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Trauma, Resilience, and Refugee Education in Gulwali Passarlay's *The Lightless Sky*: A Literary Reflection on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 3, 4, and 10

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the interrelated themes of trauma, resilience, and refugee education in Gulwali Passarlay's memoir *The Lightless Sky*, using the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Through literary analysis, the paper examines the psychological impacts of forced migration on refugee youth and highlights the role of education as a mechanism for healing and integration. Drawing on trauma theory and psychosocial education frameworks, the study argues that structured learning environments can foster resilience and agency among refugee children. It further critiques sociopolitical barriers in the resettlement process and calls for inclusive educational policies. Ultimately, the paper contributes to interdisciplinary discourse on refugee narratives, education reform, and global development, advocating for education-based interventions to ensure equitable, sustainable futures for displaced populations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Forced migration is a multidimensional crisis that intersects with issues of psychological trauma, cultural displacement, and social integration. Gulwali Passarlay's memoir *The Lightless Sky* provides an intimate narrative of a young Afghan refugee's journey across continents in search of safety, identity, and a better future. This paper aims to tackle some complex problems and shed light on the challenges that refugees encounter as they navigate trauma, resilience, and the resettlement process through Gulwali Passarlay's memoir. In doing so, the study connects these themes with the global development agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

The study addresses several interrelated questions: What are the main elements that support refugees' capacity for resilience? What effects do social support systems, education, and psychological well-being have on developing resilience during the resettlement process? How does resilience affect refugees' capacity to overcome obstacles like relocation, cultural adjustment, and educational integration? Furthermore, what specific psychological effects does trauma have on refugees' mental health and long-term academic achievement? How can stakeholders (such as policymakers, humanitarian agencies, and educational institutions) constructively respond to these challenges?

Education is central to the refugee experience, functioning not only as a means of intellectual development but also as a critical space for emotional healing, identity reconstruction, and social inclusion. Social support within refugee communities and the preservation of cultural practices are essential factors for recovery and resilience (Shannon *et al.*, 2015). Access to equitable, trauma-informed education aligns with SDG 4's vision for inclusive and lifelong learning. The significance of education in mitigating trauma is echoed by a previous report (Sharma & Gupta, 2023), who explain that an individual's perception of available coping resources (such as learning environments) plays a key role in determining psychological outcomes.

Likewise, previous research (Fazel and Stein, 2002) has shown that refugee children are at a higher risk for mental health disorders than their non-refugee peers, especially when access to education and mental health services is limited. Researchers (Sandten, 2017) underscore how displacement and perpetual uncertainty exacerbate depression, particularly among unaccompanied minors. These findings reinforce the urgency for supportive systems that align with SDG 3 by ensuring well-being and mental health through formal schooling, peer relationships, and access to professional psychological support.

The memoir's account of Gulwali's evolving relationship with education in different host countries serves as a powerful illustration of SDG 10, which seeks to reduce inequality within and among nations. Education becomes both a right and a lifeline that enables displaced youth to reimagine their futures. Despite facing xenophobia and systemic hardship, Passarlay never relinquishes his commitment to survive and learn, using education as a tool for empowerment.

Ultimately, this paper seeks to promote empathy, inclusion, and justice by analyzing refugee narratives through an interdisciplinary lens that incorporates literature, trauma studies, education, and global policy. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to frame *The Lightless Sky* not merely as a memoir of suffering, but as a call to action for transforming refugee education policy following the global sustainable development agenda. The study

contributes to discussions on how inclusive, quality education can serve as a mechanism of psychological recovery and social reintegration for displaced youth.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Different critics have examined the novel *The Lightless Sky* in various ways, especially focusing on mental health, trauma, and displacement. This study expands those discussions by incorporating the educational dimension of refugee experiences and aligning the analysis with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 on well-being, SDG 4 on inclusive education, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.

Refugee children in the UK are more likely than non-refugee children to experience emotional and behavioral issues, partly due to pre-migration trauma, post-migration stressors, and limited access to mental health and educational services (Fazel & Stein, 2002). The lack of sustained, structured learning environments is a barrier to both psychological recovery and academic growth, which reflects a critical gap in the realization of SDG 4.

Displacement and perpetual uncertainty exacerbate depression, particularly among unaccompanied minors (Sandten, 2017). These psychological conditions often translate into disengagement from education and difficulty adapting to academic settings. By reconstructing Gulwali's asylum-seeking journey, its analysis indirectly calls attention to the need for educational systems that are sensitive to trauma and responsive to the specific needs of refugee youth.

Passarlay's narrative creates "existential immediacy" for the reader, drawing them into the emotional and physical realities of the journey (Eliaison *et al.*, 2010). This literary mechanism is valuable for educational purposes, as refugee memoirs like *The Lightless Sky* can serve as pedagogical tools in developing empathy, intercultural literacy, and global citizenship—core competencies promoted in SDG 4.

Despite extreme hardship, Passarlay never relinquishes his hope and determination to survive and learn, using education as a tool for empowerment. Her analysis emphasizes perseverance and cultural identity but does not fully address how education itself supports resilience. This study reframes education not only as formal schooling but as a psychosocial support structure that promotes healing, adaptation, and identity reconstruction.

Social support and cultural continuity are essential for recovery and resilience among refugee communities (Shannon *et al.*, 2015). Although centered on African refugees in the United States, their findings apply to broader refugee populations, where schools serve as crucial community anchors and safe spaces for healing and learning.

The transactional model of stress and coping shows that the way individuals perceive stressors and the resources available to them significantly shape their psychological responses. In this light, trauma-informed education becomes essential in promoting psychological resilience, aligning with SDG 3.

A psychosocial framework that addresses both war-related trauma and ongoing daily stressors is necessary to support mental health in conflict and post-conflict settings (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). Educational systems that respond to these realities through flexible curricula, multilingual instruction, and socio-emotional support will better fulfill SDG 4 and SDG 10.

A 2018 report by the UNHCR confirms the rising scale of forced displacement and the urgent need for inclusive education for displaced populations (<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7>). Children and youth affected by migration require systems that guarantee continuity in education, language access, and integration into local school environments. The inability to access such education perpetuates global inequalities, in direct contradiction with the goals of SDG 10.

Trauma experienced before and after displacement significantly predicts mental health outcomes, while access to resources (including education) is a key protective factor (Porter & Haslam, 2005). Educational access must therefore be treated as a priority in both humanitarian and development agendas.

Refugee narratives like *The Lightless Sky* provide humanizing counterpoints to dominant Western discourses that depict refugees as security threats or economic burdens (Shannahan, 2016). Such stories offer a critical educational function, promoting social awareness, empathy, and cultural understanding, values that reinforce the goals of SDG 4 and SDG 10.

Gulwali Passarlay's journey is emblematic of the larger migratory paths taken by refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and other conflict zones in search of dignity and opportunity (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). Yet these stories often remain detached from educational reform discourses and trauma-sensitive pedagogy.

The persistence of gendered power dynamics, particularly among refugee communities, further complicates access to education, especially for women and girls (Sherma, 2025). Gender-sensitive policies in refugee education systems are critical to ensuring equity and fulfilling SDGs 4 and 10.

While prior literature captures the scope of refugee trauma, it frequently underrepresents the role of education as a vehicle for recovery, inclusion, and development. This study argues that education must be recognized as both a basic human right and a core component of psychosocial rehabilitation, social reintegration, and sustainable development for displaced populations.

3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative literary analysis approach, using Gulwali Passarlay's memoir *The Lightless Sky* as the primary text. The researcher conducted a close reading and thematic coding to identify recurring motifs of trauma, resilience, and refugee education. The analysis focused on how these themes are embedded in the narrative structure and how they reflect the broader realities of forced migration, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

To frame the analysis, the study applied theoretical models from trauma studies and sociocultural refugee education research. Foundational concepts of psychological trauma and narrative memory were drawn from trauma theory, with particular reference to how narrative functions as a space of recovery and testimony (Eliaison *et al.*, 2010). The psychological dynamics of stress and coping were interpreted using the transactional model developed by other study, which posits that individuals' cognitive appraisals and coping resources determine their psychological responses to stress (Sharma & Gupta, 2023).

The researcher also examined the educational episodes in the memoir, such as Gulwali's experience learning English, adjusting to formal schooling in the UK, and reflecting on education as a source of dignity and empowerment, as forms of narrative evidence of SDG 4

in action. Educational exclusion, language barriers, and informal learning environments were interpreted as both challenges and coping mechanisms. These insights were contextualized using research that emphasizes the role of social support and educational stability in building resilience among refugee populations (Shannon *et al.*, 2015; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010).

This method was appropriate because literary texts serve as both reflective and empirical sources, offering access to subjective refugee experiences while simultaneously engaging with global humanitarian and educational discourse. The study did not involve empirical fieldwork or quantitative data but instead relied on interpretive analysis of the memoir's language, imagery, and structure to conclude relevant to education and development policy.

In doing so, the research illuminated how refugee narratives can inform trauma-informed education, mental health interventions, and inclusive pedagogical frameworks aligned with the SDGs (Porter & Haslam, 2005; Al-Hendawi & Alodat, 2023).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Trauma in the Context of Forced Migration

Gulwali Passarlay's *The Lightless Sky* offers a visceral account of the traumatic ruptures experienced by child refugees fleeing war and persecution. The memoir opens with the death of Gulwali's father and grandfather, killed during a U.S.-led operation in Afghanistan. This event becomes a pivotal trauma, marking the breakdown of familial structure and the beginning of existential dislocation. The psychological impact of this loss is evident as Gulwali expresses a desire for revenge, rooted in cultural tradition and unprocessed grief (Kristensen *et al.*, 2012).

As the narrative unfolds, trauma accumulates through a series of border crossings, imprisonments, separations, and betrayals. For example, being detained in Bulgaria and Iran subjected Gulwali to physical violence, unsanitary conditions, and emotional degradation. These traumatic events are compounded by the absence of legal protection, highlighting the gap between refugee rights under international law and their implementation (Agamben, 2013). The United Nations' Refugee Convention outlines the right to freedom from arbitrary detention and to access basic services, yet Gulwali and other refugees are repeatedly denied these rights.

A particularly distressing episode occurs when Gulwali is separated from his brother, Hazrat. This loss of his closest emotional anchor results in a deep sense of helplessness and vulnerability. He writes, "I was too traumatized to speak... my only comfort was my brother's hand gently squeezing mine when he noticed my tears threatening to fall". Such scenes illustrate how displacement strips children of their emotional scaffolding, leaving them psychologically exposed.

From a trauma studies perspective, these experiences can be understood not merely as individual crises, but as symptoms of structural violence—political conditions that perpetuate harm through social abandonment (Womersley, 2011). They also align with what Caruth (1996) describes as "belated trauma," where the full impact of events emerges only in fragmented memory and bodily response. Gulwali's recurrent nightmares, his physical sickness when thinking of home, and his inability to articulate feelings all suggest unresolved trauma manifesting somatically.

In terms of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), these narratives demand systemic attention to mental health care for refugees, particularly children. Emotional trauma, if unaddressed, leads to long-term consequences such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and learning disruptions (Fazel & Stein, 2002).

4.2. Educational Disruption and Learning as Recovery

Throughout *The Lightless Sky*, Gulwali Passarlay not only recounts physical and emotional hardships but also reveals how his educational journey is interrupted, postponed, and eventually transformed. His story reflects the broader pattern of educational disruption faced by refugee children, who often experience long gaps in formal learning due to instability, detention, language barriers, and lack of legal status.

The narrative presents multiple instances of disrupted schooling. Before fleeing Afghanistan, Gulwali was a committed student with aspirations. However, conflict and the death of his family members forced him to abandon school. During his migration, there are long stretches of time when education is entirely inaccessible. For instance, while in refugee camps and prisons across Turkey and Iran, Gulwali and others are deprived not only of food and sanitation but of any structured learning environment (Dehghan, 2018). This educational displacement intensifies feelings of uselessness and disconnection, which further aggravates trauma.

This experience echoes global findings that refugee youth commonly spend years without access to school, which limits not only their academic development but also their sense of identity, routine, and self-worth. The absence of daily stability, such as going to school, acts as a post-migration stressor that exacerbates mental health challenges (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). In this context, education is not simply a developmental right but a psychosocial intervention.

However, upon arriving in the UK, Gulwali is finally placed in school. This marks a major turning point in his psychological journey. Despite initial struggles with language and social integration, his access to formal education allows him to rebuild a sense of normalcy. He begins learning English, adapts to British academic structures, and eventually gains admission to a university. His motivation to study, as he writes, stems from a desire to prove that “refugees are not a burden, but a resource”.

This process illustrates how education functions as recovery, restoring structure, purpose, and hope. The classroom becomes not only a place of learning but a therapeutic space where Gulwali reclaims control over his future. Such transformation aligns closely with SDG 4, which advocates for “inclusive and equitable quality education” that enables all individuals to “realize their potential.”

Moreover, Gulwali’s experience supports Sharma and Gupta (2023) model of stress and coping. Access to education becomes a coping resource, allowing him to reappraise his situation and construct a meaningful narrative from past trauma. The emotional support received from teachers and peers, along with academic success, facilitates his resilience.

From a policy perspective, this underscores the importance of integrating trauma-informed approaches into refugee education systems. Teachers and institutions must be trained to recognize the signs of trauma and to create inclusive, safe, and culturally responsive environments. Education for refugee children must go beyond the curriculum—it must address emotional recovery, identity restoration, and social cohesion (Shannon *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, Gulwali’s memoir becomes an educational text in itself, promoting awareness and empathy among host communities. In classrooms, such narratives can help reduce prejudice, a step aligned with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), by humanizing refugee experiences and dismantling stereotypes (Akin-Sabuncu *et al.*, 2024).

The Lightless Sky demonstrates that education is both a casualty and a cure in the refugee experience. Its absence deepens trauma, while its presence fosters resilience and restores agency. Ensuring educational continuity and inclusivity is not just an ethical obligation—it is a strategic imperative for rebuilding lives in the aftermath of displacement.

4.3. Resilience, Social Support, and Cultural Preservation

While trauma dominates much of Gulwali Passarlay's journey, *The Lightless Sky* is equally a story of resilience—the capacity to endure, adapt, and ultimately thrive despite repeated exposure to adversity. Resilience in this memoir is not depicted as an innate trait, but as a process forged through relationships, cultural identity, and moments of dignity and hope.

Passarlay repeatedly draws strength from the memory of his family and cultural values, particularly his mother's wishes, his Islamic faith, and the Pashtun code of honor. These elements function as internal anchors, helping him maintain a sense of identity amidst chaos. At one point, despite being overwhelmed by fear and isolation, he finds comfort in prayer at a mosque, stating, "I loved being there, as it helped settle my mind". This small act reflects the preservation of tradition as a stabilizing force, reinforcing previous research (Shannon *et al.*, 2015), which emphasizes cultural continuity as a core component of refugee resilience.

Beyond personal faith and memory, peer relationships also serve as a buffer against trauma. Throughout his journey, Gulwali travels with other displaced youth, forming bonds with fellow refugees like Sajjad, Abdul, and Karwan. These friendships offer emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of collective struggle. Social solidarity becomes a lifeline in the face of dehumanization, and these informal communities act as surrogate families.

This experience supports previous studies (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010) that social support, particularly within refugee communities, is essential for resilience. Whether in shared suffering, mutual encouragement, or protecting each other from abusive authorities, these peer connections mitigate despair. Moreover, previous studies (Sharma & Gupta, 2023) highlight how such social resources shape coping responses, facilitating positive adaptation under prolonged stress.

From an SDG 3 standpoint, the presence of supportive interpersonal relationships is foundational to psychological well-being. Yet formal systems often overlook these informal support networks, failing to integrate them into mental health strategies or educational interventions. Resilience, as illustrated in *The Lightless Sky*, is not fostered in isolation—it grows in context, through people, values, and meaningful interaction.

The memoir also illustrates how resilience is tested by gendered and institutional power dynamics. Female refugees, though not central to Gulwali's narrative, are referenced as particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Previous studies (Sherma, 2025) critique hegemonic masculinity even within refugee contexts, where male dominance persists despite mutual victimhood. This underscores the need for intersectional approaches to refugee support, particularly in education and health systems that serve girls and women, a concern central to both SDG 4 and SDG 10.

Institutional actors—whether police, border agents, or smugglers—are almost universally portrayed as antagonistic in Gulwali's journey. Yet there are exceptions, such as teachers and social workers in the UK who encourage and assist him. These moments of institutional compassion contrast with earlier neglect and abuse, suggesting that systems, if humanized, can foster resilience instead of exacerbating trauma.

Importantly, Passarlay's resilience is not presented as triumphalist or romanticized. He writes candidly about moments of breakdown, homesickness, and rage. His strength emerges not from invincibility but from enduring vulnerability, the decision to continue, to study, to speak, even when overwhelmed. This nuanced portrayal aligns with previous studies (Saltsman & Majidi, 2021) that call for refugee narratives that resist simplification and instead center the lived complexities of displacement.

By viewing resilience as relational, cultural, and systemic, this study reframes it as a developmental outcome supported by education, healthcare, and community connection. These findings have implications for refugee programming, emphasizing the need to design interventions that preserve cultural practices, foster peer support, and promote inclusive education, not only to repair damage but to empower agency.

4.4. Resettlement, Inequality, and Policy Failure

The final phase of Gulwali Passarlay's journey (resettlement in the United Kingdom) reveals that trauma does not end with border crossing. While safety may be achieved, resettlement introduces new layers of bureaucratic exclusion, social alienation, and institutional inequality. These barriers reveal the political nature of refugee integration, where access to rights, services, and dignity is often conditional and unevenly distributed.

Gulwali recounts how he was frequently detained, interrogated, and dehumanized even after reaching European borders. In Istanbul, he and other refugees were "seated in a large hallway" for hours and later imprisoned without food. Such experiences violate not only human rights conventions but also the moral premise of SDG 10, which aims to reduce inequalities within and among nations. These policies reflect what previous studies (Agamben, 2013) call the "state of exception," where refugees are excluded from legal protection and political recognition, existing in a liminal space between humanity and legality.

The UK, despite offering safety, does not immediately provide a sense of belonging. Gulwali describes cultural dissonance, language struggles, and institutional suspicion. For instance, immigration officials repeatedly questioned his age and story, doubting his credibility. This lack of trust is deeply damaging to displaced individuals who already suffer from trauma. Such treatment reflects broader trends in Europe, where security discourses increasingly dominate refugee policy, reducing human beings to case files and statistics (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018).

Access to education, while eventually achieved, is also not equitable. Refugees like Gulwali face immense challenges in catching up academically, adjusting to new pedagogical expectations, and learning a new language, all while processing trauma and often without tailored support. The SDG 4 target of "inclusive and equitable quality education" is undermined when refugee learners are placed into systems that are not prepared to accommodate their specific needs.

Moreover, resettlement is deeply politicized. Government schemes like the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) are contingent on diplomatic relations and public sentiment, often neglecting those already in transit. Even for those granted asylum, permanent status may take years, during which refugees live in a precarious legal limbo. Gulwali's memoir highlights the uncertainty of this period, where refugees remain in legal insecurity, housing instability, and emotional distress.

This injustice reflects what previous studies (Porter & Haslam, 2005) identify as post-displacement stressors, factors like uncertain legal status, poverty, and discrimination that directly impact mental health. Without secure housing, stable education, and psychological support, resettlement becomes a continuation of trauma, not a resolution (Peisker & Tilbuty, 2003; Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013).

Furthermore, Gulwali's reflections on his role as a public speaker and advocate demonstrate a reversal of marginality, where lived experience is transformed into social contribution. Yet he is the exception, not the norm. For many refugees, the lack of systemic support results in marginalization, unemployment, and alienation. These outcomes are not the product of individual failure, but policy failure.

To truly implement SDG 10, states must dismantle the systemic inequalities embedded in immigration, education, and health systems. This includes:

- (i) Accelerating legal recognition for asylum seekers
- (ii) Providing trauma-informed training for teachers and case workers
- (iii) Designing language support programs
- (iv) Ensuring safe, inclusive, and respectful integration environments

The *Lightless Sky* offers more than a personal account; it is a diagnosis of global inequality, framed through the body and voice of a displaced child. It reveals how political systems fail to protect the most vulnerable and how resilience emerges not because of those systems, but often despite them.

4.5. Literary Testimony and the Role of Refugee Narratives in Global Education

Beyond its autobiographical and political dimensions, *The Lightless Sky* functions as a literary testimony—a text that speaks not only for its author but also for countless voiceless individuals experiencing displacement, trauma, and marginalization. As such, the memoir holds powerful pedagogical value, offering educators, students, policymakers, and humanitarian actors a direct insight into the lived realities of refugee youth.

Refugee narratives such as Passarlay's serve as essential counter-narratives to dominant media portrayals that often dehumanize migrants and frame them as threats or burdens. Through detailed descriptions, emotional vulnerability, and cultural reflection, the memoir humanizes abstract data and transforms distant political issues into immediate human experiences. In the classroom, such texts become vehicles of empathy, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship education, all of which are pillars of SDG 4.7, which advocates for education that promotes "sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and a culture of peace."

The structure of Passarlay's story (from trauma and suffering to resilience and advocacy) also models narrative agency, allowing refugee voices to shape their representation rather than being spoken for. This is a crucial step in addressing epistemic injustice in education, where the knowledge and perspectives of marginalized groups are often omitted or tokenized.

By incorporating refugee literature into curricula, schools can:

- (i) Challenge xenophobic discourses
- (ii) Create inclusive discussions around migration and identity
- (iii) Equip learners to think critically about justice, inequality, and human rights

Moreover, such narratives can support trauma-informed pedagogy when used with care. For refugee students, seeing their realities reflected in the curriculum can promote a sense of belonging and validation. For host-country students, these stories break down "us vs. them" binaries and foster solidaristic perspectives. However, teachers must be trained to navigate such content sensitively, ensuring that refugee learners are not retraumatized or singled out.

Passarlay's memoir also highlights the role of literacy and communication as tools of empowerment. His ability to eventually write and speak about his experiences shows how education enables refugees not only to survive but to shape public discourse. Literacy becomes more than a skill; it becomes a weapon of dignity and advocacy.

Finally, by positioning *The Lightless Sky* as both subject and source of analysis, this study demonstrates the value of literary texts in development and humanitarian research. Literature captures the complexity and nuance of lived experiences that quantitative data often cannot. It reveals contradictions, emotions, and moral dilemmas. When aligned with

the SDGs, it offers a powerful narrative framework to assess progress, expose failures, and envision alternatives.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has explored the interwoven themes of trauma, resilience, and refugee education as depicted in Gulwali Passarlay's *The Lightless Sky*, positioning the narrative within the broader frameworks of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4, and 10. Through literary analysis, the research illuminated how the traumatic experiences of forced migration—beginning with violence and displacement, continuing through perilous journeys, and culminating in politically charged resettlement—leave enduring psychological and social scars on refugee youth.

The memoir illustrates that trauma among displaced populations is not limited to moments of violence but extends through systemic exclusion, loss of identity, and uncertainty. However, it also reveals how resilience emerges not in isolation, but through cultural grounding, peer relationships, and supportive environments. In this context, education functions as both a casualty of displacement and a pathway to recovery. Passarlay's eventual access to formal schooling, his academic success, and his role as a public advocate demonstrate how inclusive, trauma-informed education systems can foster dignity, identity reconstruction, and social reintegration.

Despite individual resilience, the memoir lays bare the failures of global policy systems to uphold refugee rights and reduce inequality. From arbitrary detention to legal limbo, from xenophobic suspicion to exclusionary education systems, refugees face multiple structural barriers that contradict the values of SDG 10. The analysis shows that meaningful resettlement cannot occur without holistic policy reforms that center human dignity, legal protection, and educational opportunity.

Finally, the study affirms the pedagogical power of refugee narratives as tools for human rights education and global citizenship. *The Lightless Sky* is not only a testimony of survival but a literary artifact that challenges dominant discourses and invites solidarity. As such, this research contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship that bridges literature, development studies, education, and social justice.

Achieving the goals of SDG 3, 4, and 10 requires more than institutional policy; it demands an ethical commitment to listen, include, and empower voices like Passarlay's. Education is not only a right but a remedy, and refugee narratives must be integral to how we understand, teach, and transform the world.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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