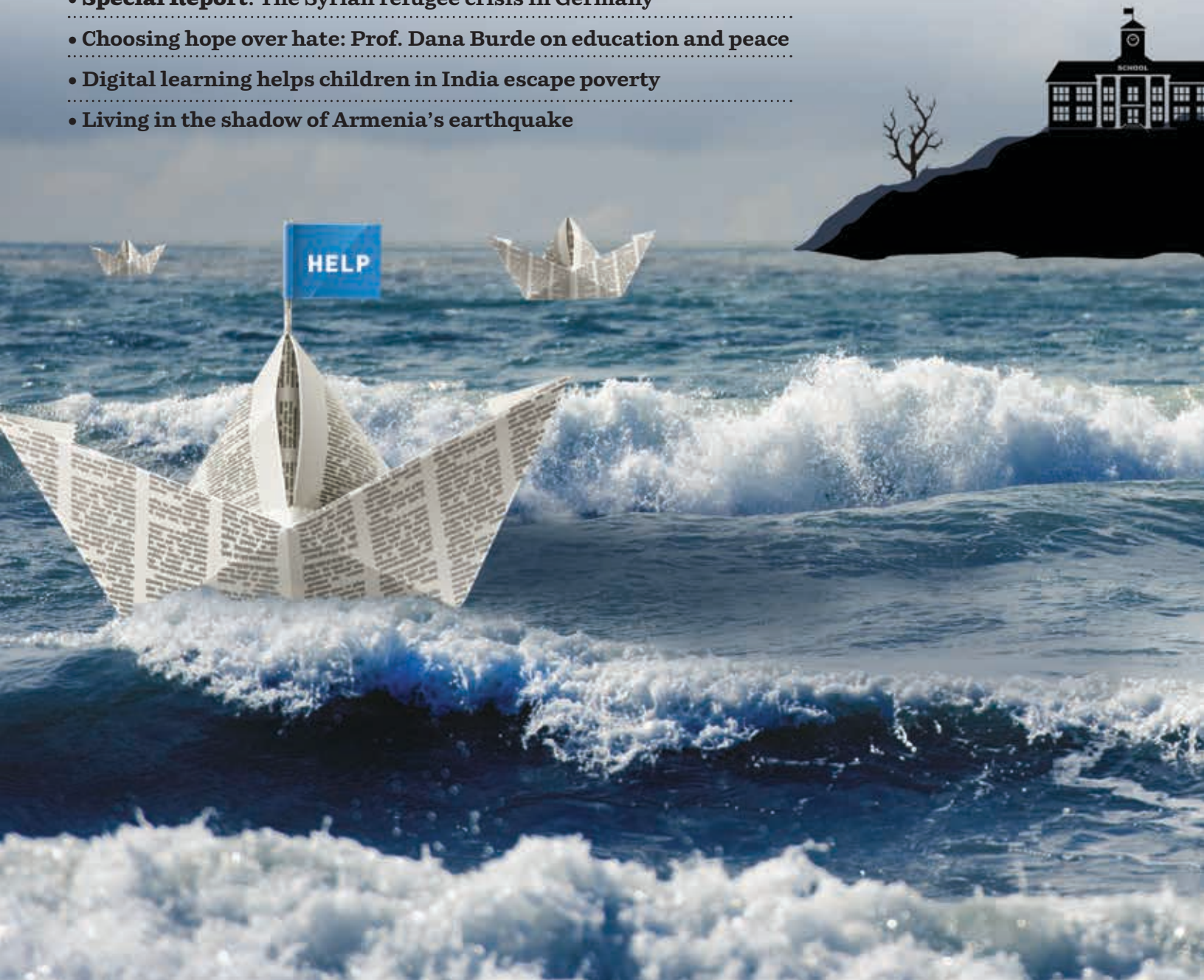


The BlueDot

Exploring new ideas for a shared future

Education and Crisis

- **Special Report: The Syrian refugee crisis in Germany**
- **Choosing hope over hate: Prof. Dana Burde on education and peace**
- **Digital learning helps children in India escape poverty**
- **Living in the shadow of Armenia's earthquake**



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THE BLUE DOT features articles showcasing UNESCO MGIEP's activities and areas of interest. The magazine's overarching theme is the relationship between education, peace, sustainable development and global citizenship. THE BLUE DOT's role is to engage with readers on these issues in a fun and interactive manner. The magazine is designed to address audiences across generations and walks of life, thereby taking the discourse on education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship beyond academia, civil society organizations and governments, to the actual stakeholders.

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Managing Editor

Sigrid Lupieri, UNESCO MGIEP

Publication Coordinator

Sadia Tabassum, UNESCO MGIEP

Design

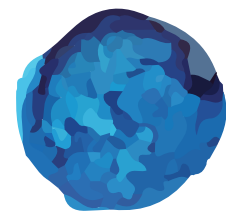
Firefly Communications
<ayesha@fireflycommunications.in>

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“Look Again at that dot.
That’s here. That’s home. That’s us.

On it, everyone you love,
everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of,
every human being who ever was,
lived out their lives.
The aggregate of our joy and suffering,
thousands of confident religions,
ideologies, and economic doctrines,
every hunter and forager, every hero and coward,
every creator and destroyer of civilization,
every king and peasant, every young couple in love,
every mother and father, hopeful child,
inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals,
every corrupt politician, every superstar,
every supreme leader, every saint
and sinner in the history of our species lived there—
on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.”

CARL SAGAN

PALE BLUE DOT: A VISION OF THE HUMAN FUTURE IN SPACE



Education and crisis: paving the way towards a more peaceful future

From the earthquake in Nepal in April 2015, which killed thousands and destroyed homes, schools and infrastructure throughout the country, to the ongoing conflict in Syria, which has displaced millions, crises continue to hit many parts of the world. Especially for young people and children, crises not only disrupt their daily lives, but also interrupt their education. In these contexts, disasters and conflicts have the potential to mar the future prospects of entire generations of the world's citizens.

In this third issue of The Blue Dot, we have chosen to focus on the often forgotten aspect of education in the context of crises. While relief efforts tend to focus on emergency responses such as providing food and shelter, more often than not rebuilding schools and ensuring that students continue to attend their classes are not considered priorities. At UNESCO MGIEP, we believe that when education is relegated to the side-lines, there is little hope for a country and its citizens to recover.

In this third issue of **The Blue Dot**, we have chosen to focus on the often forgotten aspect of education in the context of crises.

In this issue, we have brought together expert contributors from academia and the field—from countries such as Afghanistan, Nepal and South Sudan—and have dedicated a large section to the ongoing civil conflict in Syria, which will soon enter its fifth year. With almost half of Syria's population living as refugees or as internally displaced persons, an entire generation of young people risks losing out on stability and a better future. Our Syria Section explores how these young people, with a particular focus on those who have sought refuge in Germany, are faring and what their hopes are for the future.

In other parts of the magazine, we focus on technology and on how modern information and communications technologies (ICTs) can help students access a better education. From impoverished communities in Calcutta using Skype to connect with teachers around the world, to new interactive platforms built for young people to discuss global issues, we hope the stories and experiences we have collected for our readers will give a new and fresh perspective on what it means for education when a crisis hits. We also hope that you enjoy our photo contest, which drew more than 100 entries from young people around the world on what “education and crisis” means to them.

ANANTHA KUMAR DURAIAPPAH
Director, UNESCO MGIEP

Even in times of crisis, education is a fundamental human right



Akila Viraj Kariyawasam (MP)
Minister of Education, Sri Lanka

Education has been globally accepted as a fundamental right of all children, which should be available without restriction with respect to boundaries and discriminations. Most international organizations including UNESCO and UNICEF have reiterated this time and time again. It is the responsibility of relevant governments to ensure the provision of quality education to all. However, in the current context of increasing incidences of natural disasters and armed conflicts, innocent children suffer the most and their universal right to education becomes increasingly jeopardized.

Education can be linked to crises in three main stages; that is, in the prevention of a crisis, during a crisis and in post crisis.

War as well as peace begins in the minds of people. That is the reason why UNESCO has taken over the mission of building peace in the minds of both men and women. Prevention is always better than cure. Hence, it is of the utmost importance that all countries try to inculcate the concept of peace and sustainability in the minds of their youth. As such, we commend the initiatives of

UNESCO, especially those of MGIEP, in this regard. Learning to live together being one of the four pillars of education, we must put a greater emphasis on global citizenship education in order to promote sustainable peace by inculcating acceptance, tolerance, empathy and a culture of sustainable consumption in the minds of younger generations. These proactive measures will contribute towards the reduction of conflicts and wars. Natural disasters are on the rise mostly due to un-inhibited human activities and various malpractices. If we can instill ideas such as the sustainable utilization of non-renewable resources and the respect of nature in the minds of young children, then there will be a tendency towards a reduction in the number of natural disasters occurring. Our research and development also require more emphasis on the development of child-friendly teaching and learning materials using games and simulations to improve child and public awareness on these aforementioned issues.

A crisis will always leave its impact on education in one way or another. Whether in the form of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and cyclones, or armed conflicts, children's right to education is threatened during emergency situations. Children in low

income countries are most vulnerable to such situations. According to UNICEF, 36% of the world's 59.3 million out-of-school children live in countries affected by war and violence. It is also noteworthy that each year 100 million children and young people are affected by natural disasters that prevent them from pursuing education. In most countries, the first choice of location for makeshift refugee camps during disasters or situations of war and conflict is schools. Such a scenario thus deprives the school's students of their right to education. In

with the stability, structure and routine they need in order to cope with loss, fear, stress and violence during and after crises. In addition, education empowers children by providing them with the wisdom necessary to protect themselves by identifying signs of forthcoming disasters. It was reported that during the 2004 tsunami that devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia knowledgeable children saved thousands of lives by recognizing such natural warning signs and advising people of the dangers accordingly. Education for



3 million children
in the Middle East and North Africa are being prevented from attending school due to conflict.

some instances, schools have become unwitting targets of long-range weapon strikes leaving many casualties as well as the destruction of the school's property. A UNICEF report noted that schools and universities that had been taken over for military purposes were intentionally targeted for attacks in 70 countries over the last few years. It is heart wrenching to learn that over 13 million children in the Middle East and North Africa are being prevented from attending school due to conflict.

Queen Rania of Jordan in 2013 said that children need education more during emergencies. Education can help children deal better with the ordeals they are faced with in times of hardship. It has been noted that schools can provide children

Disaster Risk Reduction has used novel methods including electronic media and simulation exercises to make them more user-friendly and appealing to children. It is also important that educational authorities develop more electronic study materials and establish the necessary infrastructure so that even a displaced child can access learning materials from wherever they are through different electronic media.

Consecutive governments in Sri Lanka did their best to ensure children received uninterrupted education during a 30-year conflict. This prevented damage to Sri Lanka's human capital although during this time there were several incidences of forced recruitment of child soldiers. This is one of the major factors that prevented

total socio-economic instability of the country during this period. Education also served to bridge the gaps between different ethnic groups.

In the wake of any crisis, countries are left to deal with damaged infrastructure and heavily bruised minds. Mending damaged property or infrastructure is easier than mending bruised minds. It is necessary to handle these sensitive situations extremely carefully so that we can heal the wounds and scars that are left in the minds of children and young adults and to ensure the country's steady growth. This is of critical importance for the psychological development of children affected by war or any other such disaster. Sri Lanka has the bitter taste of both. In the midst of a conflict, which was running for three decades, the country then had to deal with the overwhelming damage left by the 2004 tsunami. The devastation of losing one or both parents along with other loved ones left hundreds and thousands of children feeling helpless and without hope. It took many years of careful counseling, psychological treatment and, most importantly, inclusive education to bring them back to a world of renewed hope.

It is necessary to devise special methods of education delivery for those children who have come through crises because many youth are left with lasting physical as well as mental trauma. Novel teaching and learning tools coupled with the use of modern technologies will play a pivotal role in educating affected youth in the aftermath of wars and natural disasters. Our future investment should be targeted towards innovation, Information and Communications Technology in education and disaster preparedness in addition to the development of improved education quality. I urge all countries to consider these issues in the preparation of their mid- and long-term education planning in order to restore the lives and the futures of children affected by disasters by ensuring they continue to have access to education.

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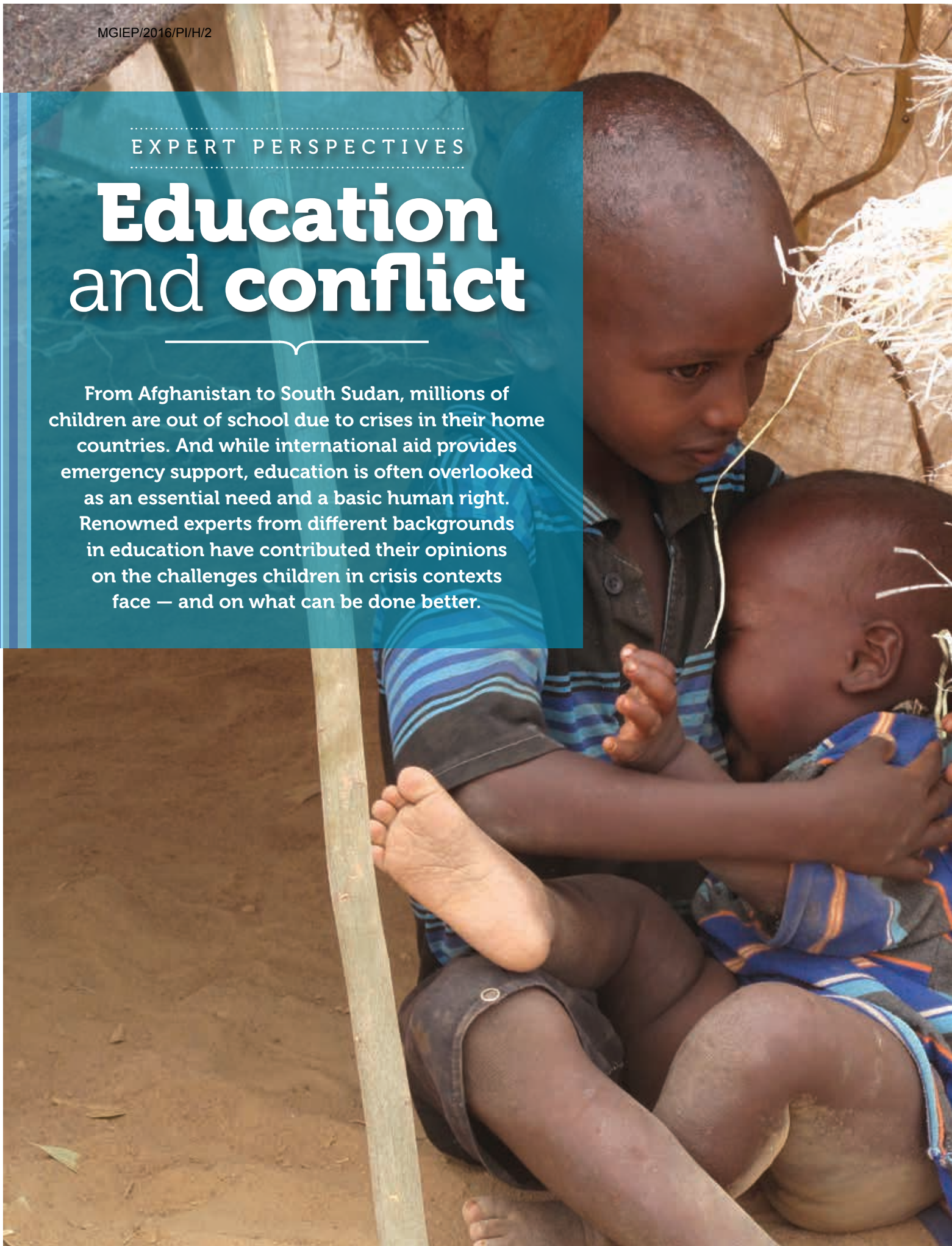
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EXPERT PERSPECTIVES

Education and conflict

From Afghanistan to South Sudan, millions of children are out of school due to crises in their home countries. And while international aid provides emergency support, education is often overlooked as an essential need and a basic human right. Renowned experts from different backgrounds in education have contributed their opinions on the challenges children in crisis contexts face — and on what can be done better.



Education and Crisis:

LESSONS FROM LEBANON



Sarah Lee is a Canada-born aid worker who has been actively involved in the development and humanitarian sector for eight years. Sarah has carried out fieldwork in Iraq, India, Liberia, Vietnam, Ghana and, most recently, in Lebanon. For the past three years, her work has been focused on the Syrian crisis response including leading the development of a non-formal education program for Concern Worldwide in northern Lebanon.

One February morning in 2014, I found myself sitting with a group of Syrian refugee community members in one of Lebanon's hundreds of informal refugee settlements. With a noticeable number of school-aged children joining in on our discussion, rather than attending classes, we talked about education. The community was prioritizing needs such as latrines, water and livelihoods first, which was understandable considering their vulnerable living conditions.

The children in this community are part of the 75% of over 500,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children not accessing formal education in Lebanon. Since the start of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011, almost two million refugees have sought

safety in this neighbouring country. The Lebanese government, humanitarian actors, and host communities have made continued efforts to manage the immense impact the crisis has had on the country's infrastructure and public services including education. With the crisis entering its fifth year, the delicate discussion of a longer-term response continues. There is a risk of an entire Syrian generation being left uneducated, which is well understood by stakeholders, but planning for the delivery of education to the predicted 655,000 school-aged Syrian children in Lebanon by the end of 2015 is not a humble effort.

Even with efforts from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), international donors and UN agencies to make formal education

Concern Worldwide established basic literacy and numeracy (BLN) and homework support programmes. Both were designed to provide children with the key skills expected of them to enter into and be successful within Lebanese public schools.

spaces available through double shift classes, the overwhelming majority of Syrian households are not enrolling their children in school. Contributing factors to low registration rates are numerous, intertwining and complex, including long gaps in education due to the war, the absence of subsidised transportation, household income needs, and highly transient communities.

Recognizing these challenges, national and international organizations have turned to non-formal education (NFE) as a means to respond to the growing education needs of Syrian refugee children. However, no two programmes are alike, and curricula and learning expectations vary greatly depending on each organization's approach. How the success of NFE programmes is measured is still largely discussed between humanitarian actors; however without consistency between programmes, standard indicators for achievement are a challenge to establish. There are also concerns by some that NFE is contributing to the lack of formal school registrations by offering additional benefits that the public schools cannot support, like refreshments or transportation subsidies, which draw more interest from households than over formal schooling.

When Concern Worldwide launched its NFE programme in north Lebanon in 2014, it aimed to strike a delicate balance between the need to respond to the growing gaps in children's education, while trying to avoid a long-term dependency on its services. Field assessments revealed noticeable gaps in literacy competencies for children in school as well as those who were out of school. Concern therefore established basic literacy and numeracy (BLN) and homework support

programmes. Both were designed to provide children with the key skills expected of them to enter into and be successful within Lebanese public schools. The aim is to support the transition to formal education for those children not registered, and improve retention rates for those who were. To mitigate access issues, BLN classes are held in temporary learning spaces established within the informal refugee settlements, and homework support is held within municipality, association, and public school buildings. The programme has had a strong impact on building children's core learning competencies, even when facing challenges which include households relocating mid-course, unsuccessful negotiations for free land for learning spaces, evictions of settlements by the local authorities, poor weather conditions and inconsistent attendance by students. For the 4,400 children, both Syrian and Lebanese, who were reached with Concern's NFE programme, the classes provided a window of educational opportunity as part of a closely monitored programme.

NFE programmes have addressed some of the immediate education needs, but they cannot act as the sole means to support pathways to formal education. Factors such as consistently shifting populations, weak social cohesion between host and refugee communities, household income priorities, reports of corporal punishment, and lack of confidence by households in actual learning outcomes, are external considerations which cannot be resolved by one organization or sector alone. Only after the community referenced above received support in sanitation, was the BLN programme then brought to the site. The opening day of classes saw children up to 14 years old learning to read and write their own names for the first time in their lives. The children have now taken the skills learned and used them to enrol in a MEHE accelerated learning programme, bringing them one step closer to enrolling in formal public schools in Lebanon.

Education is a human right

STORIES FROM AFGHANISTAN

58 million children

are missing out on primary school education and up to two-thirds of them are based in crisis settings.



Pete Simms is from the United Kingdom and has worked in education and development for the last eight years. Originally trained as a teacher, Pete has worked in various parts of Asia and the Middle East, focusing on Iraq and Afghanistan in the last few years. Pete previously specialized in literacy and non-formal education with UNESCO and currently oversees the Afghanistan program for Children in Crisis.

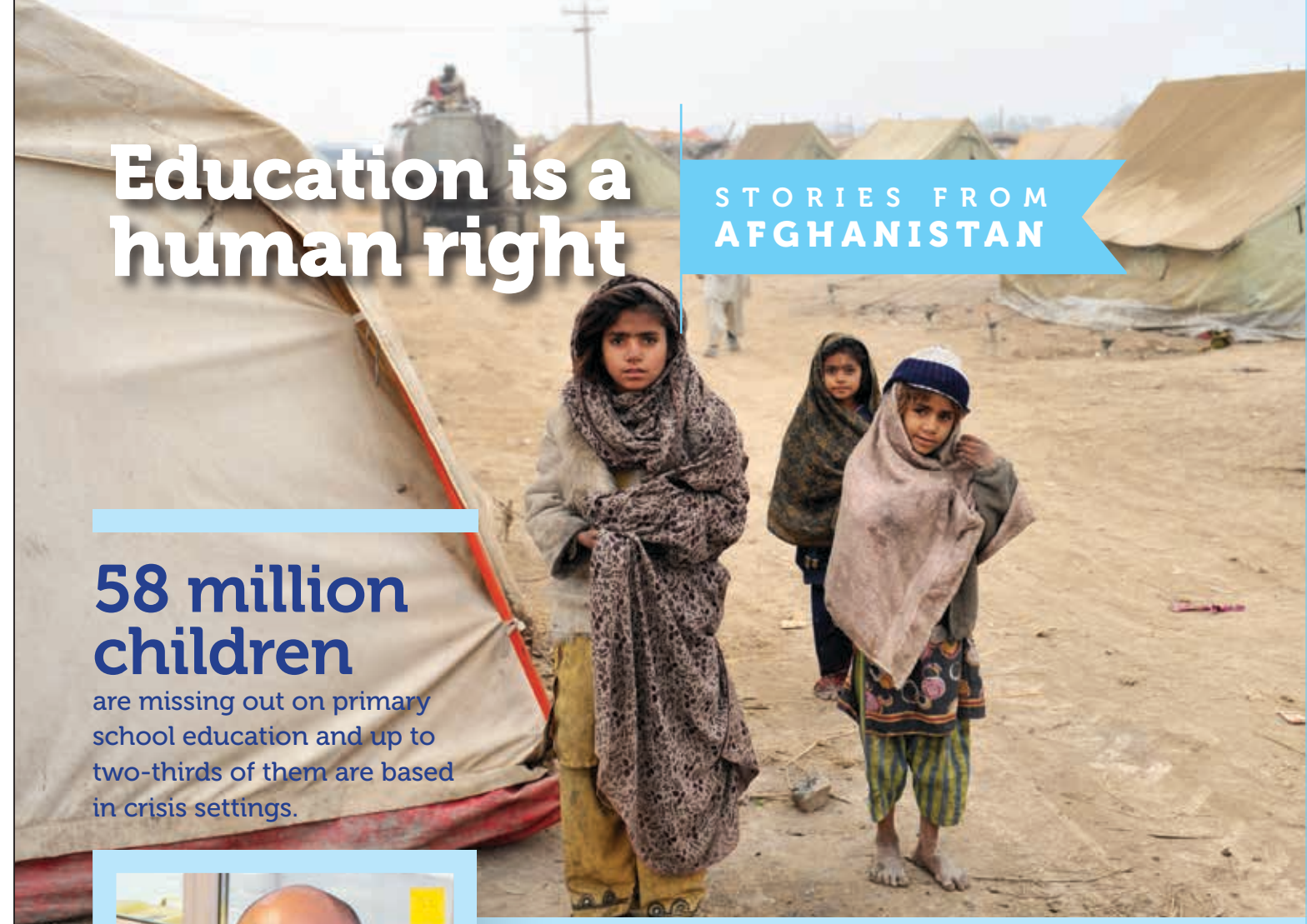
Crisis situations inevitably require resources to be prioritised. Scarcity is inescapable, and may even be a driver of the crisis itself.

There is a hierarchy of human needs with food, water, shelter, and sanitation at the top. Education has long been considered on the secondary tier of services required. This is understandable – many of the benefits of education are long term, indivisible with other influencers on well-being, and frequently assessed through economic return, which may not be of immediate importance in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis or in the midst of a war zone.

However, for two reasons education in emergencies, meaning in a context where state provisions are eroded, non-existent, or not fit for purpose, is now recognised as fundamental in both responding to crises

and mitigating their start. The first reason is the recognition that crises, whether through natural disaster or conflict, are where the most serious challenges exist. Improved monitoring over recent years has told us that of the 58 million children missing out on primary school education, up to two-thirds of them are based in crisis settings. A lack of education in emergency contexts is now the greatest barrier to reaching full primary education. The second reason is the way in which the perception of crises has changed. Rather than short-term emergencies, the majority of humanitarian contexts around the world are now considered to be 'protracted', with conflicts lasting an average of at least a decade.

Crisis are now more frequent, longer, and represent the greatest barrier to accessing education. However, there still remains the issue of outcomes.



The vast majority of funding for education in Afghanistan has gone to the Ministry of Education – building a system from the top down, seeing the children as the end point rather than at the start...In the meantime a generation is missing out on their right to education, and the country is, as a result, losing even more.

Considering that these protracted contexts are inherently unpredictable, the usual returns to education of skilled labour, having socially-aware citizens, and a knowledge-based economy become increasingly less likely in such situations. A wider, rights-based conception of education has developed that instead looks at education as a form of resilience and social justice, a tool for maintaining psychological health, and as a way of integrating displaced populations.

Indeed, the argument should be less about why children in crisis settings should receive an education but rather why they should not. What is different about these children, already suffering from multiple levels of inequality, which means that they are denied access to something we consider a human right for those living outside emergency settings?

Afghanistan, where I have worked for several years, is very much in the midst of a protracted crisis – insecure, politically fragile, poor, and prone to natural disasters. As much as 75% of the population has been displaced at least once in their lives, while the limited reach of public services means that most children do not have the chance to go to school.

For instance, last year I spoke to a girl called Hiba, who was 14 years old, born in Daikundi Province but having left there before she could remember. She moved with her family, first to Pakistan and then back to Afghanistan after a lack of documentation forced them to do so. She had moved to three different provinces in the last five years and is now in Kabul, the capital, in a makeshift house half way up a hillside.

Hiba has had a hard life, and this will continue to be the case. She talked about the places where she had lived; the camps near the border, and the rooms and tents where she had stayed, sometimes for years. She spoke with a mix of dejection and humiliation. We started to talk about school and she suddenly changed. She talked about a small town where she had lived for a year (she thinks it was in Khost Province but could not be sure). It was there that she first went to school. Her teacher was a woman called Mohira. What she remembered most was having a set of colouring pencils for her to draw pictures with. She remembers that she was put in a class with other girls who spoke her language. She made friends, played cricket, and sat and chatted around a big tea urn that was never let off the stove.

The family moved a year later to find work and the next place did not have a school; neither did the place they moved to after that.

The vast majority of funding for education in Afghanistan has gone to the Ministry of Education – building a system from the top down, seeing the children as the end point rather than at the start. Almost nothing has gone to the humanitarian sector. In the meantime a generation is missing out on their right to education, and the country is, as a result, losing even more.

Hiba is now in one of our adult literacy classes. We opened a centre soon after we met. Now 15, she is pregnant with her first child. When I saw her recently she asked me when we would be starting classes for children at the centre.



Neglected aspects during the Reconstruction of Education Systems in Post-conflict Contexts

CASE STUDY OF SOUTH SUDAN



Michael Lopuke Lotyam is the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the Republic of South Sudan. He is the youngest person ever to serve as undersecretary in the country. He also held the post of State Minister of Education in Eastern Equatoria State from 2010 – 2014.

As a young man who grew up and received an education in the war-torn Sudan, Lopuke believes that education cannot wait for the war to end. Currently, as a senior technocrat in the education sector, Lopuke is confronted with the demands of delivering education to children in the war-torn region of the country. Together with other senior government officials, he has managed to mobilize resources for the education of all children in South Sudan.

The people of South Sudan have been forced into a series of emergency situations by senseless wars that have been promoted by successive governments of Sudan from the onset of Sudan's independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Rule. According to Douglas H. Johnson, Sudan was the first African territory administered by Britain to be granted independence after World War II with Sudan's civil war also being the first in post-colonial Africa having started a few months before independence on 1 January, 1956.

Sudan's civil war is complex and it is difficult to single out a specific cause of why it started. The conflict has been drawn primarily along religious and ethnic lines

between the predominantly Arab and Muslim government based in the north and the Christians and animists from a variety of ethnic groups. In justifying this argument, the military government of President General Abbud followed a policy of Arabization and Islamization in the south of the country, focusing on education. The missionary schools were transferred over to government control and the Arabic language was progressively introduced as the medium of instruction, while the activities of the Christian missionaries were placed under restriction until all in the south were expelled in 1964. For economists, it was a war between the impoverished herdsmen and civilians of the south and the north who were being made wealthy from oil profit.



Education in South Sudan has survived through several major periods of neglect and conflict: a) Anglo-Egyptian rule 1898 – 1955; b) Post-independence Sudan 1956 – 1972; c) Inter-wars period 1972 – 1982 d) The Sudan People's Liberation Movement 1983 – 2005; e) CPA Interim Period and Post-Independence South Sudan 2005 – 2015. However, in this paper, we will briefly examine the reconstruction efforts made in the post-conflict periods and also examine the impact of the current conflict on the education system.

The Education Rehabilitation Project received **USD 45.4 million** which was used during the six-year interim period to build **52 primary schools** and **33 training rooms and dorms** in multipurpose education centers.

Twenty-one years of civil war in Sudan came to an end on 9th January, 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Nairobi, Kenya between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Among the six protocols of the agreement, *Protocols on Wealth Sharing* provided the strategies for sharing the existing national resources, mobilization of external resources and the implementation of the reconstruction programs.

Two trust funds were established in 2005 as part of the CPA *Protocol on Wealth Sharing*: the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-National and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Southern Sudan. The total funds received for MDFT-SS was USD 728 million, which then went to 21 projects in five Strategic Priority areas. The Education Rehabilitation Project received USD 45.4 million which was used during the six-year interim period to build 52 primary schools and 33 training rooms and dorms in multipurpose education centers. No money, however, was used to improve the levels of Early Childhood Development Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training and secondary school education in South Sudan.

Impact of the current conflict on education in South Sudan

On 15th December 2013, violence broke out in the South Sudan capital city of Juba as a result of political misunderstanding within the leadership of the ruling party, SPLM. The violence quickly spread to Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity States. With the vicious circle of violence that pitched the SPLA-IO led by former Vice President Dr. Riek Machar Teny and the national army SPLA under the leadership of H.E Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, three main towns of Bor, Malakal and Bentiu became battlegrounds as opposing forces continued to claim control.

The conflict continues to affect the lives of millions of people. According to South Sudan UN-OCHA 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan, tens of thousands have been killed or injured while many others have lost their homes and livelihoods. Since the beginning of the current crisis, some 1.9 million people have been displaced from their homes; 1.4 million of which are still inside the country while the rest are now refugees in neighboring countries. The conflict also affects the 244,600 refugees currently inside South Sudan as over 100,000 have sought refuge from attacks in Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites inside UN bases.

In the three affected states of Greater Upper Nile, for example, Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), which were due to be conducted in the second week of December, 2013 have not taken place to this date in Upper Nile and Unity States. Jonglei State managed to conduct PLE where 60% of the registered candidates were able to sit these. In February this year, 89 boys who were due to sit PLE were abducted in Upper Nile Wau Shilluk – a small town north of Malakal – by militia forces.

Since the current crisis began in December 2013, 1,188 schools in the three most affected states in Greater Upper Nile

Conflict has a devastating impact on education, both in terms of the suffering and psychological impact on pupils, teachers, and communities, and in the degradation of the education system and its infrastructure.

have been closed; about 10,000 children have been recruited into armed forces and groups since January 2014; more than 90 schools in the country are occupied by fighting forces while over 800,000 children have been internally displaced. Eleven containers full of primary school textbooks which were part of 9.4 million primary schools textbooks and readers printed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) with the support of the Department for International Development (DFID) were set on fire in Malakal town in November 2014 while other learning and teaching materials fell into the hands of warring parties and were misused. Thousands have fled to the neighbouring countries of Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Those who could not cross the borders ended up as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps mainly in Lakes, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria States. Others who could not move at all in the embattled towns of Malakal, Bentiu and Bor ended up in Protection of Civilians sites under the protection of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

While much of the attention tends to be directed to the embattled states of Greater Upper Nile, little is afforded to IDPs' host states within the current conflict. The influx of people into relatively peaceful states has created pressure on the already

limited services. In Equatoria States, for instance, schools in Juba, Yei, Kajokeji, Nimule, Yambio among others are overwhelmed with the influx of learners fleeing conflict-affected areas. Although article 1 of the Convention against Discrimination in Education (CADE) expresses the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and equality of educational opportunities enshrined in UNESCO's Constitution, Mangateen IDPs camp in Juba remains a typical example of discrimination among humanitarian actors. The camp accommodates over 3,500 children of school-age and despite this it has never attracted the attention of humanitarian actors. UNICEF and other humanitarian actors have continued to behave like tourists who come and take pictures of children playing around in and around the overcrowded camp near the military headquarter; an act of neglect and discrimination in the sphere of humanitarian intervention in South Sudan. Other host states like Western and Eastern Equatoria that host a large number of IDPs are neglected and preferences are made towards the areas where tensions continue to grow.

The Role of Educational Actors in response to the Crisis in South Sudan

Conflict has a devastating impact on education, both in terms of the suffering and psychological impact on pupils, teachers, and communities, and in the degradation of the education system and its infrastructure. Yet research also demonstrates that schools and education systems are surprisingly resilient, and that the disruption caused by conflict offers opportunities as well as challenges for social reconstruction.

Education in crisis affected areas has attracted little attention from donors and humanitarian actors alike in the event



“Education offers practical skills. A teacher in Malakal explained that having schools gives them the opportunity to teach children how to respond to threats of illness, fire or gunfire. A number of parents and children also noted that educated families often made better decisions about where to seek shelter when fighting breaks out. Crucially, education allows communities to prepare and plan for the future, to hope and to envisage rebuilding their lives. This is vital if development gains are to be sustained.



“Education cannot wait for the war to end

of humanitarian emergency responses until, that is, the ground-breaking report published by Susan Nicolei and Carl Triplehorn was released in 2003. Earlier, education was placed as part of a long-term intervention that did not correspond well with immediate humanitarian needs. This understanding tends to ignore the fact that education is not about preparing young people for future challenges. According to Susan Nicolei education provides safe spaces during crises, is life-saving and provides vital psychosocial support, which is crucial to the longer-term development of children, youth and communities. It is also significant to the success of interventions in other sectors, such as water and health. Education is vital for the peace and stability of countries (INEE, 2010) and is often identified as a high priority sector by affected communities themselves (Save the Children and NRC, 2014).

In a research paper carried out by Save the Children International with a consortium of international organizations in South Sudan, it was established that: “Education offers practical skills. A teacher in Malakal explained that having schools gives them the opportunity to teach children how to respond to threats of illness, fire or gunfire. A number of parents and children also noted that educated families often made better decisions about where to seek shelter when fighting breaks out. Crucially, education allows communities to prepare and plan for the future, to hope and to envisage rebuilding their lives. This is vital if development gains are to be sustained.”

Schools in crisis affected areas act as a zone of peace in South Sudan, a shelter for children who are separated from their parents, a rallying point for the provision of curative and preventive health services, a place for psychosocial support for traumatised children, and as a secure place to live as warring parties can act humanely towards school facilities.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) with the support of 25 active partners formed a Crisis Response

Plan to address the situation. Prior to the eruption of the conflict, MOEST was in its first year of implementation of the School Capitation Grants, Girls’ Education South Sudan (GESS) challenge funds. The government in the 2014/15 fiscal year allocated the equivalent of USD 20.3 million and again a similar amount for 2015/16. The Department for International Development committed GBP 6.5 million for a period of 5.5 years beginning from April, 2013 to September 2018. Last year, 2,718 primary and 204 secondary schools received capitation grants for the first time; while 25,438 received cash transfers each being the equivalent of GBP 28.

Reaching out to children in opposition-controlled areas and refugee camps in neighbouring countries

On 6th – 8th February 2014, MOEST convened an emergency meeting attended by the state ministers of education and development partners to determine the direction in which education actors should follow during this time of crisis. The meeting resolved that “**education cannot wait for the war to end**”; that the current conflict has nothing to do with the common vision of the people of South Sudan and hence access to education should not be restricted with regard to any kind geopolitical control. Today, education partners are operating from the capital city of Juba and reaching out to children in need in the entire Greater Upper Nile region in all the areas under the control of the government or opposition. For example, the Girls Education South Sudan programme funded by DFID is supporting schools and girls in both government and opposition-held areas of Unity and Jonglei States, and in a few areas of Upper Nile, regardless of which schools are still



operating. UNICEF and a large number of NGOs in the EiE Cluster have provided schooling in PoC camps and temporary shelters under the ‘Back to Learning’ initiative funded mainly bilaterally with some limited support from the Common Humanitarian Fund.

The approach of the international community in crisis affected situations needs to focus on long-term issues such as the professional development of teachers and the construction of learning space, and focus on equitable accessibility of humanitarian benefits to all citizens.

Establishment of parallel systems and neglect of relatively calm areas

With the emergence of another humanitarian intervention in South Sudan, however, humanitarian actors sometimes appear to be returning to old ways as seen during the 16 years of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). OLS was a humanitarian intervention led by the United Nations. It was the first humanitarian programme that sought to assist IDPs and war-affected civilians during the on-going conflict with a sovereign country, as opposed to refugees beyond its border. It created an equivocal and temporary ceding of sovereignty to the UN of parts of South Sudan that were outside government control. The ceding of sovereignty in areas outside government control created a tendency for humanitarian actors to undermine the responsibility, leadership and ownership of local and national authorities. Even with the establishment of the Government of South Sudan following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and the subsequent declaration of independence in July, 2011, some international community actors were often viewed by the South Sudan government as undermining the

sovereignty of the Republic of South Sudan. There is a risk that this trend can develop into a culture of dependency on external actors and create a negative impression amongst the population towards the government. At the same time they also do not plan for the sustainability of the programme beyond the donor-funding period. While much current international interventions seem to focus on the three affected states of Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei, often little attention is given to the relatively calm and peaceful states, which also have similar dire needs with regards education, water and sanitation, health among others. The international response appears to demonstrate that where there is smoke, killing and destruction, only to these areas do such actors go, thus ignoring areas of stability and relative peace. For example, Greater Pibor Administrative Area has become a new attraction point and hub for humanitarian agencies following the conclusion of a 3-year conflict in the area when the Government of the Republic of South Sudan signed a peace deal with the Murle tribesmen under the command of David Yau Yau SSD/A-Cobra Faction of Jonglei State on 9th May, 2014 in Addis Ababa. Such approaches can serve to encourage and justify the initiation of armed conflicts in the region, which suggest that the only way the needs of a community can be heard by both government and international community is by taking arms against the system.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges that South Sudan has gone through in the last 60 years, education has become a means through which people find hope in their lives. The approach of the international community in crisis affected situations needs to focus on long-term issues such as the professional development of teachers and the construction of learning space, and focus on equitable accessibility of humanitarian benefits to all citizens.



Dana Burde is Associate Professor and Director of International Education at New York University, an affiliated faculty member at NYU Abu Dhabi, NYU Wagner School of Public Service, and the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University. She is the author of *Schools for Conflict or for Peace in Afghanistan*, which recently won the Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award. She is also the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal on Education in Emergencies*. Her research focuses on the effects of conflict on education, the efforts of humanitarian organizations to mitigate these effects, and the relationship between education and political violence or peace. Her research has also been published in *Comparative Education Review*, *International Journal of Educational Development*, *American Economic Journal—Applied*, *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, and the *New York Times*. Dana's experiences as an aid worker and international education consultant include work in Latin America, Africa, and Central and South Asia. She has a PhD in Comparative Education and Political Science from Columbia University, an EdM from Harvard University and a BA in English from Oberlin College.

CHOOSING HOPE OVER HATE

A CALL TO EDUCATORS EVERYWHERE

Two galvanizing events occurred this fall within the space of nine weeks. One served to support refugees. The other produced a backlash against them. Both are instructive for educators everywhere and represent many of the key issues in the field of education in emergencies today: access, funding, protection, and quality.

The drowning death of the 3-year-old Syrian refugee boy in Turkey in the first week of September 2015 focused the world's attention on the plight of refugees in a way that has not happened to date since the Syrian crisis began. The image of this carefully dressed boy lying face down in the sand captured the fraught and dangerous journey of displaced people as they are smuggled from Syria across Turkey onto rickety boats bound for Greece, confronting border guards in the Balkans, and running toward buses bound for Austria or Germany. The picture crystalized for the world what aid workers have long known: that refugees are just like us and parents of refugee children, like parents anywhere, will go to any length to provide them with

a better future, especially with regard to education. It seemed that there had been a dramatic change in the treatment and acceptance of refugees. That is, until two months later..

Flash forward to November 13. A group of urban terrorists took aim at Paris and managed to coordinate enough guns and ordnance to kill or injure over 400 people who were simply engaged in their everyday activities—eating dinner, spending time with friends, attending a music concert. Although seven of the eight attackers were born in France or Belgium, one had traveled on a Syrian passport, apparently not his own. The generosity and support for Syrian refugees that had swelled after the image appeared of the boy on the beach suddenly receded and reversed as quickly as it had emerged. Local and world leaders denounced open borders in Europe, and US politicians demanded that the US stop accepting refugees. Politicians in Western countries began denigrating Muslims with suggestions that have not appeared before in modern public discourse.

Academics and practitioners working on issues related to education

...in 2014 the number of displaced people reached a record high of 59.5 million, with children under the age of 18 making up 51 per cent of the total refugee population.

in emergencies have never experienced a more urgent or important moment. According to UNHCR, in 2014 the number of displaced people reached a record high of 59.5 million, with children under the age of 18 making up 51 per cent of the total refugee population. In 2012, 59.3 million children of primary school age and 64.9 million of lower secondary age were out of school.

The Syrian crisis encapsulates many of the tensions facing practitioners working on education in emergencies programs as well as the open questions facing academics studying these issues. First, it raises one of the core challenges in the field: the importance of maintaining access to education even in the midst of crises. Whether remaining inside Syria or fleeing to a neighboring country, Syrian refugees need and demand education, dispelling again the myth, common among both humanitarians and outside observers alike,

that education is not a priority among crisis-affected populations. Indeed, desire for the benefits that education can bring is overwhelming, and, according to the results of my research, nearly universal.

Second, despite the need, the right, and the demand for education, funds for education for Syrians in particular and in countries affected by conflict and crisis in general remain scarce and erratic. This is despite the fact that overall official assistance provided by states rose from 2.1 billion USD in 1990 to 18 billion USD in 2011 and also in spite of the corresponding proportion dedicated to humanitarian aid also having increased from 5.8 per cent in the early 1990s to 30 per cent in 2000. In recent years, of the total amount of aid provided to global humanitarian interventions, only 1 per cent was dedicated to the education sector.

Third, as the image of the boy on the beach shows, refugees are vulnerable and children require protection. Educators believe schooling offers two kinds of protection. The first keeps children out of harm's way and engaged in meaningful activities. The second provides them with tools to protect themselves by teaching them about the world around them and supporting their ability to think critically in order to make positive and safe life choices. These assumptions have been recently challenged by attacks on schools, therefore





Above Syrian refugee children attend a make-shift school built by UNHCR. A large number of Syrian refugee children are not in school, despite efforts by governments and UN agencies.

raising questions about how safe schools really are, and by the rise of extremist violence, often perpetrated by educated young men. However, the large majority of educated young men do not turn to terrorism. Rather, terrorist organizations likely recruit among the educated.

Finally, and perhaps most pressing, the Syrian crisis has underscored the fact that the vast majority of refugees in the world in 2015 come from Muslim-majority countries. The plight of Muslim refugees coinciding with the amplification of religious claims of violent extremists has produced counterproductive anti-Muslim rhetoric and a virulent reaction in much of the Western world against refugees as a whole. In education, this perceived ideological battle manifests itself in struggles over content and quality of textbooks in foreign aid-supported schools.

Although parents throughout the world are suspicious of outsiders who suggest what their children should be taught, refugee populations may be particularly

sensitive since outsiders as well as insiders seek to influence and often manipulate them. History shows some suspicions were well-founded. For example, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, the US government—to their chagrin today—funded the design and publication of textbooks called the Alphabet of Jihad Literacy. These books exhorted Muslim children to fight the Soviets, referring to it as their religious duty.

All of these tensions raise urgent research questions. Today, educators and policymakers want to understand the links between negative classroom practices and poor or biased textbooks and behavioral outcomes, to ensure that violent extremism is not promoted but rather diffused.

Yet despite these urgent research needs and calls to strengthen the evidence on which program decisions are based, rigorous research on education interventions and related topics remains scarce and diffuse, which makes it difficult for practitioners to find and apply up-to-date information in the field and difficult for scholars to build a body of knowledge and theory. Research on questions of critical importance to practitioners working in crisis-affected contexts, such as those related to access, funding, protection and quality, as well as research that illuminates the relationship between education and conflict, is especially limited.

In practice, the urgent requests for access to education from some of the most marginalized, remote, and conflict-affected communities in the world, should convince remaining skeptics that education is a real priority even in conditions of war or humanitarian emergency. People in these communities may be occupied with immediate survival, but that does not preclude them from looking toward a better day and a better future with equal urgency. Such a view toward the future is otherwise known as hope, and children's education is an embodiment of hope.

Today, educators and policymakers want to understand the links between negative classroom practices and poor or biased textbooks and behavioral outcomes, in order that violent extremism is not promoted but rather diffused.



YOUTH LENS 2016

How does crisis affect education?

69 million children are missing out on the basic human right to get an education

As many as 69 million children are missing out on the basic human right to an education. Many of these children are out of school because they live in a part of the world that is affected by crises—including extreme poverty, conflicts and natural disasters. Considering the recent violent events taking place around the world, the time to put education first is as crucial as ever. At UNESCO MGIEP, we have decided to launch a photo contest to give young photographers a platform to show how education, and hence the lives of children in crisis-stricken parts of the world, is affected by crisis.

We received almost a hundred photographs from participants between the ages of 18 and 34 from 17 countries across the world, including from Afghanistan, Germany, Indonesia, Tanzania and Turkey to name a few.

The photographs we received capture a broad range of circumstances in which children's access to education is in

jeopardy. These circumstances include violent conflict, persistent poverty, social exclusion, gender inequality and natural disasters. Children living in these situations lose out on crucial years of learning and often experience psychological scars from witnessing or experiencing violence, destruction and other hardships.

Choosing the top three winners was not an easy task as many of the images displayed amazing creativity, talent, and enthusiasm - which made the judging extremely challenging! So we decided to showcase other images as well to give a broader picture as to how the meaning of crisis varies in different parts of the world. The images were evaluated after rounds of thorough discussions where three criteria were taken into consideration — 1) relevance 2) visual appeal and 3) original perspective on the theme. Congratulations to the winners and a huge shout-out to all the participants for capturing their thoughts so creatively. Enjoy!

.....
 ✍ **Sadia Tabassum**
 Communications Consultant,
 UNESCO MGIEP



In Nepal, lack of education is a result of many factors – political instability, poverty, lack of awareness, and most recently the earthquake which has had a great impact on everything including the education system. Most people here are not able to read or write because there are not enough schools in the country, and **hardly any learning and teaching occurs in rural public schools.**



"This image is a clear reflection of how poverty is crushing the dreams of millions of children in Nepal. The photo shows a girl wearing a school skirt uniform and represents the economic instability and living conditions of schoolchildren in the country."



RISHAV ADHIKARI
AGE: 21, NEPAL
FIRST PRIZE

Rishav Adhikari is a photography enthusiast and a traveller. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Computer Science from Pokhara Engineering College, Nepal. He also works as a photographer at Cityof7lakes.com and as an IT Consultant at Hotel Day Break.

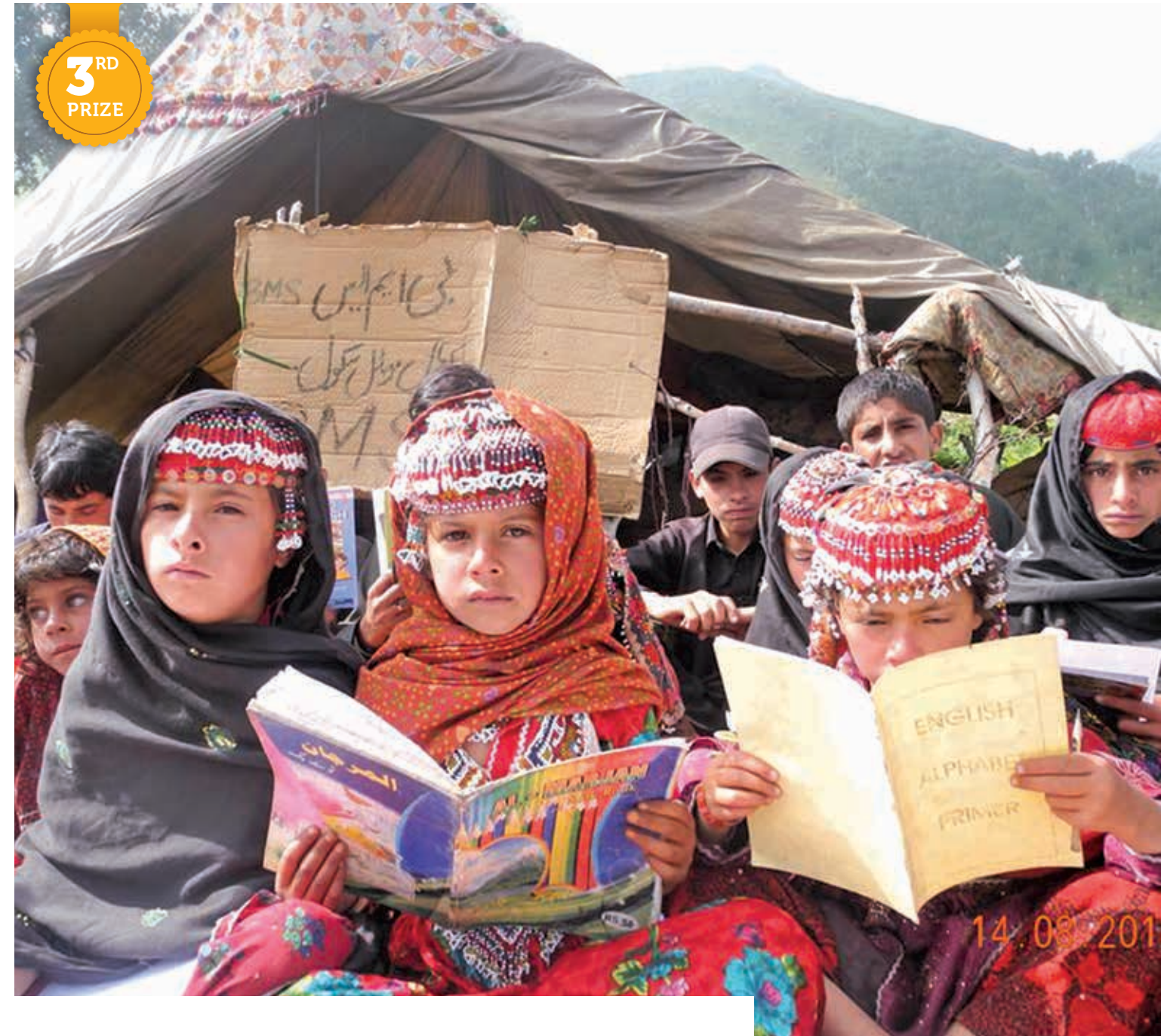


BRIAN OTIENO, AGE: 23, KENYA

SECOND PRIZE

Brian Otieno is a 22-year-old undergraduate student of journalism at the Multimedia University of Kenya. He is a freelance photojournalist in Kibera and is passionate about meeting new people, telling their stories and raising awareness about different issues.

“7-year-old James Omondi sits alone in a Standard 2 classroom at the Olympic Primary School in Kibera, studying all he can while his schoolmates play outside. This comes at a time when the education system in Kenya was undergoing an absolute crisis and teachers were on strike asking for a pay raise in early September 2015. The government later gave a nationwide directive to close all public schools indefinitely because the strike was intensifying beyond its control.”



HAROON JANJUA, AGE: 27, PAKISTAN

THIRD PRIZE

Haroon Janjua is a freelance journalist in Islamabad, Pakistan. He has won several awards for his work such as the 2015 UNCA Award, 2015 Global Media Awards from The Population Institute, Washington DC, and the 2015 IE Business School Prize for best journalistic work on Latin America's Economy in Asia. He can be reached on Twitter @JanjuaHaroon.

“These girls belong to a Bakarwal community in Pakistan. People of this community have lived a nomadic life for generations and are subject to marginalisation. Due to lack of relevant educational opportunities they remain largely illiterate and at an economic disadvantage.”

RUNNERS-UP



📷 **SUPRIYA BISWAS, AGE: 34, INDIA**

"These people lost their legs in the Bhuj earthquake on January 26, 2001. A rural teacher is giving them basic education so they can live independently."



📷 **ISLEM ABCIR, AGE: 23, ALGERIA**

"This photo was shot in Ghardaia, Southern Algiers. These kids live in a neighbourhood that is well known for poverty and segregation. What makes the image special is the happiness you can see on the faces of these children who don't understand the gravity of how lack of educational opportunities can affect their future. They are enjoying their lives irrespective of the odds."



📷 **SOURAV KARMAKAR, AGE: 34, INDIA**

"This is a very common scene in Kolkata during the monsoon season. These kids are on their way back home from school. As you can see, there isn't enough space for kids to sit properly and their safety is also a concern here as these rickshaws are not always in good shape. Their wheels break down very often in this season because of uneven roads and water logging."



📷 **ABDUL GHAFAR RABIU**, AGE: 28, NIGERIA

"10-year-old Aminu and his 3-year-old sister Amina live in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Durumi, Nigeria. Like many other children, they are out of school due to the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group."



📷 **MATEJA JEREMIĆ**, AGE: 19, SERBIA

"This shows the real picture of our society. They take away creativity and individualism and leave no space for real learning to happen. You learn something that you are not interested in...and what happen to things you don't need? You throw them away, just like these books."



Photo credit: Sigrid Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP

Overcoming crises through technology: UNESCO MGIEP and digital learning

At UNESCO MGIEP, we believe that technology and digital tools both play fundamental roles in teaching and learning. As a result, all of our programs integrate Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) into most of their activities. From the Knowledge Commons, which provides a virtual platform for young people and experts from different backgrounds to voice their opinions, to the Wealth Generation Game, which allows players to experiment with policy decisions affecting the economy and the environment, our activities reflect our belief that future generations will increasingly rely on these tools to understand and interact with the world in which they will live.



Digital learning helps children in India escape poverty



Photo credit: Sigrid Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP

Sigrid Lupieri
Public Information Officer, UNESCO MGIEP

It's an early July morning in Tikiapara, one of Calcutta's poorest neighborhoods—one with an unenviable reputation for drugs, crime and high illiteracy rates. But at the Samaritan Help Mission School, in the heart of the slum, the voices of children chanting the national anthem waft through the humid Monsoon air. Then, the bell rings and hundreds of students in crisp blue uniforms pull out their notebooks and begin their unusual lesson plan.

“Technology is a very big, cheap and attractive tool...Technology attracts children to come to school, keeps them interested and retains children in school.

Mamoon Akhbar, principal and founder, Samaritan Help Mission School

In one of the Spartan classrooms with wooden benches and peeling paint, the teacher switches on a projector and begins a Power Point presentation on English grammar. In another classroom, ninth graders listen to a teacher explaining algebra equations on a video conference call. In the school's only computer room, students squeeze

onto benches and on the floor, working in teams to create a slideshow on the origins of coal. For many of the school's 1,500 students, most of whom are sons and daughters of daily laborers, rickshaw pullers and migrant workers, this is their first experience of using a computer.

“Technology is a very big, cheap and attractive tool,” says Mamoon Akhbar, the school's principal and founder, sitting in his cramped office plastered with children's drawings and motivational quotes. After dropping out of seventh grade because he could not afford school fees, Akhbar managed to complete his education and began teaching children in his home in 1999. Today, he oversees two schools which offer classes in English and use technology to reach a total of 2,500 children in some of Calcutta's poorest communities.



Photo credit: Saptarshi Ray/PRAYASAM

As part of a growing trend, affordable technology is helping children in impoverished or remote locations to access an education they would otherwise have to forego. With a youth population expected to be the largest in the world by 2020 and youth illiteracy rates hovering above 10 percent, digital learning may help develop the skills that many students need to compete on the job market. In particular, the use of ICTs in classrooms can extend student participation from poor or marginalized communities, decrease drop-out rates, and provide access to experts around the world at any time.

“Technology attracts children to come to school, keeps them interested and retains children in school,” Akhbar says about reduced drop-out rates and higher levels of student engagement in his classrooms. In addition to providing Skype lessons with teachers from around India and the United Kingdom, the school helps students and their families to open their own bank accounts. While banks usually avoid opening branches in slum communities, online banking and a new smart card system allows everyone to manage their savings. “The Samaritan

Help Mission is not just a school,” Akhbar says. “It is a movement.”

Across the city, in Calcutta’s Salt Lake City neighborhood, young members of a non-profit called Prayasam have been using filmography and smartphone apps to bring about change in their slum communities. More than 1,000 children and young adults are now either leaders or members of the organization. Survey apps on their phones have allowed them to map their communities and ask local governments to provide access to safe drinking water.

Their short films on the importance of vaccinations and mosquito nets have helped reduce the incidence of malaria by 50 percent and have received international acclaim at film festivals.

Under the watchful eye of the organization’s founder, Amlan Ganguly, the children and young people take classes on gender equality, film-making and leadership skills. All members have to attend school and must give back to their communities by teaching what they learn to their peers. “Most people say we have nothing,” says 17-year-old Salim Shekh, a project associate at Prayasam and a film-maker. “But that is not true, we have resources.” Since joining the organization



Photo credit: Saptarshi Ray/PRAYASAM



Photo credit: Sigrid Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP

eight years ago, Salim says he has changed considerably and has gained the trust of his family members and friends. “I am responsible and I think about my community,” he says.

Across the country in the capital, New Delhi, children living in city slums are also gaining access to computers and educational games. In a community in Chanakyapuri, where ramshackle houses hug high, barbed-wire embassy walls and where women line up in the summer heat to collect water from a truck, children crowd around two unusual-looking ATMs. Painted a bright, cheerful yellow, the machines are sturdy computers built to weather any climate and heavy usage.

What had started out as a social experiment in 1999 is now an international project called Hole-In-The-Wall, which sets up computer screens in poor or remote locations to allow children to teach themselves to use technology as a tool for learning. After setting up a computer in a slum, the founders of the organization realized that children who had never been exposed to computers quickly grasped the

...computer literacy and educational games are more than just teaching tools. Children who are technologically empowered, ...gain a different perspective on life and a new vision for the future.

basic concepts and were able to teach their peers how to play games.

“This proves that, irrespective of location, culture, or ethnic background, children are the same,” says Purnendu Hota, the project manager at Hole-in-the-Wall. “What drives them is the curiosity to know.” With more than 300 computer stations around the world, the organization has been tracking its users’ progress. According to Hota, children using the computers perform better in school, are more internet savvy and are overall more confident. Furthermore, children sharing the computers learn the value of collaboration and of teaching their peers.

On a weekday afternoon, the yellow computers in Chanakyapuri are in full use. Small groups of children crowd around the screens and cheer each other on. Nine-year-old Ankush is absorbed in a game of intergalactic warfare which also teaches basic principles of math. When asked whether he had ever seen a computer before, Ankush looks up from the screen long enough to shake his head. He types in the answer to a subtraction and a spaceship flickers and falls off the screen. According to Subhash Swraup, who runs a small store selling chicken and snacks next to the computers, more than 100 children show up in batches every day to play with the computers. “The parents in the community are happy because the children are learning something new,” he says.

However, for Akhbar, Ganguly and Hota, who are using modern technology to help children access a better education, computer literacy and educational games are more than just teaching tools. Children who are technologically empowered, say the determined trio, gain a different perspective on life and a new vision for the future. “Often children think, ‘This is my fate, so why try?’ They become fatalists and don’t aspire,” Ganguly says. But computers and modern communications can open a window to the world for many children. “The eradication of poverty starts from the mind,” he adds.



Playing at
policy making:

UNESCO MGIEP's Wealth Generator Game



Geetika Dang
Programme Analyst, Innovations
Team, UNESCO MGIEP

Ever wondered how policymakers cope with catastrophic disasters? Disasters can be man-made or natural, though some argue that almost all disasters are, to some degree, the result of the former. A few would reason that we are, at this moment in time, and as a species and as a civilization, systematically working towards one of the most devastating disasters of all times—global warming.

What cannot be denied, however, are the social and economic impacts of any such disaster on education. When school infrastructure is destroyed due to a calamity, it is often noted that the schools

are then moved to temporary structures which in many cases end up becoming permanent or semi-permanent over time. In areas of conflict, schools are one of the first structures converted into safe havens for fleeing civilians. These structures also over time become permanent shelters for the homeless.

A number of countries affected by natural disasters or conflicts have experienced the above narrative. The earthquake that shook Haiti destroyed or damaged some 4,000 schools. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, temporary learning spaces were set up in large tents with water and sanitation facilities adapted to children's needs.

The earthquake that shook Haiti destroyed or damaged some 4,000 schools. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, temporary learning spaces were set up in large tents with water and sanitation facilities adapted to children's needs. These temporary tents were then over the next few years transformed into semi-permanent structures.



These temporary tents were then over the next few years transformed into semi-permanent structures.

Some would argue that education is ascertained as not an essential service and takes a back seat in the advent of such a disaster. However, by stripping away the child's access to education over an extended period of time we systematically reduce the economic opportunities of that child; and in doing so, indirectly, and somewhat ironically, decrease the economic potentiality of the country. But more importantly, studies strongly suggest that a school's daily routine provides stability and comfort in unstable times, which are essential for a child's mental health and cognitive development.

So, when a country is affected by crisis, why do policymakers repeatedly fail to ensure that education is and remains a priority? One school of thought is that

... when a country is affected by crisis, why do policymakers repeatedly fail to ensure that education is and remains a priority?

a strained country, over an extended planning period, tries to cope with a disaster that has hit its economy and its people by maximizing economic growth — often measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

However, one of its shortcomings is that the GDP often classifies non-infrastructure related investments in education as expenditures. For example, building a school is considered an investment. However, directing resources towards teacher training is considered an expenditure. If we are to truly recover from disasters, it is essential that we take a more comprehensive approach by adopting more holistic indicators that show us the bigger picture. A prerequisite for such an indicator to be effective is for it to adequately capture the investments made in the productive base—the sum total of a country's natural, human and manufactured capital.

The Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI) developed by Nobel Laureate Kenneth Arrow and the Blue Planet Laureate Sir Partha Dasgupta proposes accounting for such a *productive base*. The key advantage of capturing the productive base of an economy is that it makes sustainable development quantifiable and measurable. The indicator moves away from the tenuous and always much debated discussion on what really constitutes human well-being and focuses on the assets that a



society needs to maintain or improve its well-being over time. Such an approach would treat funding for teacher training, which increases the productive base, as an investment rather than an expenditure. This was clearly shown in the Inclusive Wealth Report of 2014 which was produced by UNESCO MGIEP and other partners.

The next logical argument is one that supports the dissemination of the IWI through the education system. We at UNESCO MGIEP believe that students should be taught to think critically and to challenge existing paradigms. There is a growing body of literature that supports the efficacy of video gaming in ensuring experiential and transformative learning. Games such as iCivics that teaches civics, FoldIt that effectively exploits the “power

of many” and Remission that helps young cancer patients with maintaining dialogue have all shown that the purview of impactful games that result in learning has both matured and magnified.

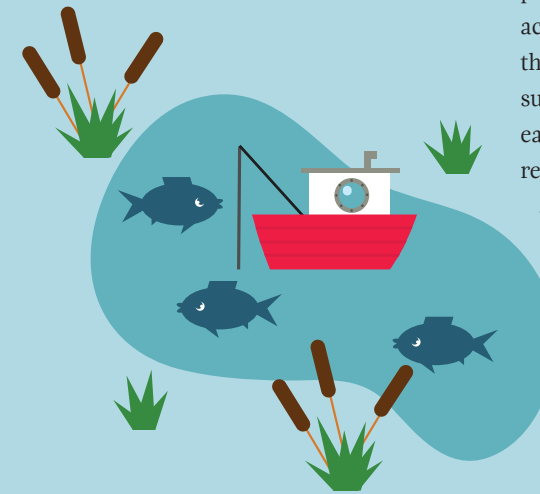
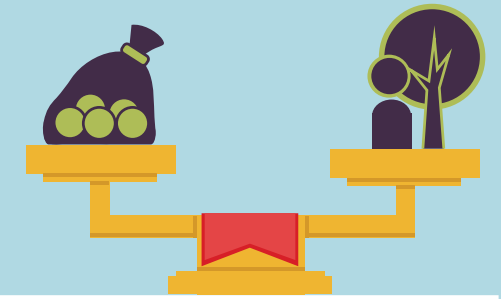
To this end, we have developed a digital simulation game, the Wealth Generator, which captures the essential elements of an economy using the Inclusive Wealth Index, and have used it as a learning and entertainment tool to play policy scenarios and observe potential outcomes.

The wealth generator simulation game starts from a randomized state of biodiversity with the player having a range of natural resources such as oil, forests, minerals and fisheries. The player then assumes the role of a policymaker and is asked to make various investment decisions on human capital, renewable natural capital and manufactured capital while ensuring that the player’s overall wellbeing is maintained or increased across generations. The goal of the game is to balance “Economic Growth” with “Sustainability”. The mechanics of the game have been woven around both the science behind GDP and IWI calculation.

Players are able to see the impact of their policy decisions over a 60-year period, which is divided over 12 planning

...we have developed a digital simulation game, **the Wealth Generator**, which captures the essential elements of an economy using the inclusive wealth index, and have used it as a learning tool in order to run policy exercises and observe potential outcomes... This game is targeted at undergraduate and postgraduate students studying economics, who will assume the roles of policymakers in the near future.

The goal of the game is to balance “Economic Growth” with “Sustainability”. The mechanics of the game have been woven around both the science behind the GDP calculation as well as the calculation of the IWI.

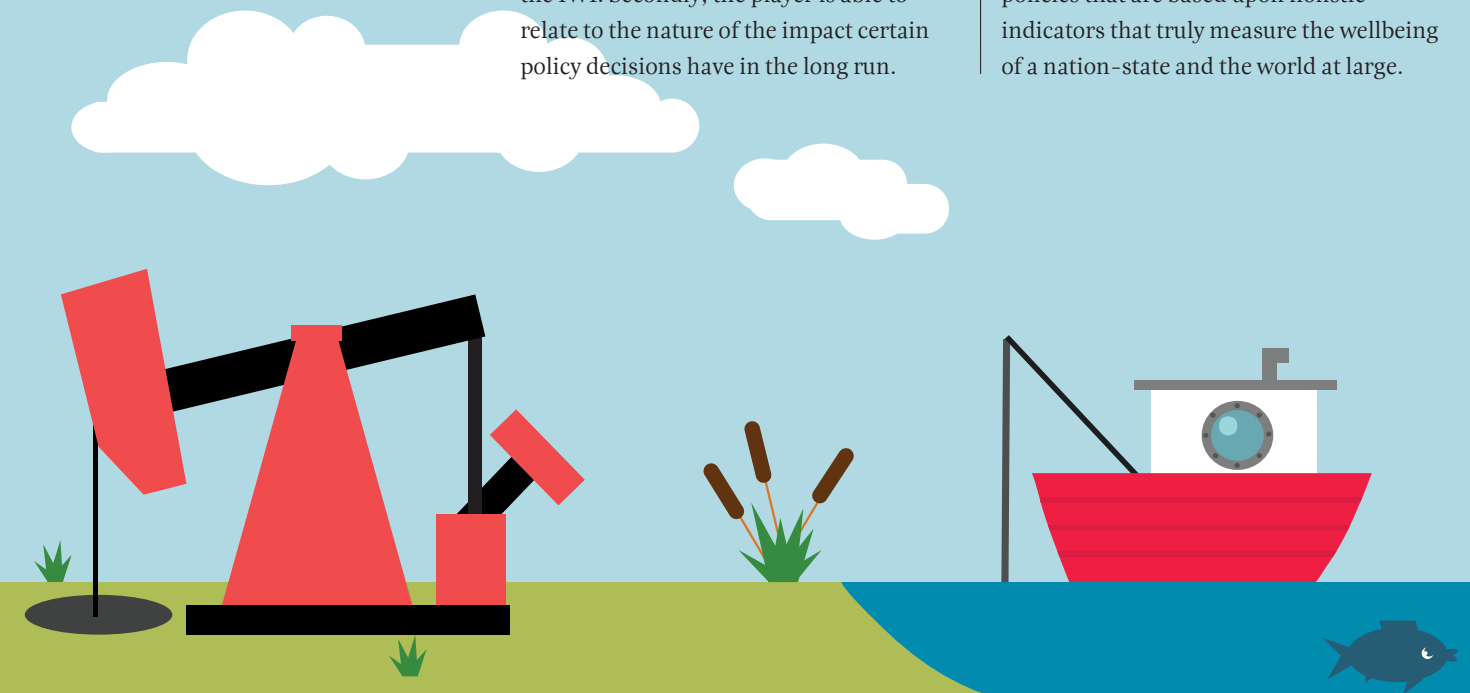
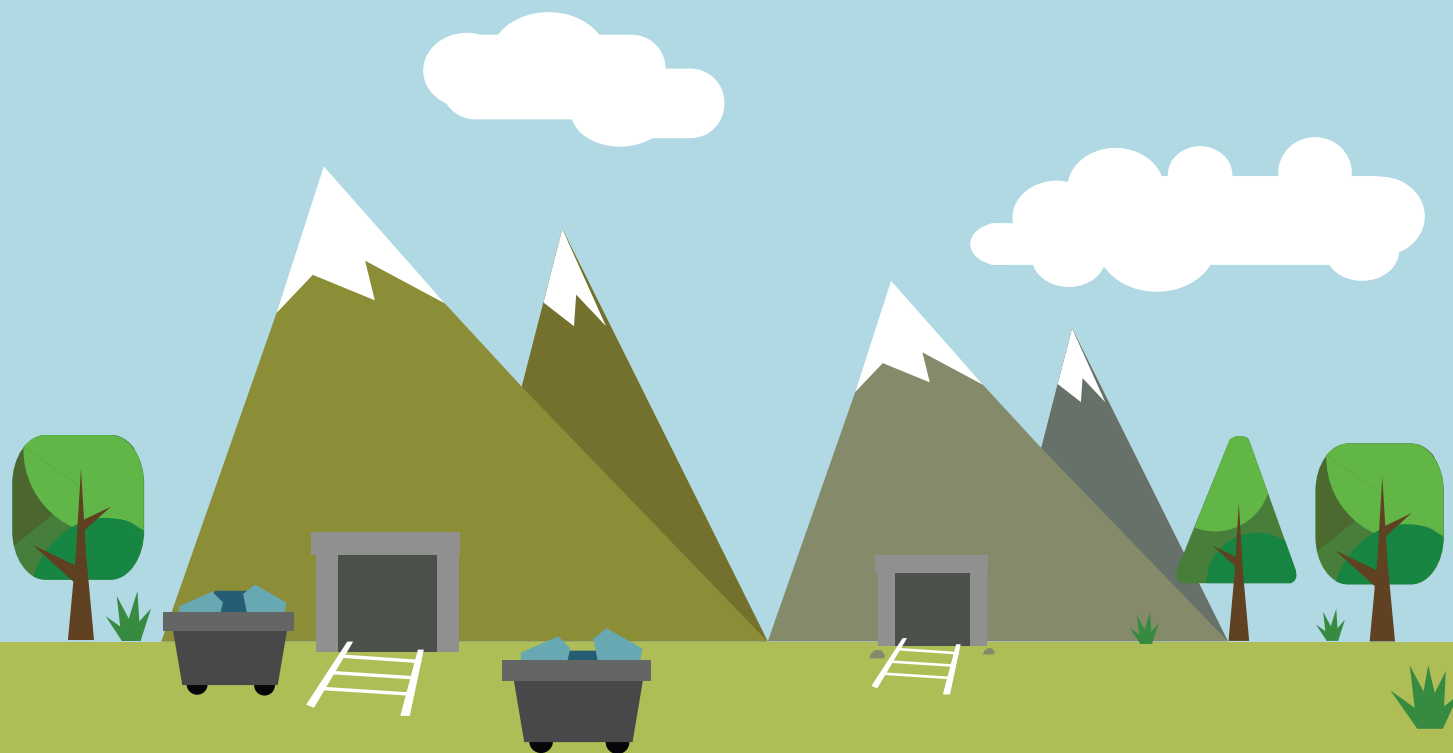


periods of five years each and spanning across two generations. The engagement in the game is enhanced with inbuilt features such as natural calamities, including earthquakes and tsunamis, and how resource mobilization and capital stocks are hit in such times. The game also has event-based shocks like flash floods and oil spills that occur based upon the previous actions of the player. Additionally, keeping the game close to real life mechanics, it has an inbuilt feature of carbon emissions that, again, pans out based on the policy decisions of the player.

Viewing the impact of policy decisions that potentially increase or decrease overall wellbeing, not only for the current generation but also for future generations, results in three strong outcomes. Firstly, the pedagogy being intuitive, visual and fun ensures that policymakers and students, who don’t have exposure to economics as such, are able to understand the IWI. Secondly, the player is able to relate to the nature of the impact certain policy decisions have in the long run.

Thirdly, the player is able to navigate through times of disaster using a number of combinations of investment decisions, and thus learns about the impact of different policy instruments over the health of the economy as well as the environment — imbibing the efficacy of different investment approaches.

This game, we believe, has come around at the right time when the UN has agreed on the post-2015 agenda and has finalized the “Sustainable Development Goals”, recognizing sustainable economic and social practices as the need of the hour. This game is targeted at the moment as a fun game for students at the undergraduate level. A more comprehensive teaching game on the IWI using the full 140 country database of the IWR is being presently built. This game will ideally be used as a classroom teaching tool for students taking classes in sustainable development and sustainability science. With all this in mind, we can only hope for a future that blossoms around sustainable economic policies that are based upon holistic indicators that truly measure the wellbeing of a nation-state and the world at large.





The Knowledge Commons:

Sana Khan
Communications Officer, UNESCO MGIEP

a new online platform to talk about peace and sustainable development



To harness the potential of technology and to bring young people together to talk about issues regarding education, peace, sustainable development, global citizenship and what these things mean to them in everyday life, UNESCO MGIEP has developed a new online platform: **The Knowledge Commons**

Designed to promote dialogue and the sharing of ideas, this online platform specifically seeks to engage with young people across the globe to share ideas and practices from their grass-root experiences. The platform aspires to break geographical barriers and differences between disciplines and aims to build a global community of stakeholders in order to create a discourse on peace and sustainable development, which has become more and more relevant to the times in which we live today.

Knowledge Commons, the virtual interactive platform of UNESCO MGIEP, goes live in February 2016 and will bring together contributors and stakeholders from among educationists, policy makers, experts, civil society organisations and, above all else, the youth. It will serve as a converging point where each contributor has a democratic space to share their experiences and views and to interact actively with like-minded people as well as with those from differing points of view. The platform will provide an excellent opportunity for people to forge alliances and collaborate on projects and ideas. The platform will also allow young people to discover the latest news and relevant opportunities in the field of education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship.

A unique feature of the Knowledge

Commons will be to make relevant the plethora of information already available on the web. The platform makes use of cutting edge technology in order to enable the visualisation of latest trends from social media platforms. The moderators will be able to choose relevant themes and pose questions while the platform is equipped to present all permissible data available from the Internet in an interesting visual format. Such visualisations help to elucidate the discussions and debates and over a period of time these will allow the audience to better observe any significant changes in terms of trends and behaviours. The platform is also equipped to analyse dialogues which are taking place on it. This means that all interaction that takes place on the platform on any given topic can be examined by the complex algorithms built into the platform, which is then used to inform research. This feature works on the principle of anonymity with the end result later made public on the platform itself.

The need for an online knowledge network

Dialogue and the sharing of views is one of the most powerful tools for learning. We tend to learn and absorb more when freely discussing ideas and sharing our experiences. Peer-to-peer learning can serve as a potent method for overcoming the shared problems of the world today.

Dialogue and the sharing of views is one of the most powerful tools for learning. We tend to learn and absorb more when freely discussing ideas and sharing our experiences.



We are looking for strong voices and radical opinions. We are looking to talk about the issues that most concern you and your surroundings

We believe that the youth are the primary stakeholders today and that their opinions need to be heard regarding matters of global significance such as conflict, climate change, poverty and migration.

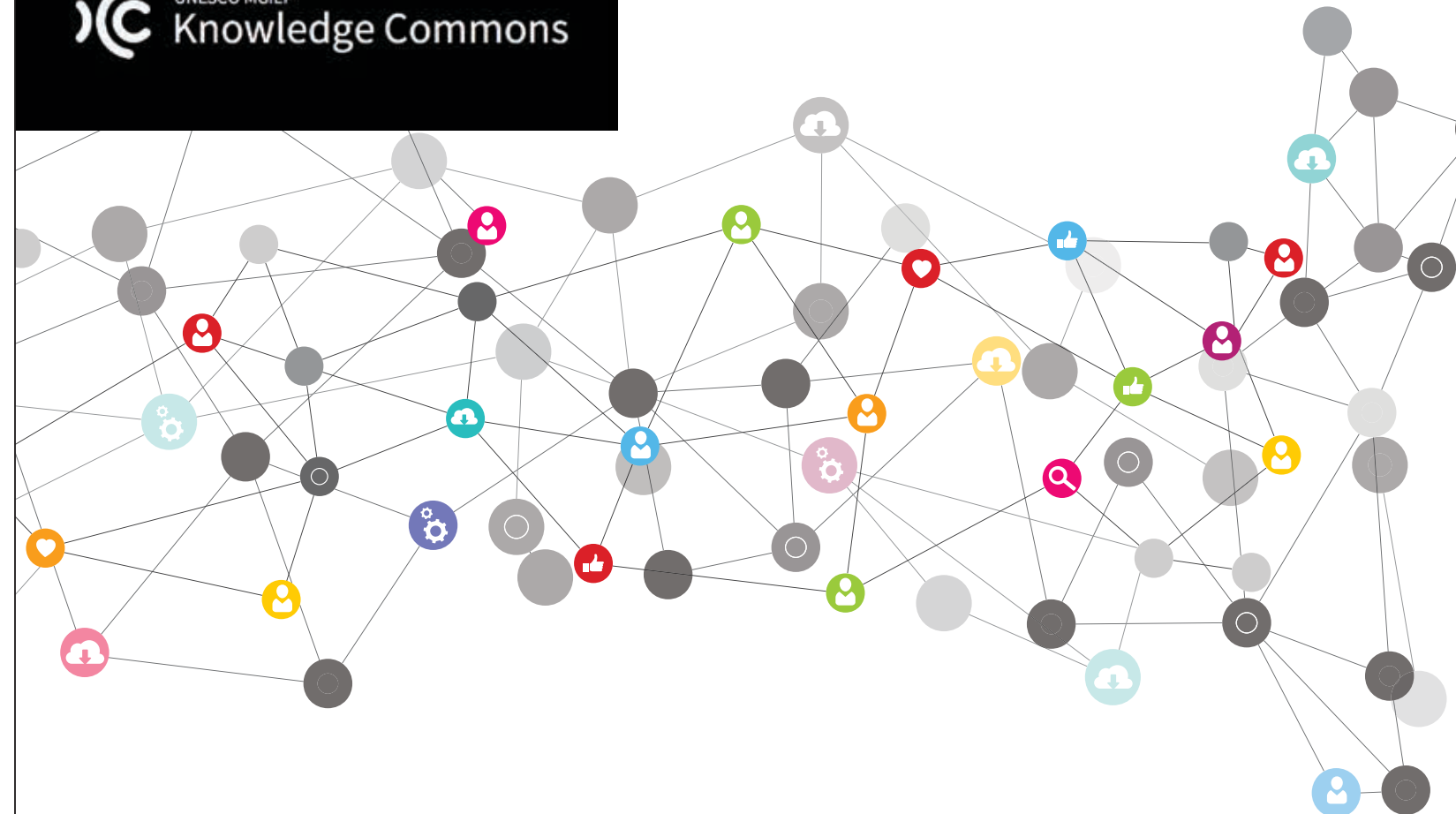
In today's densely interconnected world, the problems of one can take little time to spill over and impact a much larger context. In such a scenario, this interconnectedness needs to be utilised for human learning with experience sharing a proven technique that works to resolve our problems. We are encountering new challenges along the path to progress; problems for which we have no ready-made solutions. It is thus imperative that we forge networks of learning and thus build upon one another's knowledge.

In this quest to collectively tackle our problems, technology can play a crucial role. Regarding how we understand the most pertinent issues; for instance, what different aspects the problem consists of, existing points of view on the matter, its relevance in different regions, possible solutions and impacts and so on, technology intervenes and guides our quest at each and every step. Technology brings with it efficiency, transparency, and a global outreach, which breaks down barriers of geography, compartmentalised academic disciplines and opinions. The power of social media today makes our connections more visible. It has come to play a crucial role in all aspects of our life, whether in international politics, outer space scientific discoveries or simply the sharing of personal experiences.

How can you contribute?

The efforts of UNESCO MGIEP are especially intended to mobilise the youth. The Institute recognises the dearth of meaningful platforms on which young people can not only express themselves, but in fact lead the dialogue for change. The Institute is making a consistent effort to overcome the problem of "youth-washing" that often occurs in international fora and platforms. The idea that youth is now considered passé. We believe that the youth are the primary stakeholders today and that their opinions need to be heard regarding matters of global significance such as conflict, climate change, poverty and migration. Problems of a global nature call for an inclusive approach, a democratic mind-set and for innovative thinking that will affect change for the greater good of all.

We are looking for strong voices and radical opinions. We are looking to talk about the issues that most concern you and your surroundings. Consistent dialogue and collaborative efforts amongst global stakeholders is the only way forward if we are to achieve peace and sustainable societies.



UNESCO MGIEP is launching the **Knowledge Commons** in the first quarter of 2016.

If you are interested in being **a part of a global community of young leaders, then sign up today!**

If you think you have **something to contribute to the discourse on education, peace, sustainable development or global citizenship**, or if you would like to be part of this global movement, please sign up at www.knowledge-commons.com

Knowledge Commons is UNESCO MGIEP's virtual interactive platform, designed to foster networks and collaboration among young leaders across the globe. Using cutting edge technology, the platform showcases unique insights from ongoing dialogues across social media.



From refugee camps to German classrooms: Syrian students build a new life in Germany

Sigrid Lupieri
Public Information Officer, UNESCO MGIEP

A special thank you to Max and Christiane Bauernfeind who helped make our mission in Germany a success.

Six months ago, 57-year-old Mohamad Akram Halawa was a farmer living on the outskirts of Damascus. Today, he is one of 40 Syrian refugees living in a bright yellow house near the centre of Augsburg, Germany. He sits at the head of the table in a crowded room furnished with three beds and a wardrobe. His wife and one of his nephews sit on each side and listen to the retelling of a story they know very well—their escape from war-torn Syria.

After selling their farm and belongings, Halawa and 12 members of his extended family managed to scrape together enough money to pay smugglers to help them flee across the Syrian border. For almost a month, the family traveled through

the night with little to eat along the way. “I can’t describe it,” Halawa says of the 3,400km journey to Germany. Now, the father of six hopes his children will receive an education, integrate into German society and build a better future.

With more than 1 million refugees from Syria estimated to have reached Germany by the end of 2015, stories such as Halawa’s are becoming increasingly common. And while the refugees often come from very different backgrounds, a shared hope is that education in Germany can pave the way towards a brighter future. However, accommodating this sudden influx of children and young adults into German-speaking classrooms is a challenge Germany is struggling to overcome.



Photo credit: Sana Khan/UNESCO MGIEP



Mohamad Akram Halawa with his wife and nephew

SPECIAL REPORT

Syrian Refugee Crisis

In this special report, we investigate how one of the largest and most protracted crises of our times—the crisis in Syria—is affecting education. To this end, we traveled to Germany, a country estimated to be hosting as many as 1 million Syrian refugees, to speak to both refugees and German residents on how the crisis has affected their hopes and dreams for the future.



Photo credit: Sana Khan/UNESCO MGIEP

Refugee children at Augsburg

In the Bavarian city of Augsburg, which has a total population of 300,000, **more than 3,000 refugees have recently settled.**

While previous years saw an average of 40,000-50,000 refugees arriving in Germany, since 2014 these numbers have risen exponentially. In the state of Bavaria in southern Germany, thousands of refugees have been pouring in every day having made long journeys through neighboring countries. While many of these refugees are then sent on to other locations in Germany based on a quota system, nearly 15 percent of all Syrian refugees in Germany end up remaining in the area. In the Bavarian city of Augsburg, which has a total population of 300,000, more than 3,000 refugees have recently settled.

For Ingrid Rehm-Kronenbitter, a school inspector dealing with refugee children in Augsburg, one of the main challenges is the neglect with which education is often treated in conflict and crisis situations.

“The refugees that are arriving today are very heterogeneous and are not all necessarily educated. We have children who are 12 or 13 years old who have never been to school, and children and young people who cannot read and write.” Ingrid Rehm-Kronenbitter, School inspector, Augsburg

For students arriving from war-torn countries who have sometimes spent months or even years in refugee camps, school attendance has often been interrupted. “The refugees that are arriving today are very heterogeneous and are not all necessarily educated,” Rehm-Kronenbitter says. “We have children who are 12 or 13 years old who have never been to school, and children and young people who cannot read and write.”

Other challenges include finding qualified teachers to teach German as a second language, suitable textbooks for teaching basic literacy skills to older children, and trained specialists to support children dealing with emotional trauma or physical challenges. Even more difficult has been providing suitable education for children around the age of 16—when education is no longer compulsory. For 14- or 15-year-olds who do not speak German, time is running out for them to pick up a new language and benefit from the regular classroom experience.

However, as part of a nation-wide effort to integrate children into the German school system, the city of Augsburg has set up 40 transitional programmes for children between the ages of six and 16.

“we accept everyone into the school system so that they have a chance... I believe that every child that comes here has a right to quality education.”

Ingrid Rehm-Kronenbitter, School Inspector, Augsburg

These courses focus on imparting language skills and bringing children up to speed with the German curriculum. According to Rehm-Kronenbitter, most children make the transition into the regular classroom within one or two years. For older children, who are no longer required to attend mandatory schooling, one option is to enroll in vocational training schools which provide skills-based training required to pursue a trade or profession. Special transitional classes now prepare refugee children above the age of 16 for the German job market.

“Whatever their status, we accept everyone into the school system so that they have a chance,” says Rehm-Kronenbitter about the Education Authority’s efforts in dealing with the crisis. “We have to manage it even if the numbers (of refugees) keep growing. I believe that every child that comes here has a right to quality education.”

According to Dr. Stefan Kiefer, the mayor of Augsburg, one of the challenges he is working on is instilling a greater feeling of acceptance among the city’s residents. To this end, he organizes groups of volunteers to help refugees living in government housing and sets up neighborhood meetings for German residents to interact with their new neighbors. “The people in our city need to get to know the refugees to overcome their fears,” Kiefer says. “We have to work together.”

For most refugees, education is essential to creating stability and hope in the face of uncertainty. In one of the government apartments set aside for refugees in Augsburg, Yasmin Kanhash Khedir and her two children are among 10 other families crowding into a three-story building. Before arriving in Germany, the 28-year-old single mother had fended for herself in Turkey where she worked odd jobs as a waitress to make ends meet. The money, however, was not enough to send her children to school. “Now they have been going to school for the past month,” Khedir says of her eight-year-old son and nine-year-old daughter. “They are happy to be able to go back to school.” Their future, she adds, now lies in Germany.

Mohammed Nur, a bright 11-year-old with an infectious smile, also lives in the house with his father. Since arriving in Germany, he has been separated from his mother and three sisters who are living in a refugee camp in another city. Despite his father’s increasingly desperate attempts to reunite the family, bureaucratic hurdles have prevented them from residing in the same place. In the meantime, however, Mohammed has learned German and loves his school. While he doesn’t know what he wants to be when he grows up, he knows his future will likely be in Germany. “In Syria, everything is broken,” he says.

For the Halawa family, life and an appearance of normalcy seem to have resumed. On a blustery day in November, they celebrated a new addition to the family—their first child born in Germany. Passing around a bowl filled with chocolates, Halawa says he is grateful to Germany for the opportunities it has afforded him and his relatives. Especially when it comes to education, he has high hopes for his younger family members. Halawa’s 15-year-old nephew, Ahmed, is studying hard at one of the transitional school programmes and hopes to enter the regular classroom soon. “I want to become a doctor,” Ahmed says.



Yasmin Kanhash Khedir and her son

Photo credit: Sana Khan/UNESCO MGIEP

Syrians Willkommen:

A German organisation helps refugees to settle in

Interview by **Sana Khan**
Communications Officer, UNESCO MGIEP



Photo credit: Sana Khan/UNESCO MGIEP



Jessica Weiss is currently the Program Manager of the Division of Education at the non-governmental organization Ökohaushaus e.V. Rostock, Germany. She is leading the Training of Trainers programme at the organization and is responsible for the implementation and evaluation of projects within the context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). She has extensive experience in working with rural youth, youth in difficult circumstances, and in issues such as migration of displaced populations and ESD. Jessica has been actively involved with designing and implementing educational projects and workshops for the better integration of refugees in Germany. For the past three years she has been responsible for the coordination of the international cooperation project Learning Across Borders.

Q Why do you think it is important to focus on education in the context of refugee integration?

Education plays a critical role in the acceptance and integration of refugees. Our organization came into being during the re-integration of East and West Germany. It has been our experience that awareness and empathy not only work to reduce friction but also pre-emptively resolve a lot of other issues. We have also observed that in regions where there is a lower presence of foreigners, there tends to be higher prejudice against the “other”. It is really quite remarkable how people’s views change once they have to deal with people from diverse backgrounds.

Our work is currently focussed on rural areas in northeast Germany. This region has a high rate of youth unemployment and ranks low in population diversity. These conditions make it easier for extreme ideologies to take root and we have observed a direct correlation between low exposure to people from diverse backgrounds and high unemployment vis-à-vis a rise in fundamentalist ideologies. Hence, education plays a central role in raising awareness and empowering people to make informed decisions about their present and future.

Q What is your typical mode of functioning?

Education is not restricted to schools and formal systems alone. Awareness campaigns, hands-on workshops, public talks – all form a part of education for us. Often our intervention goes beyond schools kids, to their parents and neighbourhoods. It is important to bring about a shift in thinking about the complete environment of a young person.

We run programmes for young people and adults, which are tailored for both local residents and refugees. We often pair up a local German-speaking trainer with a person who is currently, or has in the past held the status of an asylum seeker. This helps put a face to large numbers of previously faceless refugees and make their stories real. These sessions are interactive and we have seen a lot of friction diffuse after people talk with one another.

For the refugees, we offer courses in German language and also try to inform them about their rights under existing legislation. Mixed sessions also help the refugees share their concerns and to develop a better understanding of their new environment. Our aim is to reach a maximum number of people,

“ A challenge in the near future is to ensure the integration of refugee children as soon as possible. There needs to be a concerted effort to make sure that these children gain access to equal opportunities.

so we focus on the training of trainers. These ‘multipliers’ are mostly volunteers and freelancers committed to the cause of education and integration.

Q What are some of the challenges you foresee in the near future?

A challenge in the near future is to ensure the integration of refugee children as soon as possible. There needs to be a concerted effort to make sure that these children gain access to equal opportunities. Due to Germany’s low birth rate and the migration of East Germans to western Germany, much educational infrastructure, especially in East Germany, was rendered useless due to the low population. However, with the current surge in pupil numbers, there is a sudden need to rejuvenate the old redundant infrastructure and create more of it. In addition, we need more teachers who can teach German as a foreign language to Arabic speakers. At the same time, we need to integrate young teachers who can improvise pedagogies and make our curricula relevant to Syrian children.

Q What have been some of your lessons learned over the past few years?

We have learned that raising levels of empathy can change people’s attitudes. On many occasions, it has been helpful to just talk about simple issues like why people leave their homes. And there are a number of reasons for migration, ranging from climate change to hunger and war. Perceptions change when you ask a person to step into the shoes of someone who has had to leave their home behind. When people actually think of the difficult journeys undertaken by refugees and the challenges posed by statelessness, their attitudes begin to change drastically.

At our public events, we talk about the lives of refugees before the crisis. This helps overcome pre-conceived notions about the new arrivals. We speak about their day-to-day struggles such as language barriers, loss of privacy, and lack of medical care. Our overall effort is to raise levels of empathy amongst people and this can only happen through education and vibrant public discourse.

We have also seen that the best ideas and greatest success stories come from the people themselves. Change happens when people take initiative and responsibility for their projects. Global challenges are not only about the negative. The coming of refugees is also an opportunity for Germany to become more diverse.

Youth voices from Germany

refugees and volunteers discuss the Syrian crisis

Living in temporary shelters or apartments around Germany, hundreds of thousands of young Syrian refugees are waiting to find a job, go to school and resume their day-to-day activities which have been disrupted by war. Young volunteers across the countries have signed up to help them settle into their new country. These are some of their stories:

I was working as a software developer in Dubai when the Syrian consulate refused to renew my passport and said I had to either join the military in Syria or pay USD 8,000. I didn't have the money so my brother and I decided to leave. Germany is great for education. I am studying the German language and plan to go to college to study programming.

Sam Kurabatak, 22, Syrian refugee in Augsburg

I am a Palestinian refugee. In Germany, they don't recognize Palestinian citizenship so my ID says "no citizenship". Here, I am taking vocational training courses because I want to work as a hairdresser or a make-up artist.

Abdel Rahman, 19, Syrian refugee in Augsburg

I moved here because of the war and because there was no hope anymore in Syria. Even in the neighboring countries I couldn't send my children to school because I had no money. I am divorced and am taking care of my two children on my own. Now they can go to school and they are happy.

Yasmin Kanhash Khedr, 28, Syrian refugee in Augsburg

My wife and 3-year-old son are living in Saudi Arabia. It's too dangerous for them to travel to Germany so I am waiting for my papers confirming my refugee status. Then I can get permission to bring my wife and son. I hope to offer my son the opportunity to go to school and to have a better life.

Bader Houari, 32, Syrian refugee in Augsburg

When the revolution began, I was studying literature in Aleppo (Syria). Now, I work as a journalist in Germany and run a radio programme for refugees. My radio show focuses on the problems refugees face, tells their stories, and gives information about opportunities in Germany. I hope to go back to university to study politics.

Ameen Nasir, 24, Syrian refugee in Munich

I have been in Germany for nearly two months now and I have met so many nice people. Even when people don't understand my language, they try to help. My point of view about humanity has changed drastically and I have learnt to respect people for who they are. I just want to get on with life and have a decent education. I want to see my family again.

Alayn Badari, 26, Syrian Refugee in Rostock

There was a train from Italy to Munich and I took it. It's really strange how one moment decides your life. Here in Germany it has been really stressful thinking about my family and my future. But now I can finally rent an apartment and study, and I am attached to Munich.

Karmel Zarzar, 24, Syrian refugee in Munich

My duty is to stand at the main station and distribute bananas, coffee and bread to our guests. I will remember this as one of the most gratifying moments in my life.

Katreen, Youth Volunteer helping refugees in Rostock (requested anonymity for security reasons)

When we think of war, we tend to think of large scale devastation and the more overt consequences. However, coordinating the efforts of the refugee camps has given me a glimpse of the real damage done. Loss of privacy, walking across forests with sick children, waiting for food are more harmful for a human soul than one can express.

Reshma Houari, Coordinator Refugee Camp, Rostock

My mother is a pharmacist and my father is a civil engineer. My parents have invested a lot into the education of their four children. I am an engineer and had the privilege of private education in Syria, which is why I can speak English. I did not want to leave Syria but my parents panicked after my 20-year-old cousin died in bomb shelling at the basketball court. Even if I didn't die in the shelling, I would have been compulsorily recruited in the army where I would have to kill people, my own people.

Nour El Sadat, 24, Syrian Refugee in Rostock



Tent housing 400 refugees on the University of Bremen's campus in Bremen, Germany

Photo credit: Sigrid Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP

A meeting of minds

German universities open their doors to Syrian refugees

Sometimes, Karmel Zarzar dreams he is back home in Damascus, Syria. In his dream, he is very happy. When he wakes up in the temporary apartment he shares with four other Palestinian Syrians in Munich, Germany, he thinks about going back.

Home, however, is quickly becoming a distant concept. A little more than six months ago, the 23-year-old graphic designer escaped his war-torn country and boarded the first train headed to Germany. "It's really strange how one moment decides your life," Zarzar said,

staring contemplatively into his coffee mug at a café in Munich, a pair of large headphones slung around his neck.

Tall and lanky, with short cropped hair, brown eyes and thick-rimmed glasses, Zarzar could pass for a student almost anywhere in Europe. Unlike European students, however, Zarzar cannot rent his own apartment, apply for a job or enroll in a university until his papers confirming his refugee status are completed—a process that has taken months. In January, he may once again be transferred to a tent housing more than 300 refugees. He hopes not.

Photo credit: Sama Khan/UNESCO MGIEP



Karmel Zarzar

“Lots of people are against the refugees... You can only understand what that feels like if you have been in such a situation. It's just luck.”

Karmel Zarzar

But more than anything, he hopes he can eventually get into an academy for graphic design and study there. His dream is to create paintings and digital art to represent the voices of the refugees trying to build a new life far from their homes. "Lots of people are against the refugees," Zarzar says in his nearly impeccable English. "You can only understand what that feels like if you have been in such a situation. It's just luck," he adds.

Though higher education in Germany is mostly free of charge, refugees such as Zarzar face particular hurdles due to missing transcripts, different academic credit systems, and a long wait before gaining official recognition as a refugee—a necessary requirement for enrollment. However, new initiatives in Germany may soon offer opportunities for Syrian

refugees with an academic background to study at German universities. For the first time, the University of Bremen, in northern Germany, is opening its doors to the newly established Syrian community—irrespective of transcripts, previous academic credits or refugee status.

The university's IN-Touch programme, listed by the European Commission as an example of good practice and a role model for other institutions, allows all refugees with some academic background and a basic knowledge of German or English to participate in university lectures and seminars, access the library, and connect with other German students. Through a "study-buddy" system every refugee who enrolls in the programme partners with a German volunteer student. The volunteers then help their partners to settle into university life and access the resources they need, including books, to participate in their courses.

According to Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Vice President for International Affairs and Diversity at the University of Bremen, the idea of the IN-Touch programme reflects the university's philosophy of offering accessible, high-quality education, as well as an identity and a home for refugees who have lost both. "The idea of sitting in a tent waiting for a future that may begin in a few weeks, months or even years would drive anyone crazy," Karakaşoğlu says. "We offer access to knowledge, development and education."



Photo credit: Sigrid Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP

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 ✍️ **Sigrid Lupieri**
 Public Information Officer, UNESCO MGIEP

“It’s touching because you can see how this is changing (students’) perspectives and allowing them to prove themselves in an academic environment

Jens Kemper, Project Manager, IN-Touch

With only € 6,000 (approximately USD 6,500) in funding for 2015 and 2016, the programme has started helping around 150 young refugees access the university resources and seminars. After attending lectures and successfully completing coursework, students registered in the programme receive a certificate. Though the certificate is not yet the equivalent of university credits, it allows students to make good use of their time and invest in something meaningful.

“It’s touching because you can see how this is changing (students’) perspectives and allowing them to prove themselves in an academic environment,” says Jens Kemper, the project manager of IN-Touch. “We had underestimated the emotional impact.”

Though support through volunteers and professors has been overwhelming, Kemper says that there have also been challenges and limitations. One of the problems

has been a high drop-out rate. This is often attributable to unaffordable public transportation to and from the university, insufficient language skills, and other family commitments such as caregiving, which take up time otherwise devoted to studying.

For those currently enrolled in the programme, however, the advantages have been apparent from the outset for both German and Syrian students. Pelumi Olusanya, a German student in her second year of public health studies, volunteered to help one of the refugees integrate into the university system. “I’ve learned a lot,” Olusanya, 21, says reflecting on her experience as a mentor. “I never knew anything about Syria and now I get to hear other things from what you hear in the media,” she says, adding that the mentorship has developed over time into a friendship.

Photo credit: Sigrind Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP



Camps for Syrian refugees in Germany

According to Karakaşoğlu, who is also a professor of Intercultural Education, the programme’s benefits go beyond university credits and the possibility of one day earning a degree. The mentorship system ensures that German students are exposed to different realities and begin to appreciate what it means to come to another country as a refugee. Most importantly, student volunteers get to know the refugees as more than helpless individuals and recognize their strength in overcoming challenges and starting their lives again. For the professors, who open their seminars to refugees, this is a first-hand experience of global interconnectedness.

For the refugee students, the experience is about shaping their identity and allowing them to prove themselves in an academic setting. “People need more than shelter and food,” Karakaşoğlu says. “Education is a core human right, but we act as if it were a luxury. In a wealthy country we need to share our facilities with people who can not only benefit but also contribute.” And, even if the refugee students end up returning to their homes in a few years, the programme will have helped to create a bridge between Germany and the students’ home countries. According to Karakaşoğlu, the programme is also an investment in international relations.

Other universities around the country have also begun to recognize the merits of the programme, which may soon be replicated in major cities such as Bonn and Berlin. An estimated 80 universities in Germany are also setting up similar initiatives. In the meantime, the University of Bremen is starting to scale up its efforts in the hope of accommodating close to 500 refugee students in the coming years through increased federal funding.

“Academic knowledge seeking is universal. This is where we can all meet at the same level and this is what higher education can contribute,” Karakaşoğlu says.

Olusanya’s mentee, Saleh Shehada, a Syrian student from Aleppo, sits across from her in an empty seminar room. At 27, Shehada has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and has worked for several years in marketing. But when he was drafted into the army, he fled to Germany in the hope of finding a job and continuing his education. In July 2014, after a harrowing trip partially conducted on foot, he spent the last of his money and arrived in Bremen. Here, he slept on a mattress in an overflowing camp and says he felt hopeless and depressed.

After hearing about the IN-Touch programme, he enrolled in psychology and marketing psychology classes and began to take a new interest in his future. “I got out of my depressed mood and started to get involved and people here were very helpful,” Shehada says. “Students approach me and translate for me because the psychology classes are in German. And I help them with their projects.” Though the current courses do not offer him credits or a degree, he hopes to become fluent in German and someday study neuroscience. “I really like it here and I would like to stay,” he says.

“Education is a core human right, but we act as if it were a luxury. In a wealthy country we need to share our facilities with people who can not only benefit but also contribute.

Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Vice President for International Affairs and Diversity at the University of Bremen

Photo credit: Sigrind Lupieri/UNESCO MGIEP



Pelumi Olusanya, a German student mentors Saleh Shehada, a Syrian student from Aleppo

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO AT UNESCO MGIEP

Youth Consultations on Higher Education in India

April–September, 2015



In 2015, the Government of India (GOI) undertook a nationwide series of policy consultations on the redrafting of the National Policy on Education. In order to support the aims of

GOI, UNESCO MGIEP facilitated a nationwide exercise to incorporate youth voices into the consultation process, with a special focus on higher education. UNESCO MGIEP designed and implemented a mixed methods approach to gather the opinions of a diverse group of young people (aged 18-29) on how higher education could be improved in India. The report will be released at the *Talking across Generations* dialogue event on 15 February, 2016.

Launch of LIBRE (Learning through Issue-Based Reverse Embedding) Pilot Portal on Climate Change

July, 2015



The first pilot portal on Climate Change was launched in July inviting teachers from across the world to come together and collaboratively create lesson plans to teach climate change through their own subjects. The portal is hosted on www.debategraph.org and an advisory group has been formed to guide the initiative. The next focus for LIBRE will be on the theme of migration.

International Workshop on Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education

July 27-29, 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



Our Programme Officer, Yoko Mochizuki, with educators from nine countries

UNESCO MGIEP participated in this workshop organised by UNESCO Bangkok and is planning to actively participate in the project by providing support for teachers to engage on an online platform. The project aims to empower teachers in Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

International Youth Day

12 August, 2015



UNESCO MGIEP celebrated International Youth Day 2015 with the theme of youth civic engagement by inviting blog posts from youth ambassadors from across the world. The young people narrated their experiences with civic engagement such as mobilizing civil society and communities to promote voluntarism, care for the global common good, and other forms of activism.

Featuring voices from our youth partners and young leaders around the world

Webinar with Asi Burak – 'Games for Social Good'

20 August, 2015



Asi Burak, the President of Games for Change

During the most recent instalment of the UNESCO MGIEP webinar series, Asi Burak, the former president of Games for Change, made an impassioned case for using video games for the greater good, with an overview of the

latest trends and core challenges. He shared prominent case studies and success stories from around the world, including his own unique entry into the field; namely, leading the team behind the award-winning game PeaceMaker.

13th International Association of Research on Text Books and Educational Media

11-13 September, 2015, Berlin, Germany



UNESCO MGIEP presented a paper on 'Embedding concepts of Peace and Sustainable Development in textbooks of mainstream subjects' at the 13th International Association of Research on Text Books and Educational Media (IARTEM) Conference.

Consultation on Youth Leadership | 25–27 September, 2015, Rajasthan, India



UNESCO MGIEP organized a consultation with 20 youth experts on youth leadership at the Neemrana Fort Palace, Rajasthan. Experts from the fields of psychology, economics, youth leadership, social media, grassroots activism, peace education, education for sustainable development, and spiritual education were invited to brainstorm on the visions of youth leadership for the 21st century in the wake of rising extremism, increasing youth population and poverty, advancements in communication and the spread of social media.

Participants at the workshop at Neemrana Fort, Rajasthan

9th UNESCO Youth Forum on the Theme 'Young Global Citizens For A Sustainable Planet' | 26–28 October, 2015, Paris, France



In partnership with the UNESCO ESD Section, UNESCO MGIEP organized a capacity-building session on youth-led monitoring of SDG Target 4.7. UNESCO MGIEP supported 13 youth from 11 countries to participate in the forum. Simon Kuany Kiiir, a young refugee, presented his journey from South Sudan to Kenya and his pursuit of academia at Symbiosis University in Pune, India. The recommendations from the UNESCO Youth Forum were presented at the 37th Session of the UNESCO General Conference, 2015. The survey on understanding youth perspectives and priorities from the SDGs was also conducted at the forum.

Launch of the 'Wealth Generator' game—beta version

15 September, 2015, New Delhi, India



A snapshot of 'Wealth of Generations'

The UNESCO MGIEP Executive Committee members played the game "Wealth of Generations" during a facilitated session. The game was created to give players an understanding of how investment decisions by policy-makers can encourage or discourage sustainability.

Lecture based on the 'Wealth Generator' game

| 14–15 October, 2015, Tokyo, Japan



UNESCO MGIEP's director, Dr. Anantha Duraiappah, addressed a class of graduate students on the topic of inclusive wealth. The students then played the game in a facilitated session, which helped incubate possible improvements for a bigger

IW digital simulation project tentatively entitled 'Levers of Change'.

Announcement of the Winner of UNESCO MGIEP's Gaming Challenge | 29 October, 2015



UNESCO MGIEP announced the winner of its Gaming Challenge, which was piloted in 2014. The winning team, Pocket Scientists from Hungary, was chosen by our jury after a rigorous selection process. The team will produce a digital game that can be used to promote a greater understanding on issues regarding peace and sustainable development to be released in 2016.

A snapshot of the winning game, World Rescue, by Pocket Scientists from Hungary

India International Model United Nations Conference

21 August, 2015, Aamby Valley City, India



Professor Anantha Duraiappah, the Director of UNESCO MGIEP, presented at the India International Model United Nations. He spoke about the concept of Youthwashing, in which young people at international conferences and dialogues are marginalized and their voices are rendered insignificant.

Participants at a Model UN Conference

Incubator Workshop for the Gaming Challenge Winner

7-9 December 2015, Budapest, Hungary



The Pocket Scientists, the winners of the UNESCO MGIEP gaming challenge, received intensive mentoring on their game design from a panel of international experts. The focus of the workshop was to explore ways to create games that are both educational and entertaining.

Sketch of a potential element of the game created by one of the Pocket Scientists

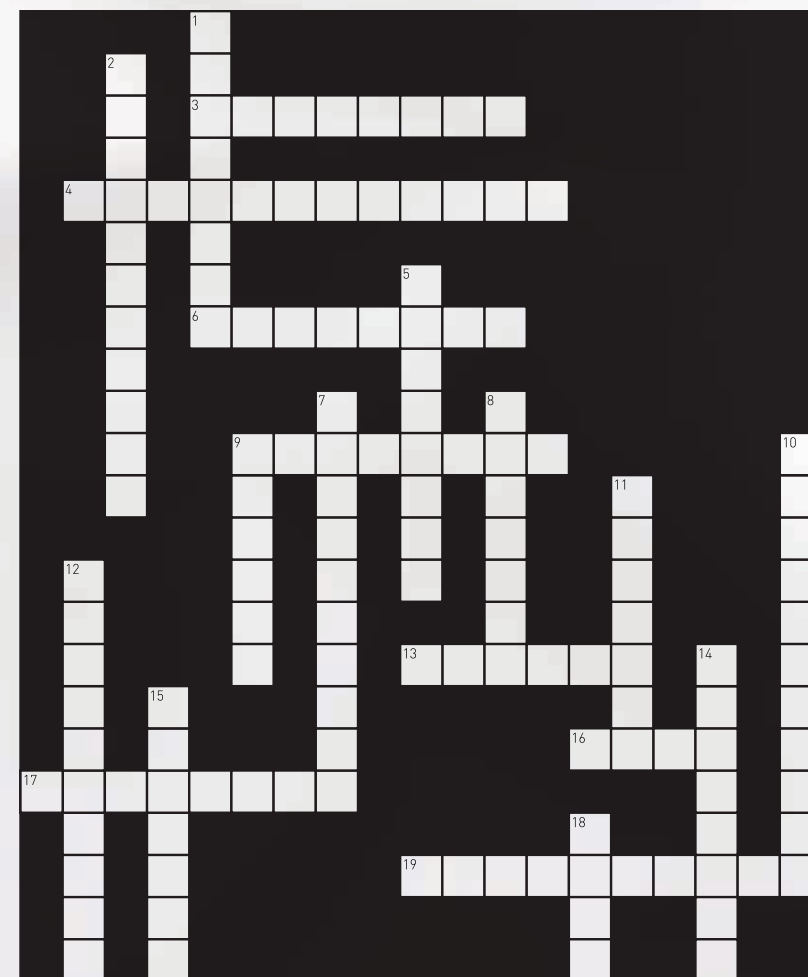
World Encounter on Sustainable Actions conference

24 November, 2015, Saltillo, Mexico

Ms Deepika Joon, a Programme Officer at UNESCO MGIEP, spoke about the Global Action Programme on ESD and youth leadership responses to contemporary challenges.

Free as a word

Follow the clues on
education and crisis



Across

3. What people use to communicate with each other
4. Payment for work completed
6. Being able to read and write
9. A word for school term
13. What university graduates receive
16. Continent in which Syria is located
17. ID documentation needed to cross borders
19. Educational institution where people attain degrees

Down

1. The C in UNESCO
2. Fitting into a new community
5. Capital city of Syria
7. Paid work
8. Essential skill for understanding written words
9. Where education for youth takes place
10. Chance
11. As well as seas and oceans, these separate countries
12. Successful conclusion of school or university
14. Acquiring knowledge
15. A school day is made up of these
18. School work station

* CHECK OUR WEBSITE (mgiep.unesco.org/bluedot/) FOR THE SOLUTION.

Temporary Life

LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF
ARMENIA'S 1988 EARTHQUAKE

In 1988 a devastating earthquake hit Armenia, destroying homes and infrastructure, killing more than 25,000 people, and leaving half a million homeless. Almost three decades later, the small country in the heart of the Caucasus region is still struggling to come to terms with the disaster.

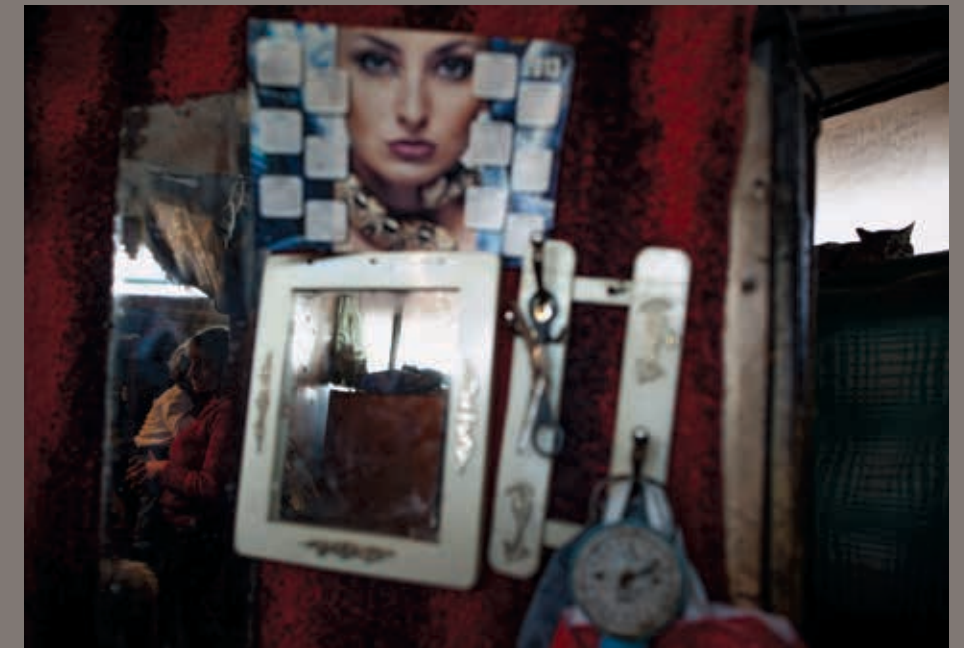
A former hot-spot for cakes and coffee, this building is now a temporary shelter for 77-year-old Chichak Petrosyan and his 12-year-old granddaughter Sosi, who attends school whenever she has clothes and shoes to wear.

MORE THAN 4,000 PEOPLE STILL LIVE IN TEMPORARY SHELTERS—THEIR LIVES SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY.



A look at the shanties — temporary shelters — constructed from scrap metal and scavenged material in the Savoyan district.

MANY OF THESE FAMILIES LIVE ON AS LITTLE AS 18,000 DRAMS (OR USD 50) A MONTH, WHICH MEANS THAT EVEN CHILDREN HAVE TO WORK



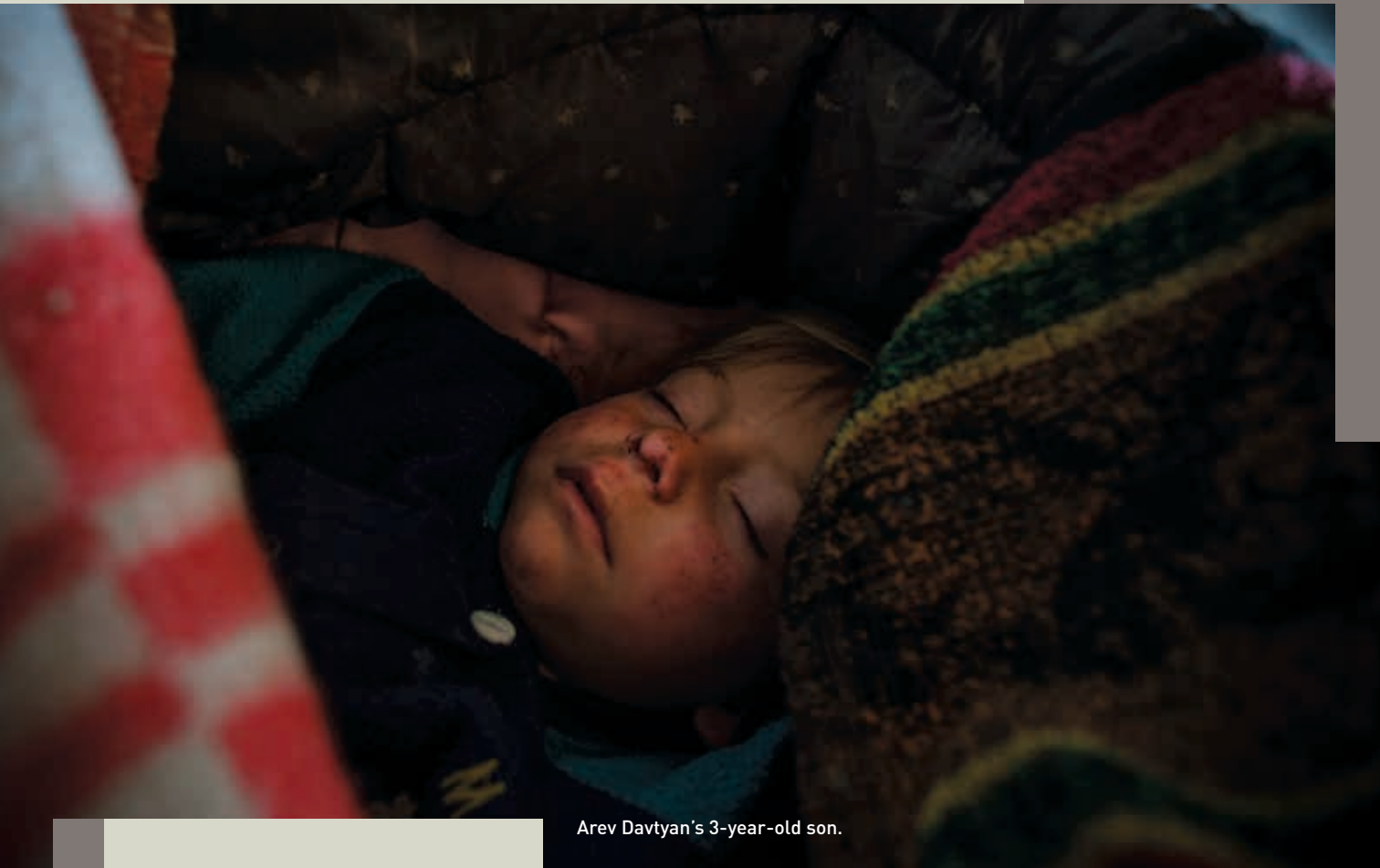
Above and below: Chichak's cafe cum home.



RESIDENTS LIVE IN SHANTIES, CONSTRUCTED FROM SCRAP METAL AND OTHER SCAVENGED MATERIAL.

Gyumri, the country's second-largest city, bore much of the damage. Though new districts have sprung up from the rubble over the past 25 years, the Shirak region, of which Gyumri is the capital, harbors the highest poverty rates in the country. And despite efforts to rebuild the area, more than 4,000 people still live in temporary shelters—their lives suspended indefinitely.

Savoyan is one of the 95 *domik*—temporary shelters—in Gyumri, created after the 1988 earthquake. Here, residents live in shanties, constructed from scrap metal and other scavenged material. Many of these families live on as little as 18,000 drams (or USD 50) a month, which means that even children have to work—often at the expense of their education.



Arev Davtyan's 3-year-old son.

WHILE MANY FAMILIES RELY ON THE EXTRA INCOME, CHILDREN WHO ARE FORCED TO WORK ARE DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

While labour market analysis from 2014 shows that adolescents aged 15-19 years comprised 1.2 percent of the workforce, in reality teen employment rates are severely underreported. As unskilled laborers, children find odd jobs washing cars, carrying groceries and produce at the local markets, working in the fields, or earning 1,000 drams (about USD 2.50) a day for opening and closing mini-bus doors. While many families rely on the extra income, children who are forced to work are deprived of their right to an education.



Dogs and cats sleep with the kids to keep rats away.



Arev Davtyan 6-year-old daughter in her flower shop cum home

26-year-old Arev Davtyan lives in the 'flower shop' where flowers were sold during Soviet times. Now the walls of this flower shop are made out of glass and cardboard. Dogs and cats sleep with her 6-year-old daughter and her 3-year-old son to prevent rats from gnawing the children's ears or noses.



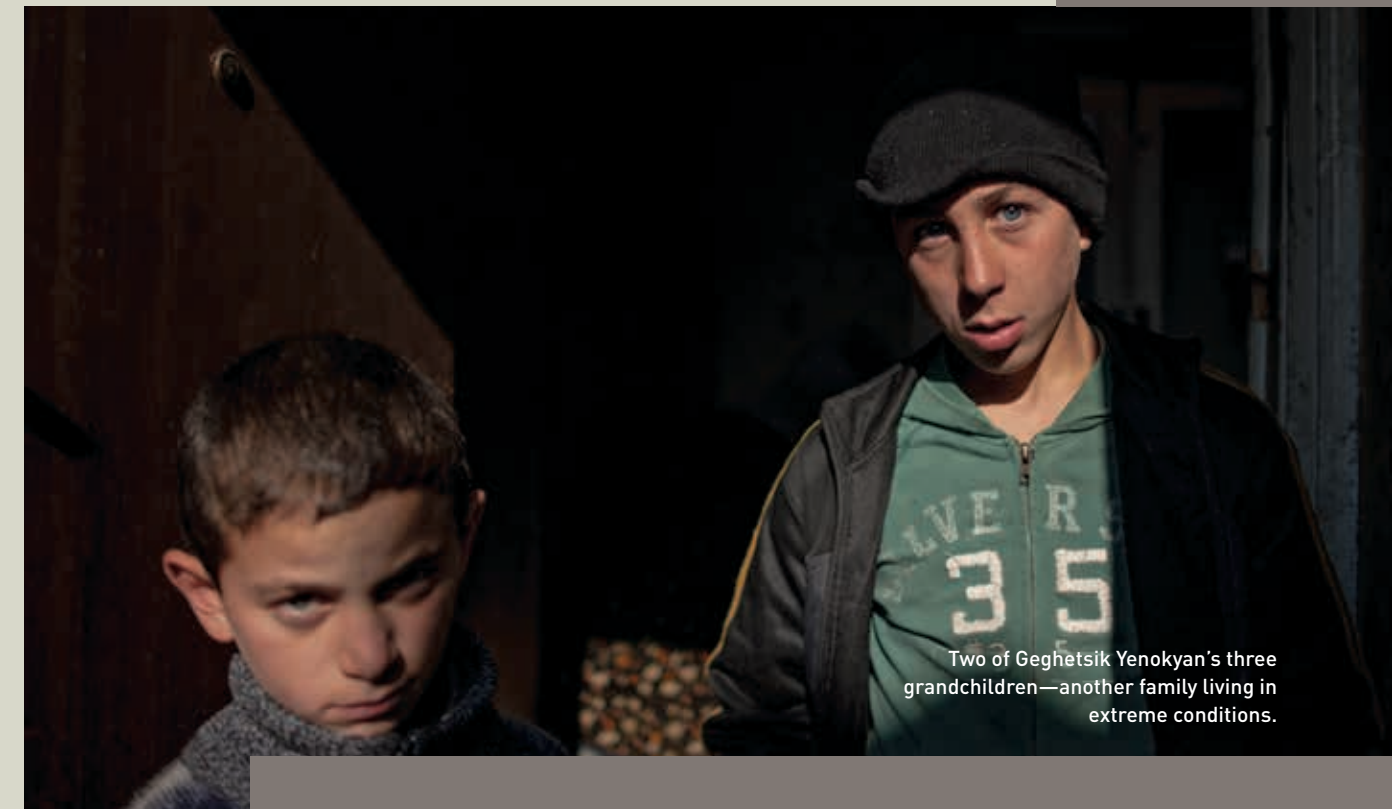
Arev Davtyan



Armine Davtyan with her younger daughter, Marianna.



Chichak Petrosyan



Two of Geghetsk Yenokyan's three grandchildren—another family living in extreme conditions.

THE CHILDREN OF THESE THREE FAMILIES ARE DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHTS TO EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND OFTEN A FUTURE

Chichak Petrosyan is 77 and lives with her 28-year-old daughter, Armine Davtyan, her son-in-law, who suffers from a mental disability, and her two grandchildren—Sosi, 12, and Marianna, 4. The family lives in the neighboring 'cafe'.

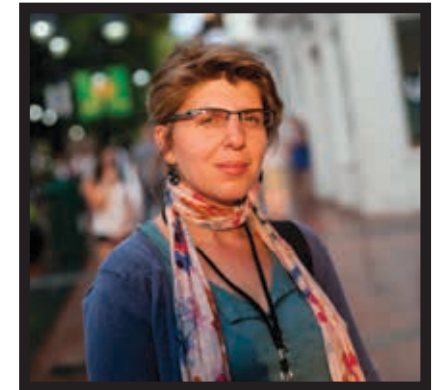
Before the earthquake, coffee and home-made pastries were served here; today it is a shelter to five people living on an income of 65,000 dram (USD 155). Twelve-year-old Sosi attends school whenever she has clothes and shoes to wear.

Farther down the road is 72-year-old Geghetsk Yenokyan's domik. After her son's death, her daughter-in-law left home and she is the one looking after her three grandchildren between the ages of 9 and 12. She supports her family on her meagre

pension and social benefits amounting to 40,000 drams (\$100). Leading in extreme poverty in temporary shelters, the children of these three families are deprived of their rights to education, healthcare and often a future.



The Savoyan district is one of the 95 domik districts created after the earthquake.



📷 NAZIK ARMENAKYAN

Nazik Armenakyan has been working as a photojournalist since 2002 with Armenpress news agency, Yerevan magazine and Forum magazine among other media outlets. She has completed freelance assignments for Agence France-Presse (AFP) and Reuters and currently works as a photojournalist with ArmeniaNow.com.

Nazik completed a photojournalism course at the Caucasus Institute, organized by World Press Photo in 2004-2005. Since 2007, she has been working on long-term documentary projects such as "Survivors", featuring portraits of survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. In 2009, she won the Grand Prix award and first place in the "People and Faces" category in the Karl Bulla International Photo Contest in Russia, and picked up third place in the "Portraits/Stories" category in the Photojournalism Development Fund contest.

In 2011, Nazik received a Magnum Foundation Human Rights scholarship to study at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts as well as a grant from the Open Society Foundation (OSF) for her second long-term documentary project on the LGBT community in Armenia. Nazik is one of the founders of the 4 Plus Documentary Photography Center, which works toward the development of Armenian documentary photography.

What does happiness mean to you?



Children from Delhi's Jamghat School drew us their answers

Sadia Tabassum
Consultant - Communications, UNESCO MGIEP

UNESCO MGIEP has taken up an exciting initiative called "Adopt a School". Under this project, we have been tutoring 25 students from Jamghat (<http://jamghat.org/>) — a non-governmental organization that provides an environment where street children can evolve as physically and emotionally healthy, self-dependent individuals. Students visit our institute on a monthly basis to participate in a series of ICT-based activities designed to supplement their existing education with additional computer training and to increase their oral and written English comprehension — two key areas necessary for future professional success in a rapidly changing, globalized economy.

We have been doing different activities with these children for the past nine months, such as creating a Gmail account, writing emails to pen pals, or preparing PowerPoint presentations. But our latest activity was a bit different — it was about encouraging them to express themselves and to draw something that makes them happy. Each one of them drew different things, such as their friends, family, nature, cartoons, sports and even historical monuments with a caption in English. It was amazing to see their perspectives on happiness and how creatively they were able to express them. Here are a few of their drawings to enjoy!





SAY YES

TO A NEW WAY OF DOING THINGS

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