

# UNICEF

Topic: **“Addressing the Global Crisis of Inadequate Access to Healthcare, Education, and Safety for Children.”**

Written by: María Regina De Los Santos Cavazos

## **I. COMMITTEE BACKGROUND**

In 1953, The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) became a permanent part of the United Nations system. Nowadays, UNICEF operates in over 190 countries and territories, serving as a global leader in providing vaccines and supporting children’s health, nutrition, safety, and education. Dedicated to reaching even the most disadvantaged - and to protect the rights of every child. Whoever they are. Wherever they live.

Founded in December 1946, in the aftermath of World War II, UNICEF originally was an emergency fund, which addressed the post-war emergency needs of vulnerable children in post-war Europe and China. Ever since, it has had a clear mission: to help every child and young person in need, paving their way to survive and thrive. Over the years, it has promoted awareness and provided critical resources to ensure children live healthy lives; such as achieving the complete eradication of polio in India in 2012, as well as increasing life expectancy in 1993 by over 33% from what it had been in World War II.

## **II. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC**

### *a. Introduction of the topic*

According to the UN, “every child is born with the same inalienable right to a healthy start in life, an education, and a safe, secure childhood - all the basic opportunities that translate into a productive and prosperous adulthood” It can be described as an universal right, to grow up healthy, safe and strong. In 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, defining children’s rights, and serving as a foundation for national policies around the world. While tremendous progress in child and maternal health has been achieved over the past decades, millions are still dying from causes that can be prevented with quality and strong health care systems. But inequities persist when it comes to accessing life-saving care, especially those suffering through violent conflicts, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. Education, though being a basic right, has affected hundreds of millions of children, many not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. Children are deprived of basic education mainly because of poverty. Economic fragility, political instability, conflict, natural disasters, etc. cause children to be

cut off from schooling. Without the quality education they need, the children face considerable barriers that threaten their ability to shape a better future for themselves.

*b. Evolution of the topic*

The problem of far from adequate access to healthcare, education, and safety of children is rather long-standing and vexing in its grand evolution. The necessity to extend certain protection to children encouraged most countries after World War II to devise several international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Despite this, many children around the world are still being subjected to quite a significant level of hardships. Conflicts, poverty, and natural disasters in numerous parts of the world have ensured that many children lack even basic healthcare or education. There are also insecure settings where children run the risk of violence, exploitation, and neglect. The unprecedented Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 summoned the rights of children to survival, development, and protection. Yet, over the past few years, economic instability and health crises-like COVID-19-further squeezed resources and access. Today, as ambassadors, we must come together to ensure that solutions are found to allow each child to grow up healthy, educated, and safe regardless of the home they were born into.

*c. Relevant Events*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948:

This crucial document was passed by the United Nations and it dawned that every human is born with rights to receive education, health care, and safe living. Although this declaration has come as a great leap forward, many countries around this earth have yet to work out providing these basic needs for their children. Our committee will have to work that the pledges in this declaration will be made good for the most vulnerable members of our societies: our children.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, 1988:

The initiative was started to combat this crippling disease. The effort has worked toward vaccinating children worldwide and has drastically reduced the incidence of polio. Even today, however, many societies still have kids to whom vaccines are not given because of poor health access, making them susceptible to a very preventable disease. One must address health access gaps as a key approach toward ensuring all children grow up healthy and without diseases.

The Syrian Refugee Crisis 2011-present:

Due to the unending war situation in Syria, millions of children are now refugees; many struggle to find access to education and healthcare for safety. It embodies the urgent need to protect all children from armed conflict and provide support toward starting to rebuild their lives. Our committee should look into ways of seeing that even the displaced children are educated and given health care, no matter what the given circumstances are.

### III. CURRENT ISSUES

#### a. *Panorama*

Delegates this problem has affected many children from all over the world. Instead of playing and enjoying their childhood, they are worried about the lack of access to their basic needs. This does not only affect children but also many parents too. Every day and night worrying that if their children are sick they don't have enough resources to take care of them, when kids go out they might be attacked, or even their education if they don't pay enough their children won't have enough education to be successful in the future. The mission of this committee is to help those families to not worry about that, to promote safety to their children, to give them enough education and also affordable, and not only that but also helping them with the healthcare of their children. It is expected that delegates find ways to solve this problem once and for all.

#### b. *Points of view*

##### Afghanistan

This country has the highest child mortality rate, with 103.06 deaths per 1000 live births. This is due to the lack of sufficient childcare resources and birth practices with limited medical intervention. Poor nutrition is the biggest cause why Afghanistan is the country with highest rates of infant mortality, with 55% of children under 12 facing mental and physical incapacities because of a poor diet. These issues are caused mainly because of the hostile security situations and political unrest in the nation.

##### Syria

It is the 3rd least peaceful country, leaving nearly 7 million children in the country in need of basic, humanitarian aid. Now, in its second decade of its ongoing humanitarian crisis, has left children as orphans, got them separated from their families, injured or even killed them. These children are in need of aid, psychosocial support, and education. Before the crisis, 2.4 million children were out of school, and so many more have dropped out ever since.

##### Niger

Like many other African countries, Niger is facing a learning crisis, with 90% of children not able to read by the age of 10, yet around 60% of children finish primary school. Schooling does not imply learning, especially with a lack of quality education. In addition, the completion rates for secondary education are around 15%, revealing a considerable drop-off. This leads to most children not reaching their full potential.

### IV. UN & EXTERNAL ACTIONS

#### a. *UN*

### Smallpox Eradication

Smallpox is a contagious disease caused by the variola virus. It was one of the most devastating diseases to humanity, causing millions of deaths. In 1967, the World Health Organization launched a plan to eradicate smallpox, conducted for several years across the world, until the last known case was in Somalia in 1977.

### Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs (Sustainable Development GOals), established in 2015, are an urgent call for action by all countries, most of them relating to either health, safety, or education.

#### *b. External actions*

##### International Partnerships for Health:

Many countries, in cooperation with different health organizations, perform vaccinations and provide medical care to the children. They also strive to reduce diseases and give the children doctors and medicines.

##### Global Fund for Education:

This has consequently led to organizations and countries raising funds for schools in the poorer regions, allowing children with the opportunity to experience education through books, teachers, and safe places to learn.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, UNICEF's enduring commitment to the rights and well-being of children worldwide remains vital in addressing the persistent challenges faced by the most vulnerable populations. Despite significant progress in health, education, and protection, many children continue to suffer from preventable diseases and inadequate access to education, particularly in conflict zones and impoverished areas. International efforts, including various treaties, initiatives, and partnerships, have laid the groundwork for ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. As we look to the future, it is vital that we ensure that all children can grow up healthy, educated, and safe, regardless of their circumstances. Only through sustained commitment and collaboration can we hope to fulfill our responsibility to protect and empower every child, fostering a brighter future for all.

## **VI. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS**

- What are the main reasons some children do not have access to healthcare?
- How does lack of education affect a child's future opportunities?
- What countries or regions are most affected by these issues?
- What role do governments play in ensuring children have access to basic needs?

- How can we make education more accessible for children in rural or poor areas?
- What are the effects of violence or unsafe environments on children's health and learning?
- How can international organizations help improve healthcare for children?
- What successful programs exist that provide education or healthcare to children?
- How can communities work together to support children's safety and well-being?
- What can young people do to raise awareness about these issues in their own communities?

## VII. REFERENCES

*Amnesty International*. (n.d.). Amnesty International. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (n.d.). CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/>

*Children*. (n.d.). United Nations. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/children#:~:text=The%20Convention%20on%20the%20Rights,an%20earlier%20age%20of%20majority.>

*Digital Library*. (n.d.). UNESCO Digital Library. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>

*Donate to Help Children in Syria and Syrian Refugees*. (n.d.). Save the Children. Retrieved

November 3, 2024, from <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/where-we-work/syria>

*Education*. (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

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

*Frequently Asked Questions.* (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://www.unicef.org/about-unicef/frequently-asked-questions#8>

*Global Impact of our Donors.* (n.d.). UNHCR. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://www.unrefugees.org/>

*Health.* (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from <https://www.unicef.org/health>

*National Center for Biotechnology Information.* (n.d.). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

OrigamiForHope. (2016, November 6). *UNICEF's greatest achievements.* Origami for Hope.

<https://origamiforhope.com/2015/08/18/unicefs-greatest-achievements/>

*THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development.* (n.d.). <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

*UNICEF history.* (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from

<https://www.unicef.org/history>

World Health Organization: WHO. (2019, November 1). *Smallpox.*

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/smallpox#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/smallpox#tab=tab_1)

*Yahoo is part of the Yahoo family of brands.* (n.d.).

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/20-countries-highest-rates-infant-173247225.html>