

Resolution on the right to education for displaced people, refugee and stateless children

The 7th Education International (EI) World Congress meeting in Ottawa, Canada, from 21nd to 26th July 2015. Notes:

1. That many countries are engaged with sometimes recurring armed conflicts;
2. That, in some countries, civil wars create rifts based on ethnicity, religion or political affiliation;
3. That many individuals and whole families flee their country to be safe from the conflicts;
4. That of the world's 51.2 million forcibly displaced people, half are below the age of 18 years;
5. That statistical data compiled by the UNHCR confirm that conflict and persecution forced an average of 32,200 persons per day to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their countries or in other countries;
6. That developing countries host 86% of the world's refugees and displaced people but often lack the resources or infrastructure they need to meet their needs, including access to shelter, water, food and clothing;
7. That the living conditions of such refugees are often catastrophic (camps set up by NGOs);
8. That displaced children are disproportionately at risk of forced labor, child marriage, sexual exploitation, violence and recruitment by armed militia;
9. That many displaced children are denied access to even the most basic levels of education;
10. That children born stateless, much like children who arrive in a foreign country after their parents' exile are generally particularly vulnerable as concerns their rights

Further notes:

11. That more than 100 years ago, the Red Cross established the right to healthcare in conflict zones; but the right of refugees to education has yet to be won;
12. That national governments have the primary responsibility for ensuring children's rights in displacement;
13. That displacement can last for years or a lifetime. In many instances, children who are displaced grow up without any education throughout their lives;
14. In a context where children are fleeing from conflict or natural disasters, education is too often seen as a "luxury" and not as a priority for displaced children;
15. That the success of Education International's Unite for Quality Education campaign depends upon national and international efforts to protect the right to quality education for the world's most vulnerable children, including refugee and displaced children.

Believes:

16. That education is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all people including those displaced by conflict or natural disasters;
17. That education fosters understanding of and respect for others, and therefore plays an important role in preventing violence and conflicts;
18. That national governments and the international community should be explicitly obliged to ensure that this right is a reality for all children and young people;
19. That richer countries should contribute more to fulfill the spirit of their international commitments and obligations to meeting the needs of refugee and displaced children, including through the provision of access to education.

Resolves:

20. To continue to advance the ideals, aims and objectives of the EI Unite for Quality Education campaign in the interests of refugee and displaced children; ensuring that the problem of the language of schooling is not an obstacle for refugees;
21. To continue to provide support and assistance to member organisations in countries where there are large numbers of refugees and displaced children;
22. To maintain pressure on national governments and on international institutions to prioritise financial assistance for the education of refugees and internally displaced people, especially in states having a common border with a country in conflict and welcoming a very important number of them.
23. To work with affiliates, the UNHCR and other partner organisations to assist refugees in developing the skills and knowledge they need, and to plan activities and actions that promote self-reliance and sustainable peaceful coexistence.