

Non-Formal Education for Displaced Rohingya Children in Selangor: Issues and Challenges

Nor Zarifah binti Saleh, Md Mahbubul Haque, Shariffah Nuridah
Aishah binti Syed Nong Mohammad

Faculty of Law and International Relations, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kampung Gong
Badak, 21300, Terengganu

Email: norzarifahsaleh@gmail.com, aishah@unisza.edu.my

Corresponding Author Email: mahbubh@unisza.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i1/16391>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i1/16391

Published Online: 24 March 2023

Abstract

The fear of persecution in Myanmar have led to thousands of Rohingya people fled the country and seek asylum in neighboring countries including Malaysia. The Rohingya have been seeking refugee status in Malaysia since the 1980s. Currently Malaysia hosts the largest number of Rohingya refugees among the ASEAN countries. However, as Malaysia is not the signatory party of the 1951 Refugee Convention, there are no specific regulations that protects the rights for the displaced Rohingya. From a legal point of view, the displaced Rohingya cannot enjoy refugee rights due to the absence of effective domestic law. The Rohingya children are also facing challenges in getting their right to education especially in formal education as they are not the nationals of Malaysia. According to the Malaysian law, only the nationals of Malaysia are given the access to enter the public schools. Although Malaysia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Rohingya children rights to education are still being deprived. The purpose of this study is to examine how the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) played a major role to provide non-formal education for the displaced Rohingya children in Selangor. It should be noted that UNHCR has collaboration with the local NGOs to conduct non-formal education for the children. After intensive field work and meeting with different stakeholders, this paper forwarded that it has been a big challenge for NGOs to work with the Rohingya children education especially lack of infrastructure, funding, less skilled teaching staffs and limited access to public examination.

Keywords: Rohingya Children, Non-formal Education, NGOs, UNHCR, Challenges

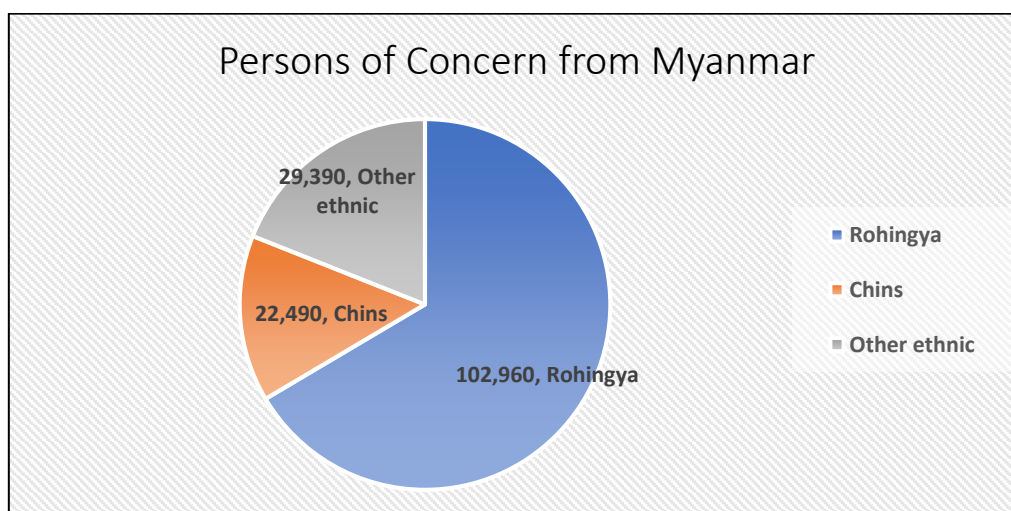
Introduction

The Rohingya are a predominantly Muslim community. They are a borderland people living mainly in northern Arakan State with bona fide historical roots in the region. Due to the large-scale persecution, mass exoduses of Rohingya into Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries have continued. It should be mentioned that not only Rohingya but also other ethnic minorities such as Karen, Shan, Kachin face discrimination and have also been targeted by the Myanmar military since the end of the colonial era in 1948 (Mahbub, 2021). The Rohingya people have experienced difficulties in obtaining citizenship since the enactment of

the 1982 Citizenship Law in Myanmar (Mahbub,2021). Throughout the years, the situation has shown a significant number of the Rohingya community coming to Malaysia in search of better living condition. However, they are facing challenges in their daily lives as their status remained invincible in Malaysia.

Malaysia has a long history in providing temporary asylum to the group of refugees and asylum seekers and Malaysia currently hosts one of the largest urban refugee populations in the world (Siti Munirah, 2021). Malaysia is chosen as one of their destinations because of the geographical factor where they could travel by boats even though the journey is very risky and dangerous (Ali, 2014). Since then, the number continue to grow and during the humanitarian crisis in 2017, an exodus of Rohingya community came Malaysia in search of protection. However, this issue has brought challenges to the Malaysia government as Malaysia is not the signatory party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1961 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (Hamzah & Daud, 2016). This regulatory does not recognize the Rohingya community as refugee and instead those who came are regarded as illegal migrants due to their uncertain citizenship status (Ibrahim, 2020).

In Malaysia, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter UNHCR) plays a major role in assisting the Rohingya community. They were given the authority to ensure the registration and other necessary support to the Rohingya community and other refugees in Malaysia are provided (Ali, 2014).



Sources: *Figures at a glance (UNHCR,2021)*

Provided above is the report of 'Figures at a glance' from UNHCR as of end 2021. Based on this report, out of 179,450 refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR in Malaysia, 154,860 of them are from Myanmar. 102,960 was from the Rohingya ethnic. However, based on the data, the number shown is only for the Rohingya community who was registered with UNHCR and received the UNHCR cards, while there are hundred thousands of the Rohingyas who are yet to be registered. The UNHCR cards act as an identity document for the stateless Rohingya. Some may be lucky enough to receive this card after going through several application and interview sessions, but many are still at risk because of the difficulties in obtaining the UNHCR card. From the chart shown, it is estimated that there are still thousands of Rohingya community who are living ambiguously in Malaysia and are at risk of being detained (Khairi, 2021).

The situation for the Rohingya community in Malaysia is very challenging and risky. As they are undocumented, their status remained unrecognized and invincible. Due to this situation, this community are facing challenges in practicing their basic human rights. They live in a poor condition where jobs, healthcare and education opportunities are very limited. The Rohingya children are denied from having the access to public schools as the public schools are only accessible for Malaysian citizens. Without having formal education, these children will not be able to apply for formal job sector, but instead resulted to doing hard labour jobs (Dali & Abdullah, 2012). It is argued that due to legal status as forced displace people, Rohingya children are utterly denied to access formal education in Malaysia.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the challenges faced by the Rohingya children in obtaining their access to education under human rights concept.
- To illustrate the different types of the non-formal education provided by the local NGOs to the Rohingya children.
- To identify the common challenges for the non-formal education in Selangor.

Methodology

This paper employed qualitative research to achieve the objectives of the research. Qualitative research refers to a non-experimental method that interacts with people through talking and observing in order to understand the situation and emotions felt by the person, as well as literature analysis. In order to achieve the overall purpose of the research, primary data were collected from interviews with academicians, NGO representatives and community leaders. Secondary data were obtained from various literatures including books, academic articles and reports. Generally, the process involved two phases as follows.

Secondary data from relevant literature was reviewed extensively to understand the theoretical framework of right to education. This phase also reviewed the literature comprising evidences of Rohingya's atrocity in Myanmar, unregulated Rohingya migration in Malaysia and displaced Rohingya children's education found in related NGO reports, academic journals, digital materials on websites and community organizations' reports. This literature helped the researcher to gain adequate knowledge of the Rohingya's desperate journey toward Malaysia, challenges of their children's non formal education and the role of NGOs.

This research has also conducted intensive field work in Selangor. Before the interview is conducted, the researcher obtained prior consent from the potential interviewees for the research. Open-ended interviews were made with five community leaders', five academicians, and five NGO's officials. After obtaining verbal consent, the researcher fixed appointments at their convenient places in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. Open-ended interviews were made with the respondents in obtaining the relevant data. The interview was made face-to-face to allow the researcher to critically analyse and understand the behaviour and the experiences of the respondents relating to the Rohingya children education in Selangor.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted to understand the situation of non-formal education for the displaced Rohingya children and its various challenges. However, during the field study, the researcher could not communicate directly with the Malaysian policy makers including member of the Parliaments from the government and parliamentary opposition as well as officials of the State of Selangor due to pandemic. Without having face-to-face conversation, it was challenging for this research to draw a complete and comprehensive conclusion about the status of the Rohingya children's education in Selangor. The limited time frame for this project has also made an impact on this research, as the scope of data collection and content analysis were adjusted to the given timelines. There has also been a limitation on individual supporting this research as the impact of the Rohingya narrative may bring backlashes for individuals supporting this community.

Literature Review

As highlighted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the refugee education today is in a crisis. With millions of people who are currently refugees mainly hosted in low-and middle-income countries as well as in least developed countries, the challenges are crucial. In view of Education 2030-Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the recent massive influx of refugees, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereafter UNESCO) seeks to draw attention to the fact that, in order to guarantee the right to education for all, it is critical that all those in a refugee-like situation enjoy equal access to an education of good quality (UNESCO, 2019). This issue was also pointed out by the former Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Vernor Muñoz when he said: *'there is ample evidence that migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking students in many countries face a higher risk of marginalization with regard to education systems and opportunities when compared with native students'* (ibid). It is clear that legal, administrative and practical barriers prevent them from effectively enjoying their right to education. Yet, everyone has the right to education including migrants, irrespective of their legal or migration status, based on the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. International human rights law also emphasises the right to education of specific categories of migrants, such as refugees or internal displaced persons.

The right to education has been recognised in a variety of international and regional legal instruments, including treaties (conventions, covenants, and charters) as well as soft law, such as general statements, guidelines, declarations, and action frameworks (UNESCO, n.d.). Soft law only imposes moral obligations for nations, while treaties are legally binding and establish legal obligations. A state must, however, ratify a treaty to be legally bound by it and signing it is not enough. The distinction between ratification and being a signatory is like the difference between soft law and hard law. By ratifying a treaty, a state consents to be legally bound by it, while by signing, a state signals its intention to ratify, thus politically and morally obliging it to comply. Furthermore, most multilateral treaties would require ratification by a certain number of states before entering into force. The treaty becomes legally binding on all States-parties until this point is reached.

According to Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), everyone has the right to education. Since then, the right to education has been reaffirmed in several other international treaties including:

- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)

- International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families (1990)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

In addition, the International Labour Organization Convention 138 has made a clear acknowledgement on the elimination of child labour and right to education for all. This is supported as well by the International Humanitarian Law which mentioned that education shall be for all children without discrimination even in times of conflict (Tawil, 2000). The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education both guarantee the right to education in general, that is, for all people. Other treaties refer to particular groups like children, women, disabled people, refugees, and migrants or to specific situations for example, education in armed conflicts and education in child labour. Human rights bodies attached to these treaties usually control their compliance through monitoring mechanisms and complaint mechanisms in the cases of violations. Through the adoption of General Comments, Recommendations to States and judgments, they are also responsible for providing authoritative interpretations and therefore a deeper understanding of treaty provisions (UNESCO, n.d.).

According to Article 1 of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), for the purposes of this Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular. Based on this Article, all children shall be given the right to education without any discrimination whether through nationality, skin colour or gender (Hevener, 2019).

Furthermore, according to the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), in compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in Article 2 of this Convention, State Parties agree to prohibit and eradicate all types of racial discrimination, as well as to guarantee everyone's right to equality before the law, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, especially in the enjoyment of the right to education and training (Schwelb, 1966).

Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights adopted in 1966 states that the States Parties acknowledge that everybody has the right to an education. It could be argued that education should focus on the complete development of the human personality and sense of dignity, as well as the promotion of human rights and fundamental liberties. It is also agreed that education should allow all people to participate effectively in a free society, foster empathy, harmony, and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic, and religious groups, and support UN peacekeeping efforts (Hoag, 2011).

According to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and based on equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

Throughout this article, all children shall be given the right to education despite their nationality. Therefore, when it comes to children issue, all children shall be treated equally despite their whereabouts (United Nations, 1996).

Right to Education of the Refugees in Malaysia

According to the data presented by UNHCR in 'Figures at a Glance in Malaysia', there are 179,390 of refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR Malaysia and 45,730 of them are children below the age of 18. Children would continue to be vulnerable if they do not obtain an elementary education. They were denied their right to education in many cases, while in exceptional circumstances, numerous organizations made unprecedented efforts to realise the children's dream of attending school.

Education is a fundamental right and it is stated in various international human rights instruments. Article 28 of the CRC, to which Malaysia acceded on February 17, 1997, reiterates every child's right to free and compulsory primary education. The Malaysian government, on the other hand, has made a reservation on this Article during the adoption of the convention. This has brought contradiction towards the spirit of universalizing and promoting equity which is listed in Article 3 of the Declaration on Education for All which Malaysia is a signatory party to (SUHAKAM, 2007). In 2002, Malaysia amended the Education Act 1966 (Act 550) to make primary education compulsory for all Malaysian citizens' children aged 6 to 12. The Government presented its initial report on the CRC on January 25, 2007 at the 44th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Naylor, 2000). According to the Committee, many asylum-seeking and refugee children who have lived in Malaysia since the 1990s are lack of access to formal education. In accordance with articles 2, 22 and 28 of the CRC, the Committee recommends that the State party take immediate steps to ensure that asylum seeker and refugee children have access to free and formal primary, secondary, and other types of education, and that, in particular, refugee and asylum-seeking children who are engaged in informal education have access to official exams (SUHAKAM, 2007).

Based on all the reported documents, this study agreed that Malaysia education policy does include the right to education for the invisible children including the displaced children. However, there have been some contradictions between Malaysia perspective and the international human rights framework to implement the rights education for all. In this circumstance, the Rohingya displaced children are still facing challenges in getting their right to education. Until these contradictions are not cleared or changed, the Rohingya displaced

children are left waiting for some brighter days and future. Right to education shall be given to everyone regardless of their whereabouts and identity. Nowadays, most of the invisible children including refugees, displaced children and disabled children have been denied their right to education as their status remained ambiguous.

Rohingya Children Education and NGOs in Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the countries that are receiving a wave number of Rohingya people other than Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Thailand (Khairi, 2021). There are no formal refugee camps in Malaysia and sizable number of Rohingya people are living in the state of Selangor because of livelihood opportunities. This research field work witnessed that Rohingya community lived in a low-cost apartment consisting of three to four families in one house.

After generations, there are still a lot of Rohingya children who were born in Malaysia but unable to obtain the Malaysian citizenship as the state does not practice the principle of *jus soli* (Letchamanan, 2013). In many cases, the children were undocumented because their parents do not have any legal documentation. Without proper documents, these Rohingya children are unable to obtain any identity documentation which led them to remain undocumented (Khairi, 2021). Being an undocumented child escalated their challenges in accessing to formal education in Malaysia. In fact, the Malaysia government only allow the access to public schools for the Malaysia nationals. Without any legal protection from the Malaysia government, these Rohingya children have been living in Malaysia for years without formal education (Farzana et al., 2020). It is agreeable that they are always at risk since Malaysia is not the signatory parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Nevertheless, Malaysia shall still bear the responsibilities as stated in Article 28 of the CRC, where all children shall be entitled to formal education without any discrimination. As the signatory parties to the convention, Malaysia should be responsible to provide formal education for the Rohingya children in Selangor.

The clashes between these laws and rules have impacted on the Rohingya children access to education. At present, these Rohingya children are only attending informal education provided by the local NGOs supported by the UNHCR. They only obtained informal parallel system of 128 community-based learning centres (UNHCR, 2019a). According to UNHCR report on education in Malaysia, there are a total of 150,379 people of concern and 25,499 are under the age of 18 while 23,823 of school-going ages. Among the number of school-going ages, only 30% of them enrolled in community-learning centres (UNHCR, 2019b). This research field work witnessed that only few of them are lucky to join the international schools and other educational institutions, whereas most of them are left without having any formal education.

In this research, a comparison between the community-based learning centres and public schools were made. Provided in Table 1.0 below are the differences between the two institutions.

Table 1.0

Comparison between community-based learning centres and public schools

Comparison	Community-based learning centres	Public Schools
Location	Located in small houses or shop lots	Located in big areas and designed specifically for learning process
Funding	Supported by UNHCR or self-funded	Funded by the government
Syllabus	Some follows the Myanmar syllabus; some follows the Malaysia syllabus	Follows the Malaysia syllabus based on the Ministry of Education
Facilities	Facilities are limited	Facilities are provided by government
Teachers	Teachers are volunteers	Teachers are qualified and have high education in teaching
Legal identity	Not required	Required to be nationals of Malaysia
Qualification	Qualification is not recognized by the government	Qualification is recognized by the government

Source: Research fieldwork (2021)

Through an interview with Faruk (2021), a Rohingya refugee in Selangor, this research found that the condition of the community learning centres is inconducive for learning process. Without proper facilities, the children would not be able to receive the best quality of education. This is supported by (Palik, 2020) in 'Education for Rohingya Refugee Children in Malaysia' where the researcher described the common challenges for these Rohingya children are staff retention and quality. Many of the Rohingya children decided to quit schools as they do not see any prospects for the future in getting education. This resulted them in getting jobs rather than going to school.

Common Challenges in Non-formal Education for Rohingya Children in Selangor

The government restrictions on formal teaching for the Rohingya children have left the children to access only the informal education sector. As previously discussed, there are several types of non-formal education in Malaysia. Each of these centres are run differently depending on their system and organization. However, based on the discussions with the NGO leaders, it was found that all the centres faced same challenges which will be discussed in detail in this section.

In Malaysia, NGOs have been playing vital role to provide non-formal education for Rohingya children. Earlier it was discussed that various types of non-governmental organizations received assistance from the UNHCR to work for refugee children's education. This research field work and document review witnessed that the Rohingya Education Centre (REC) and Ihsan Rohingya Global (IRG) worked for them more than decade. Before discussing on the challenges of non-formal education for Rohingya children, this research introduces how both NGOs worked in Selangor.

Rohingya Education Centre (REC)

The Rohingya Education Centre which is locally known as *Persatuan Jaringan Islam Global Masa Depan* is a non-governmental organisation registered under the Malaysian Registry of Societies (ROS). Their establishment is to provide education support to the Rohingya community in Malaysia. They are known as the implementation partner for UNHCR in several projects. REC mission is to provide integrated and contemporary education to all Rohingya children in Malaysia and improve awareness among the Rohingya children and their parents. Currently, the REC conducted several education projects that helps the overall development of Rohingya children. These projects include 880 refugee children who will be given primary education following the Malaysian national syllabus and supporting 30 learning centres through the teacher compensation programmes throughout the whole Malaysia (Islam & Depan, n.d.). In an interview with Ali (2021), a Rohingya representative in Selangor, REC aims to provide education for the Rohingya children in a structured and holistic manner.

Ihsan Rohingya Global (IRG)

Established by the Rohingya youth based in Canada, the Ihsan Rohingya Global is a non-profit organisation which aims to promote social and sustainable development among the Rohingya community. Currently, the IRG conducted development programme for Rohingya community in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Malaysia. It is noted that IRG established a community-based learning centres in Selayang, Selangor which aims to strengthen the physical sides and moral of the Rohingya community to understand their issue and create a better education for the Rohingya community (Raezul, 2021). IRG is also working for the Rohingya communities socio-economic and cultural development in different places. In an interview with Raezul (2021), the headmaster of IRG, he informed that Selayang was chosen as the place of establishment of the centre because of the high number of Rohingya population at the district. This study field work witnessed that IRG led education program which emphasizes the Quranic education as well as few other formal subjects such as Malay Language, Mathematics and Geography.

Learning Methods and Management

This research identified that the NGOs non-formal education is not similar to each other. Based on different stakeholder's discussion, it was found that non-formal education provided by the community-based learning centres differs from each other depending on the system that are being used.

Table 2.0

The learning centres that are provided in Malaysia

Name	Description	Example
Alternative Learning Centre	These centres are managed by local NGO which is from Malaysia and based in Malaysia	Rohingya Education Centre
Community-based Learning Centre	Centres are managed by the Rohingya community itself to support the Rohingya people however it is based in Malaysia	Rohingya Youth Development Forum, Ihsan Rohingya Global
Independent Learning Centre	Managed by the Rohingya community however it is supported by local NGO	-

Sources: Research fieldwork (2021)

As stated in Table 2.0 above, there are differences between these learning centres practiced by many local NGOs in Malaysia. This is supported by an interview with Ali (2021), stating that the REC is an alternative learning centre, and different from community-based learning centres. The alternative education centre is run by local NGO, and it is managed by the Malaysian citizens. Most of the teachers and staffs are the nationals of Malaysia and they are registered under the ROS. It is easier for them to register the organization under the Malaysia system as they are the nationals of Malaysia. On the other hand, however, the community-based learning centres, are mostly run by the Rohingya community itself to support the Rohingya people and it is based in Malaysia. Most of the staffs and teachers are the Rohingya people and the syllabus are managed by themselves. Although most of the community-based learning centres originated from 'Madrasah', it was later improved to include few curriculums from the mainstream education.

Limitation of Long-term Funding

According to the interview with Ali (2021), the alternative learning centres are operated using public donation and UNHCR support. Donors are needed to support the programme developed by the learning centres. School fees are charged to the parents in a very small amount but in many cases, parents are unable to pay for the fees. Therefore, the alternative learning centres would have to manage their own funding to support the centre. Similar to the alternative learning centres, the community-based learning centres are also facing challenges in obtaining long-term funding. They are more in need of public support and donations since most of the community-based learning centres are not supported by the UNHCR. With the limited access to long-term funding, it has brought difficulties for these centres to maintain their operation.

Limitation of Infrastructure

Comparing the alternative learning centre and community-based learning centre, the facilities provided in alternative learning centre are more conducive. They are provided with uniforms, bigger classrooms and better learning equipment. However, these facilities are still not at par with the public schools. Students in public schools are provided with complete science lab, computer lab and even a big field. However, these facilities are not accessible to the Rohingya children. The infrastructural limitations in the learning centres could be upgraded for a better

development of the children learning process. During the researcher's visit to IRG, the centre was established in a house situated outskirts of Selayang. Through the observation, the house was a bit small to accommodate 120 students. There is no partition between classes and the tables are to be shared during classes. There are no fields around the houses, so during sports class, the children will have to walk about 2km to reach a small public field. From this situation, it is important to understand that infrastructural limitations may affect the learning process of the children.

Limited Opportunities for Vocational Training

In discussing the vocational training, REC has established several vocational trainings that can help with social development of the Rohingya children including sewing and manufacturing. However, the access to vocational training is very limited due to the government restrictions. Similarly, the community-based learning centres are facing the same challenges. Their opportunities in accessing vocational training are very low which led them to difficulties in gaining vocational skills. If opportunities are given to these children, there are high chances of these children to excel in these sectors.

Lack of Skilled Teaching Staffs

As mentioned by Raezul (2021), most of the learning centres are having challenges in obtaining frequent teacher training including the IRG. They could not provide with quality teacher training since most of the teachers are only volunteers. This is supported by REC which mentioned that even with the support of UNHCR, they are also facing challenges in having frequent quality teacher training. The teachers working with refugees shall be mentally and physically prepared as they work in a complex environment. Therefore, skills such as classroom management, psycho-social support, positive discipline, and pedagogical skills for multi-grade classroom need to be given continuously and intensively (Islam & Depan, n.d.). Nik (2021) that if the teachers are provided with frequent teacher training, then they will be able to develop more ideas and solutions to help the children refugees. This is because, as the years increase, a greater number of students will be applying and joining the learning centres. Therefore, if the teachers could not handle their learning progress efficiently, it will bring bigger challenges for the children to study.

Limited Access to Public Examination

As reported by REC and IRG, both centres are having difficulties in providing the children an access to the public academic examination. In Malaysia, there are several public academic examinations such as *Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga* (PT3) and *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM). Both academic examinations will help to determine the public school or higher learning institutions that are open to be applied by the registered students. However, these opportunities are inaccessible to the REC and IRG students as they are not eligible to sit for this examination. It has become a major challenge for these children to have the same opportunity due to the status and current situation. This is supported by Salman (2021) who stated that the public schools are only accessible to the Malaysian citizens. It is nearly impossible for any refugees to enter the public school in Malaysia. Therefore, without entering the public school, clearly it will be difficult for them to sit for any public academic examination as well. As a result, they can only apply for other academic examination which some may not be recognized by the Malaysia government. Thus, as the chain goes around,

these children will not be able to apply for any formal occupation instead of working in the hard-labour sector.

Conclusion

This study addressed the displaced Rohingya children's education and the role of NGOs in assisting this issue. The denial of right to education for the displaced Rohingya children has brought severe impact on their future job opportunities. Few of them are capable in entering the private schools and later continue their higher education in other places. However, the vast majority of these children are incapable of securing professional jobs because of their failure to obtain formal education recognized by the government. This research analysed that most of the Rohingya children failed to obtain formal education because of their legal status. Without having the citizenship of Malaysia, it will be challenging for them to access the public schools and only optional to the non-formal education centre.

This research elucidates the situation that has befallen on the displaced Rohingya children in Selangor in accessing the right to education. This study suggests that policymaker should provide with comprehensible policy on the implementation of managing the Rohingya community. Policymakers should consider providing clear policy guideline for NGOs in establishing a non-formal education in Malaysia. With clear guideline, the children will be able to have more conducive learning environment for the Rohingya children. Enforcement should be strictly implemented to parties who are yet to comply with the policy given. Fieldwork and secondary data suggested that NGOs and community organizations are unsupported with systematic coordination to address the issue of non-formal education. Immediate measure on the registration of the Rohingya children to school should be prioritised by community leaders and NGOs. All the data and information of these issue should be publicly published for the awareness of all. This research will further assist future researcher, policymaker and the Rohingya community in understanding the status and challenges faced by the Rohingya children community in Selangor. Actions should be taken to improve the community and with their skills and experience, they will be able to contribute back to the Malaysia society.

References

- Ali, N. (2014). Cabaran-Cabaran Pelarian Rohingya Muslim: Kajian Kes di Pulau Pinang. *Social Sciences Postgraduate International Seminar (SSPIS)*, 13(2), 265–274.
- Ali, E. (2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]
- Mannan, A. (2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]
- Aziz, A. (2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]
- Dali, A. M., & Abdullah, A. (2012). *Air mata kesengsaraan Rohingya: identiti, penindasan dan pelarian*. Inteam Publishing.
- Farzana, K. F., Pero, S. D. M., & Othman, M. F. (2020). The Dream's Door: Educational Marginalization of Rohingya Children in Malaysia. *South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277977920905819>
- Hamzah, I. S., & Daud, S. (2016). *Pelarian Rohingya dan isu-isu kontemporari di Malaysia Rohingya refugees and contemporary issues in Malaysia*. <http://www.mm2h.com/>
- Hevener, N. K. (2019). Convention Against Discrimination in Education. In *International Law and the Status of Women* (pp. 165–176). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429050022-20>
- Hoag, R. W. (2011). International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In

- Encyclopedia of Global Justice* (pp. 546–547). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9160-5_534
- Ibrahim, M. I. (2020). *Malaysia tak iktiraf status pelarian Rohingya*. Berita Harian. <https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/nasional/2020/04/683606/malaysia-tak-iktiraf-status-pelarian-rohingya>
- JREC. (n.d.). – Persatuan Jaringan Islam Global Masa Depan. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://jrecmalaysia.com/>
- Khairi, A. (2021). *Keselamatan insan terjamin?: pelarian Moro dan Rohingya di Malaysia*. Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
- Letchamanan, H. (2013). Myanmar’s Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia: Education and the Way Forward. *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, 2(2), 86–97. <https://doi.org/10.14425/00.50.24>
- Yusop, M. (2021). Personal Communication [Personal interview]
- Haque, M. M. (2021). A Future for the Rohingya in Myanmar, in *The Rohingya Crisis: A Moral Ethnographic, and Policy Assessment*, Routledge: London.
- Haque, M. M. (2021). Stranded Rohingya in “No-Man’s Land” between Myanmar and Bangladesh, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 48:1, 41-62, DOI: 10.1080/00927678.2020.1827181
- Yusoff, M. (2021). Personal Communication [Personal interview]
- Naylor, S. (2000). Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Journal of Government Information*, 27(2), 259–261. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1352-0237\(00\)00144-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1352-0237(00)00144-1)
- Palik, J. (2020). Education for Rohingya Refugee Children in Malaysia. *Prio Policy Brief*, 02. <https://reliefweb.int/report/malaysia/education-rohingya-refugee-children-malaysia>
- Schwelb, E. (1966). The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 15(4), 996–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1093/iclqaj/15.4.996>
- SUHAKAM. (2007). *Report on Access to Education in Malaysia*. 1–42. <http://www.suhakam.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Research-Report.pdf>
- Tawil, S. (2000). *International humanitarian law and basic education*. Revue Internationale de La Croix-Rouge/International Review of the Red Cross. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1560775500184639>
- UNESCO. (n.d.). *Right to Education - Legal Action*. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from <https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education/legal-action>
- UNHCR. (2019a). *UNHCR - Education in Malaysia*. Webpage. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/education-in-malaysia.html>
- UNHCR. (2019b). *UNHCR - Education in Malaysia*. Webpage. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/education-in-malaysia.html>
- UNHCR. (2021). *UNHCR - Figures at a Glance in Malaysia*. UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/figures-at-a-glance-in-malaysia.html>
- United Nations. (1996). *OHCHR | Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Ohcher. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- United Nations. (2019). *Civil Society | United Nations*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/civilsociety>