



SOCHUM Briefing Papers



The Question of Child Labour in Sub-Saharan Africa

Introduction

The problem of child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa has been a long-standing issue that remains widespread and extremely worrying. It endangers the region's children, economies, and overall development. An overview of the current condition of child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa, its history, causes, effects, and possible solutions to address this pressing issue are provided in this briefing paper.

Overview and Statistics

The ILO (International Labour Organization) defines child labour as ‘work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development’ Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the highest rates of child labour in the world, as of 2021, 26 percent of children aged 5-17 years in Sub-Saharan Africa were involved in child labor, according to estimates. In comparison to 2012 and 2016, the rate has increased, reaching peak numbers in 2021.

Background

For a very long time, children in Africa have worked on farms and at home. This is not unique to Africa; before the 1950s, many children were in domestic and agricultural settings in America, Europe, and many other societies across the world. In past times all over the world parents would teach a child their trade. The growth of colonial rule in Africa, from 1650 to 1950, by powers such as Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Netherlands encouraged and continued the practice of child labour for a multitude of reasons. Later colonial governments tried to run schools and educate kids in some African countries. In general, these efforts were not successful in terms of enrollment or impact. Since then, child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa has been exploited by modern corporations.

Causes

The reasons for such a high rate of child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa include poverty, lack of resources, together with other factors such as credit constraints, income shocks, decreased access to education, school quality, and parental attitudes toward education.

Effects-The effects of child labour can be devastating for the children involved. The effects include psychological trauma, physical trauma and depriving the children of education and a future. The effects on society are also prevalent, such as reduced human development.

Solutions- Solutions to this problem could include a combination of support for education, efforts to support economies, and international cooperation.

Further Reading

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089e040f0b649740002e2/childrens-wellbeing-and-work-in-ssa.pdf>

The Question of Ethical Organ Harvesting

Introduction

Organ transplantation is a life-saving medical procedure that can significantly improve the quality of life for individuals suffering from end-stage organ failure. However, organ transplantation raises a wide range of complex ethical issues. The basic morality of body part transplantation, the ethics of organ procurement, and the ethics of allocation are the three primary challenges.

Overview and Statistics

The shortage of organs has led to unethical practices such as organ trafficking, commercial organ trade, and involuntary organ harvesting. Despite international and domestic efforts, approximately 10 percent of all transplants worldwide are believed to be illegal. This highlights the fundamental issues of organ harvesting in the world today.

Causes

Weak infrastructure for organ donation, ethical questions surrounding concepts such as brain death, monetary incentives for organ trafficking, lack of organ transport infrastructure, among others are the causes for issues with ethical organ harvesting.

Solutions

Fair and equitable access to organ transplantation, international cooperation is necessary to prevent malpractice and bring perpetrators to justice. Raising awareness about the potential risks of organ tourism is important to protect patients. Encouraging public education and awareness campaigns to promote voluntary and altruistic organ donation. Investing in research to improve organ preservation, transplantation techniques, and organ generation from stem cells.

Further Reading

<https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/professionals/by-topic/ethical-considerations/ethical-principles-in-the-allocation-of-human-organs/#:~:text=Utility%2C%20justice%2C%20and%20respect%20for,of%20scarce%20organs%20for%20transplantation.>

https://academic.oup.com/bja/article/108/suppl_1/i73/237544

<https://bmcmedethics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12910-015-0057-1>

The Question of the Rohingya Refugee crisis in Myanmar

Introduction

The Rohingya People are a small, majority Muslim, ethnic group residing primarily in the Rakhine State of Myanmar (formerly Burma). Commonly referred to as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world, however the largest insurrection on them took place in 2017 causing 742,000 Rohingya people to flee from Myanmar to Bangladesh. In committee we will be focusing on this refugee crisis.

Overview and statistics

The Rohingya refugee crisis has been called "the most urgent refugee emergency in the world" by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Over 960,000 Rohingya people require humanitarian aid, according to UNICEF. More than 499,000 of them are children.

Background

The persecution of the Rohingya people has its roots in British Colonialism. When Myanmar gained independence in 1948, the Rohingya people were not granted recognition or a state. The rise of a military dictatorship in 1962 started implementing a nationalist agenda, with heavy emphasis on racial discrimination. The Rohingya people were cast out and in 1982 Myanmar passed a citizenship law denying the Rohingya citizenship, making them the largest stateless population in the world (est. 2 million).

Today the Rohingya People are still considered illegal immigrants by Myanmar, so they have very little rights and cannot access social services or education.

Causes

A migration of Rohingya began in 2017 in response to a resurgence of violence, which included alleged rape, murder, and arson. Myanmar's security forces claimed to be conducting this movement in an effort to restore order in the country's western area. August 2017 saw hostilities outbreak in the Rakhine state following attacks on army and police stations attributed to the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). Following the government's designation of ARSA as a terrorist group, the military launched a ruthless operation that resulted in the destruction of hundreds of Rohingya communities and the forced emigration of Rohingya people.

Solutions

Repatriation of Rohingya people to their homes ensuring their rights and dignity, providing access of safe passage to humanitarian and relief agencies into Rohingya IDP camps, and ensuring access to education, lifelong learning, skills development, and livelihoods in the camps are vital to solving the issue.

Further Reading

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis>

<https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561>