

UNICEF

STUDY GUIDE

Preliminary Information about UNICEF

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) operates as a United Nations agency which started its mission in 1946 to deliver emergency assistance and ongoing support to children who suffered from World War II. The organization achieved permanent status in the United Nations system during 1953 while its mission expanded to all parts of the world. Today UNICEF conducts its operations in more than 190 countries and territories to fulfill its mission of safeguarding and enhancing the welfare of children throughout the planet.

The organization works to accomplish its main objectives which provide children with access to education and healthcare services and nutritional needs and clean drinking water and security from all forms of violence and abuse and exploitation. UNICEF operates through development programs and emergency response services which include armed conflict areas and natural disaster zones and refugee emergency situations because children need special protection during these times.

The organization works together with governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities to execute programs and policies. NGOs function as essential partners to UNICEF operations because they provide direct humanitarian assistance in conflict zones through emergency relief and educational programs and child protection services. They also assist in collecting field data which helps UNICEF determine its decision-making process and response plans.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) serves as the main method used to help children who have joined armed groups in regions affected by conflict. The DDR programs which UNICEF uses for child protection work to ensure that child soldiers are safely taken from armed forces while their weapons are acquired and they are officially released from military service. The reintegration process focuses on supporting these children who need to return to regular life through educational programs, psychological assistance, vocational training, and family reunification. UNICEF and its partners have implemented DDR programs in conflict-affected countries like Sierra Leone and South Sudan which help thousands of children restore their lives and achieve successful social integration.

UNICEF operates its funding model through monetary donations which governments and private donors and organizations provide. The organization exists to provide every child with necessary resources which will enable them to

stay alive and develop their full capabilities.

Introduction to the agenda item

The most vulnerable population in the world exists as children who live in areas affected by armed conflicts. Modern warfare creates a situation where children experience both direct violence and indirect harm. The situation affects millions of children because they encounter displacement and family deaths and the destruction of their schools and hospitals while lacking basic essential resources such as food and clean water and medical care.

The armed groups that recruit child soldiers create a major problem because their actions violate international humanitarian law. Children face multiple forms of violence, which include sexual abuse and trafficking and forced labor and psychological harm that can persist until death. The survivors of these situations lose educational opportunities for multiple years, which restricts their future options and forces them to experience permanent states of poverty and instability.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols together with international law establish a complete prohibition against using children in armed conflict. The implementation of law enforcement remains weak across multiple areas because ongoing warfare and political unrest and lack of judicial accountability continue to exist.

UNICEF plays a critical role in crisis situations by delivering emergency assistance and providing psychosocial support and educational programs for emergency situations and development programs that help children who need assistance to return to their communities. The current state of global conflicts makes it harder to provide children with complete safety, which shows that international partnerships need to improve and protection systems require better development.

United Nations Previous Involvement

The United Nations has been working to find solutions for children who experience war since its establishment. The Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda emerged as a vital achievement which protects children in wartime through its work against recruitment and killing and abduction and attacks on schools and hospitals.

The UN Security Council has passed several important resolutions, including Resolution 1612 (2005), which established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to systematically track violations against children. The later resolutions of 1882 (2009) and 1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015) increase protection against school and hospital attacks through their better reporting system and stronger accountability methods.

The UN has also supported peacekeeping missions that include child protection officers which help demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate them into society. UNICEF works closely with the UN in these efforts by providing education and psychosocial support and emergency relief for affected children.

The ongoing conflicts and weak governance in some areas and the lack of accountability for armed groups create enforcement challenges that persist.

Key Terms

Grave violations: There are six main violations committed against children during a war according to United Nations Security Council (UNSC). These are listed as;

Killing and maiming children: Direct targeting, torture or collateral damage towards children.

Recruitment and Use of children as Soldiers: Compulsory, forced or voluntarily enlistment of individuals under the age of 18 in army.

Sexual Violence against children: Rape, trafficking, forced prostitution or sexual assault of any kind.

Abduction of Children: Unlawful abduction of children. This usually leads to sexual violence and/or enlistment.

Attacks against Schools/ Hospitals: Attacks destroying educational/ healthcare facilities.

Denial of Humanitarian Access: Intentionally impeding/blocking any aid for children in armed conflict zones.

Children in Armed Conflict (CAAC): Individuals under the age of 18 that get affected from the conflicts.

DDR programs (Disarmament, demobilization, Reintegration): Programs to

reintegrate individuals that are affected into society.

International Humanitarian Laws (IHL's): Laws that safeguard children, civilians, medical personnel, wounded soldiers from harm. Mostly based on Geneva Convention and its additional provisions.

Psychological/Psychosocial support: Supporting systems to reintegrate the population into society after war.

Safe zones/ Humanitarian Corridors: A temporary, geographically specific, and negotiated truce between warring parties aimed at allowing safe passage for civilians

MRM: A Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism system United Nations Security Council established in 2005.

CRC (The Convention on the Rights of Child): Adopted in 1989, this legally binding international convention outlines the fundamental civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of every person under the age of eighteen.

1612 Monitoring Mechanism: UN Security Council resolution to monitor children in armed conflict areas.

QARMA (Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

1. How can international law better be enforced?
2. Should new treaties or amendments be proposed?
3. What early-warning systems can be implemented?
4. How will children be physically protected during war?
5. What role will safe zones play?

6. How can recruitment of children be prevented?
7. How will perpetrators of these violations be prosecuted?
8. How will NGO's, governments and other UN bodies collaborate more effectively?
9. How will the proposed solutions be funded?

Measures That Must Be Taken

1. ***Enhancing Law Enforcement***
 - Improve monitoring systems (such as UN reporting systems)
 - Reprimand those who violate
 - Further strengthen the function of international courts
2. ***Preventive Methods***
 - Education initiatives in areas vulnerable to conflict
 - Digital surveillance to stop internet hiring
 - Campaigns for community awareness
3. ***Defense Systems***
 - Establish safe zones monitored by international courts
 - Expand humanitarian corridors
 - Strengthen the security of schools and hospitals
4. ***Reintegration and rehabilitation***
 - Improve and establish new DDR programs

- Provide long-term psychological support
- 5. ***Use of Technology***
 - Monitoring violations using AI-based systems
 - Satellite tracking conflict zones
- 6. ***Enhancing Partnerships with NGO's and governments***
 - Making new relationships with NGO's
 - Regional and national cooperation frameworks
 - Public-private relationships
- 7. ***Funding and Sustainability***
 - Creation of international funds
 - Mandatory contributions from member states
 - Transparency mechanisms for aid distribution

Useful Resources

-UNICEF Official Website:  UNICEF

-UN Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict
<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>

-Human Rights Watch reports on child soldiers
 Children and Armed Conflict | Human Rights Watch

-Amnesty International reports  Annual report archive

-Geneva Conventions texts Article 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54

<https://elearning.icrc.org/healthcareindanger-legal-framework/en/media/attachements/chapter-1/gva-conv.pdf>

-UN Security Council Resolutions database

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/resolutions-0>

-Save the Children organization  Save the Children International | Search