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United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Topic 2: Education in Emergencies, Continuity for Refugees and Displaced Populations

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How can a child continue their education without a home, a school, a teacher, or a community? Around the world, armed conflicts, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises have displaced millions of children, disrupting their access to education. The Syrian civil war forced millions of Syrians to seek refuge in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. These countries have faced significant challenges in accommodating displaced students into their educational systems, including overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, and limited financial resources.

International efforts have been made to protect the educational rights of displaced populations. Article 22 of the 1951 Refugee Convention establishes that states party to the Convention must provide refugees with the same treatment as nationals regarding elementary education. The 2018 Global Compact on Refugees encourages international cooperation and sharing of responsibility in hopes of supporting countries hosting large refugee populations. UNESCO has collaborated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to address barriers preventing displaced students from receiving education. However, these frameworks do not eliminate the financial and logistical challenges faced by host countries, and the Global Compact is not legally binding.

When writing your position paper, please consider the following points:

- Host country responsibility
    - To what extent should host countries be responsible for providing education to refugee and displaced students, especially when their existing educational systems are already strained?
    - Should refugee students be entitled to the same educational opportunities and resources as citizens of their host countries?
- International cooperation and funding

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- Should the financial responsibility for educating displaced populations fall primarily on host countries, or should it be shared among the international community?
- What mechanisms can UNESCO establish to assist countries hosting large refugee populations?

- Educational integration and cultural identity
  - Should refugee students be integrated into the existing educational systems of their host countries, or should separate educational programs be established for them?
  - How can educational programs balance the importance of learning the host country's language and curriculum with preserving students' native languages, cultural identities, and connections to their countries of origin?

Please do not limit yourself to these topics in your research; rather, use them as a starting point as you gather information. Be sure to thoroughly research your country's position as well as the topic as a whole to thoroughly prepare yourself for the conference.

Remember that your job is to represent your country's views, not your own. Please be sure to cite your sources and not to plagiarize or use AI to write your papers, or you will be disqualified from winning an award. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at psterman@mail.yu.edu. I am looking forward to reading your papers and to working together to find a solution to this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Perri Sterman

Chair, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

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