An Unmet Need; Education in Conflict Zones

Discussion > Advanced 9

Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

void	An empty space where something is missing.
[noun]	*Ex: Recognizing a **void** in his knowledge, he bought a book on the history of his hometown.*

catalyst	Something that causes change.
[noun]	*Ex: Manga has been a great **catalyst** with regard to people's interest in Japanese popular culture.*

humanitarian	Involved in promoting human welfare.
[adjective]	*Ex: Oxfam is one of the largest **humanitarian** organizations in the world.*

hone	To carefully improve something, such as a skill or idea, over time.
[verb]	*Ex: She **hones** her skills by practicing every day.*

entrenched	Firmly established and difficult to change (of a belief, idea, or attitude).
[adjective]	*Ex: It's difficult to change the attitudes that have become deeply **entrenched** in our society.*

successive	Following one after the other without stopping.
[adjective]	*Ex: After several **successive** failures, she managed to create a design that pleased the client.*

Exercise 2 – Reading

An Unmet Need; Education in Conflict Zones

The California-based charity Justice Rising is working to educate young people in conflict zones, especially the conflict-torn eastern section of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is one of many organizations struggling to meet a need that is largely unmet in troubled areas worldwide, according to the United Nations International Children's Fund, UNICEF.

UNICEF says 27 million children are unable to attend school in conflict zones such as Syria, South Sudan, Iraq and Yemen, as well as areas divided by religion and resources, such as Nigeria and Niger.

According to a 2016 report from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 236 million children, adolescents, and youth are out-of-school. This represents nearly one-fifth of the global population within this age group. The gap in children's education leaves a void in their social development, said Linda Jones, senior education specialist with UNICEF, noting it has an impact on the society as well. She said that getting children into schools contributes to a nation's stability.

Schools can be a catalyst for change, said Cassandra Lee, founder of Justice Rising. "If we cluster the schools," she said, "have multiple schools in a community, we can see them come out of war and into a culture of peace."

Less than 4 percent of global humanitarian appeals fund education, said Linda Jones. UNICEF says it will spend one billion dollars a year over the next four years on education.

Jones says the programs need to be flexible. "We have that with examples in Afghanistan," she said, "with community schools where the schools reach out to the village where the children are," in effect taking classrooms to the children. "There are also programs with learning through radios," she added, and using games on tablet computers to hone math skills.

Jones has worked in Somalia, where some solutions were low-tech. "Children had libraries brought to them on the backs of camels," she said, and, "The librarian walked with the camel from place to place... Children had opportunities to learn to read different books."

Without education, say UNICEF officials, poverty and instability can become entrenched, harming successive generations.

Exercise 3 – Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your tutor.

1. What are your thoughts on Justice Rising's work in conflict zones around the world?

2. Does it surprise you that 236 million children, adolescents, and youth are out-of-school globally?

3. Would you agree that opening schools in conflict zones can be "a catalyst for change"?

4. How might getting children into schools contribute to a nation's stability?

5. Do you believe that developed nations have a responsibility to aid education in conflict-torn countries?

6. In what ways would you say education helps to create a "culture of peace"?

7. Do you think that technology will play a greater role in education in the near future?

8. If you had the means, what charitable organizations would you support? Please explain your answer.