



Committee: UNHCR

Topic: Addressing the needs of children and the disabled in the resettlement process.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a global organization created in 1950 after the end of the Second World War, first created to help Europeans who had lost their home, after that the UNHCR kept helping in different problems. It is dedicated to saving the lives, protect the rights and ensure a better future for the refugees.

The problem is that refugee children and disabled people are constantly at risk after the resettlement process. The UNHCR defines the resettlement process as the procedure in which refugees are chosen and transported from the first State in which they looked for protection to a new state that has agreed to let them live there as refugees with a permanent living status. The status given by the state agreed to admit them ensures the protection against being returned to the country where the refugee is likely to be subjected to persecution, it also provides the refugee and his or her family access to all the benefits enjoyed by the people of that country, this benefits are the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Children, especially teenagers are at risk of being influenced by violence because of the conflict they are living in and are pushed away from the opportunity of a healthy and positive environment. Disabled people are often at risk because of their special needs and usually seen as an obstacle by their community and face exclusion not only from support groups but from their community as well.

The ignorance of the needs of children and the disabled refugees in the resettlement process has been an issue since the creation of the UNHCR, but it was not until 1988 that the Executive Committee of UNHCR published the “Guidelines of Refugee Children” and the “Policy on Refugee Children”, then in 1994 the “Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children” were applied, this was the first time the needs of refugee children were addressed. The needs of the disabled were addressed for the first time in 1982 in the creation of the World Programme of Action, here the problems disabled people face and their needs were highlighted, it included disabled people among the refugee groups.

As the number of refugees has increased along the years, so has the need of

resettlement, last year there were 81,337 refugees resettled and according to the UNHCR, more than half of the refugees are under the age of 18 and around 15% of the refugees have a type of disability.

Resettled children have different needs as they are the most vulnerable to be victims of violence, disease and malnutrition that are being ignored, for example, a safe livable environment, education, security, and healthcare.

Resettled disabled people also have different needs that are being ignored, they might have difficulties to communicate, concentrate or move, and because of these they are usually seen as non important members of their community and can find it difficult to access their essential protection services which are transport, understanding of written or verbal information, to register into institutions for additional support or recalling information during interviews. Also the children with disabilities are at greater risks of discrimination, abuse, abandonment, exploitation, health problems, family separation and denial to the right of education.

It is very important to solve this issue as it is not only affecting the children and disabled that were resettled but the whole society, this happens because it is a chain effect, these people are becoming members of the society in which they are living in, based on their development they can either affect the people they interact with in a negative way, or a positive way, then the people affected will interact with others and transmit the same message they had earlier received and so on, this is how the whole society is affected by this issue. The children and the disabled can develop in a negative way when their needs are not addressed, then they are in danger of becoming a version of themselves that they do not want to be. This version negatively affects them and the society they are living in and the negative behavior can be adopted by the people they are with and also by further generations that can cause different problems such as crime, uneducation or lack of values.

There are different ways to approach this issue, it is the UNHCR who is in charge of deciding who is able to resettle and each country is able to decide on accepting refugees, the most viable way to make an effective resettlement process for children and disabled refugees in which their needs are not ignored is through planning and preparation. As resettlement is a permanent solution for asylum seekers, it is very requested and there is a very big number of

refugees requesting it, because of this it is required a high number of volunteers to be in charge of deciding who should be resettled and where they should move to, once they have decided, health assessments before departure must be done, this in order to ensure if the children has special needs or what are the specific needs of the disabled. Now each country that is in a position to accept refugees must have either workers or volunteers that must be in charge of evaluating which refugees they can take. Once they have been chosen, the children and disabled should go through an orientation in which they will learn what they are going to live and how to make the best of it. Also the transportation process must be made under the supervision of experienced volunteers as here have been cases in which during the transportation process people have suffered traumatic experiences that can affect the way they resettle, once they have successfully arrived to their new home county, each individual must have a volunteer or worker assigned by the government that must make sure the needs of the refugees are being fully addressed. If they are not, they should communicate it to the government office and they must make sure they are being meant.

#### Resources and helpful sites

United Nations, (n.a.). (2019, June 19). Figures at a Glance. Retrieved September 27, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

United Nations, B. H. (2011, July). UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: Chapter 5 - Protection Considerations, and the Identification of Resettlement Needs. Retrieved September 27, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/3d464e176/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-chapter-5-protection-considerations-identification.html?query=needs%20of%20disabled%20in%20the%20resettlement%20process>

United Nations, (n.a.). (2017, February). Frequently Asked Questions about Resettlement. Retrieved September 27, 2019, from <https://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/56fa35b16/frequently-asked-questions-resettlement.html?query=what%20is%20the%20resettlement%20proces>

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