermore, the essential teachers are either forced to flee, injured, or unable to work because their salaries have stopped, leading to a complete collapse of the professional structure that education depends on.

### *The Role of Education as a Protective Shield*

While the immediate priority in a conflict is always physical safety, providing sustained education is a critical humanitarian measure that extends far beyond academics; it serves as a powerful protective shield for children. For a child whose life has been upended by violence and uncertainty, the routine and predictable structure of a school day—whether in a traditional classroom, a tent, or online—offers a crucial "sense of normalcy." This stability is vital for their



mental health, offering a psychological refuge from the trauma they have experienced. Moreover, schools act as a safe space that protects vulnerable children from numerous hazards, including recruitment by armed forces or militant groups, child labor, and exploitation. By simply being in a supervised environment, children are kept away from the most immediate dangers of the surrounding conflict.

### ***Securing the Future Through Continued Learning***

The continuation of learning during a conflict is not merely about preserving knowledge; it is an investment in peace and stability for the post-conflict era. By providing children with literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills, education empowers them to participate in the reconstruction of their societies once peace returns. Without it, a generation can be lost to illiteracy and lack of skills, which directly translates into long-term poverty, unemployment, and an increased risk of future instability. This challenge requires the international community, through bodies like the United Nations, to treat education as an essential, life-saving intervention, just as vital as food and medicine. The task before the delegates is to devise solutions that are both practical and resilient, ensuring the continuity of learning by protecting educational spaces, training teachers to provide psychological first aid, and utilizing innovative technologies to reach children who are constantly on the move, thereby guaranteeing their fundamental right to a hopeful future.

The issue of providing education to children in conflict zones is one of profound urgency and moral responsibility. The recent crisis following the October 7th attacks—where hundreds of thousands of students had their learning abruptly halted—is a clear and tragic example of a widespread global challenge. This is not simply a matter of restoring blackboards and books; it is about protecting the fundamental human right of a child to have a future, a right enshrined by international treaties. As delegates of this Model United Nations, your task is to move beyond mere recognition of the problem. You must now propose actionable, innovative, and sustainable resolutions that the global community can implement to safeguard schools, support displaced students and teachers, and ensure that even amidst the chaos of conflict, the flame of learning remains alight.



## **International Actions**

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Several international frameworks and agreements aim to address the provision of education to children in conflict zones. These instruments recognize education not only as a fundamental human right, but also as a life-saving, protective, and stabilizing intervention in emergency settings. The commitment to maintaining the continuity of education during conflict and protecting the educational environment has driven a coordinated global response involving states, UN agencies, governmental organizations, and non-governmental bodies. This collective action is fundamentally rooted in the near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which mandates that states ensure a child's right to education and protection from violence, requiring safe access to learning even amid war.

### ***1. Global Commitments and Legal Frameworks***

The legal and political foundation for this work is strong. The Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), an inter-governmental political commitment, is one of the most significant actions, committing states to protect schools from attack and military use during armed conflict. Complementing this, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2601 (2021) focuses exclusively on the protection of education, strongly condemning attacks on schools and reaffirming its role in promoting peace and security. Under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as defined by the Geneva Conventions, schools are classified as civilian objects and their destruction or deliberate targeting is recognized as a potential war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Beyond protection, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—the global 2030 agenda—explicitly calls for countries to develop inclusive, responsive, and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth, and adults in crisis contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees.

### ***2. UN and Inter-Agency Actions***

Major international organizations lead the operational and financial response. As a core actor, UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) prioritize the uninterrupted delivery of education in emergencies, focusing on providing child-friendly learning



spaces, essential supplies, and training teachers in vital skills, including psychosocial support. Furthermore, UNICEF strongly advocates for the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), a vast global network, provides the technical backbone by setting universal benchmarks known as the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, which guide all actors in delivering quality, consistent education. For financing, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) stands as the dedicated global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises, mobilizing rapid, flexible funding to ensure that education is prioritized from the onset of a crisis. Meanwhile, institutions like the World Bank support long-term system resilience through initiatives like the Inclusion Support Programme for Refugee Education (INSPIRE), which aids host countries in integrating refugee children into national education systems.

### ***3. Non-Governmental and Focused Interventions***

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often act as the crucial last mile to deliver education on the ground, frequently partnering with UN agencies. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Save the Children are major implementers, providing education through temporary learning spaces, catch-up programs, and integrated services like child protection and early childhood development, tailored for the trauma of conflict. Other groups, like War Child, have introduced innovative solutions such as the 'Can't Wait to Learn' program, which uses technology to reach children who are out of school due to insecurity. Lastly, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) plays a vital role in monitoring, collecting data on, and reporting attacks on education, thereby providing the evidence base necessary for advocacy and security measures.





## **Recommendations for further investigation**

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1. How can UNICEF reinforce its position to respond faster to global threats?
2. What innovative items can UNICEF create to improve its operations in conflict zones?
3. Given the heightened risk to girls in conflict zones, what strategies can UNICEF take to confirm and take care of the girls?
4. How can UNICEF's field offices make the schools “Zone of peace” policies, taking in consideration recent conflicts in schools in Gaza?
5. What measures should UNICEF take to be able to give psychological help to children who need it, specifically in conflict zones?
6. How can UNICEF work with local partners to provide non-formal education to children whose school has been destroyed?
7. How can UNICEF find a way to make the warnings of children whose human rights are being violated, even if access to the internet is complex?

## **Recommendations to do Resolution Paper**

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Delegates can use websites to receive support to elaborate on a resolution paper. Some of the recommendations found are:

1. Find solutions that fit all the previous laws.
2. Use proper language and express your delegation’s ideas in an extended way.
3. Use preambulatory and operative phrases.
4. Seek for sponsors to support your delegation’s solutions.
5. Consider Non-governmental Organizations (NGO’s) to support your solutions.
6. Always maintain your country's position and abstain from contradicting yourself.
7. Specify the worldwide planning committee reached and make it realistic.



### Sample Preambulatory Phrases

Affirming	Expecting	Having studied
Alarmed by	Expressing its appreciation	Keeping in mind
Approving	Expressing its satisfaction	Noting with regret
Aware of	Fulfilling	Noting with deep concern
Bearing in mind	Fully alarmed	Noting with satisfaction
Believing	Fully aware	Noting further
Confident	Fully believing	Noting with approval
Contemplating	Further deploring	Observing
Convinced	Further recalling	Reaffirming
Declaring	Guided by	Realizing
Deeply concerned	Having adopted	Recalling
Deeply conscious	Having considered	Recognizing
Deeply convinced	Having considered further	Referring
Deeply disturbed	Having devoted attention	Seeking
Deeply regretting	Having examined	Taking into account
Desiring	Having heard	Taking into consideration
Emphasizing	Having received	Taking note
		Viewing with appreciation
		Welcoming

### Sample Operative Phrases

Accepts	Encourages	Further recommends
Affirms	Endorses	Further requests
Approves	Expresses its appreciation	Further resolves
Authorizes	Expresses its hope	Has resolved
Calls	Further invites	Notes
Calls upon	Deplores	Proclaims
Condemns	Designates	Reaffirms
Confirms	Draws the attention	Recommends
Congratulates	Emphasizes	Regrets
Considers	Encourages	Reminds
Declares accordingly	Endorses	Requests
Deplores	Expresses its appreciation	Solemnly affirms
Designates	Expresses its hope	Strongly condemns
Draws the attention	Further invites	Supports
Emphasizes	Further proclaims	Takes note of
	Further reminds	Transmits
		Trusts

## Questions to consider while creating your resolution

1. How can your delegation express a solution that is fair for all the countries?
2. Where does your country stand while disputing the best quality of security systems?
3. How can you get a solution where all border countries win something?
4. Consider short and long term solutions. What can you do to improve your short and long term solutions so they can be successful?
5. Who should be involved in your solution?
6. Are there any monetary funds or NGO's considered for your solution?
7. How could you convince the delegations that they are against the solution?
8. Do you have any type of back up plan that will reinforce your plan?



## Research and preparation questions

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- What's your country's position on the topic?
- How is your country affected by this problem?
- How is your country trying to solve this problem?
- Does your country have received help from other countries?
- Does your country have helped others?
- What partnerships can emerge to secure the legal commerce of health products?
- Which activities can be promoted by the citizens of your country to reach a solution?



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