UTMUN 2023

United Nations Children Fund

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Contents

Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an equitable manner, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

> This Background Guide presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to: poverty, child abuse, child marriage, mental health issues, etc. Great care will be taken by staff in handling any/all of these topics should they arise.

UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: refraining from reading certain parts of the background guide, preparing yourself before reading this background guide, doing some self-care or seeking support after reading the background guide, or anything that can help make you feel more comfortable. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Equity Director, Aidan Thompson, at equity@utmun.org. We want you to feel safe and comfortable at UTMUN!

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please:

• Contact your Faculty Advisor/Head Delegate with your request if you are a part of a group delegation
• Email our Director of Academics, Elaine Wang, with a brief explanation of why you would like to switch committees if you are NOT a part of a group delegation.

UTMUN

Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to the behaviour of all attendees of UTMUN for the entire duration of the conference, while engaging in any conference-related activities, including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies.

1. Harrassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,

    a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect) discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;

        i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;

        ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;

    b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harrassment, such as, but not limited to,

        i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;

        ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;

        iii.   Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;

2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,

    a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;

    b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;

        i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;

        ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Director of Equity, Aidan Thompson, with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;

    c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character

and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;

d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Director of Equity, Aidan Thompson;

e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff members;

i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,

a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;

b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;

c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;

i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;

ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to discipline delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,

a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;

b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);

c. Disqualification from awards;

d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. If online, additional rules apply to delegate and staff conduct, including but not limited to Zoom background usage. Delegates must use either conference-provided Zoom backgrounds, the blurred background, solid colours, or no background.

6. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on University of Toronto Model United Nations' policies regarding equity, questions, concerns, or for any equity violations that attendees would like to raise, please contact equity@utmun.org, or fill out this anonymous form.

A Letter From Your Director

Hello delegates!

Welcome to the UNICEF committee for UTMUN 2023! My name is Antonette De Los Reyes, and I am ecstatic to be your Director for this committee. I am a first year student at the University of Toronto, currently under the social sciences stream. I have yet to choose my majors, but I have a deep interest in learning about subjects such as international relations, political science, and the French language. My first experience with UTMUN was as a delegate at the UTMUN 2022 Legal Committee, and now I have the distinct pleasure of directing UNICEF!

Joining me on the dais are two lovely individuals: Harmanpreet Pahwa and Aya Al Tabbaa. Harmanpreet is the Vice Director of this committee, and has done a fantastic job helping me with this background guide. Meanwhile, Aya is the Moderator of this committee, who will do an amazing job during the conference.

We have two distinct and broad topics to discuss during our conference! Our first topic handles poverty. It is a big topic, but filled with many points of discussion. Our second topic handles child marriage. I am aware how sensitive this topic may be, especially in an environment of debate, so I ask that we all adhere to our equity disclaimers. I am aware of the broad nature of these two topics, but I hope you use the background guide and further research to navigate yourselves through it. Nonetheless, I am looking forward to seeing your discussion!

The background guide is intended to be your starting point of research. The dais has created this document which frames key information and topics of discussion. This document does not cover *everything*, but does cover a wide array of topics that delegates are expected to address.

To close this off, I would like to say that please feel free to reach out if you need any help. The dais would love to aid in making your UTMUN experience better in any way. We are here to help.

I'm looking forward to meeting you,

Antonette De Los Reyes
Director of the United Nations Children Fund
unicef@utmun.org

Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), formerly known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, is an organization of the United Nations tasked to "save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence."[1]

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was formed in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 57 as a relief agency for European children fleeing World War II.[2] Following the aftermath of the war, UNICEF's mandate to "help children and young people whose lives and futures were at risk" was established for all children worldwide.[3] Now officially called the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF is renamed accordingly following the General Assembly's decision to extend UNICEF's mandate indefinitely with resolution 802 (VIII) in 1953.[4]

Due to the fact that childhood is the most vulnerable stage in a person's life, children are among the most susceptible members of society, especially when it pertains to international affairs.[5] In order to reach the most vulnerable children and adolescents and to defend the rights of all children, UNICEF works in environments where youth are most at-risk. UNICEF is active in more than 190 countries and territories such as Cambodia, Somalia and Germany.[6]

While regional governments continue to be principal collaborators of UNICEF, they also collaborate with non-governmental groups, academic institutions, UN agencies, international financial institutions, and the corporate sector, including the council of Europe and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).[7] UNICEF cultivates and establishes partnerships by accomplishing larger objectives for children, closing equity gaps, and addressing the most severe child rights violations in the region. Delegates should think about the partnerships that UNICEF might seek to carry out its obligations and duties to children around the world, giving governmental bodies priority.

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1 "What We Do." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do.
2 "UN Resolution Establishing UNICEF." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/documents/un-resolution-establishing-unicef.
3 "UNICEF History." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/history.
4 UN General Assembly, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (A/RES/802 (VIII)), 1953.
5 "Children: UN Global Compact." Children | UN Global Compact, https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/social/childrens-rights.
6 "What We Do." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do.
7 "Our Partners." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/eca/what-we-do/our-partners.

Topic 1: Poverty

The world has made incredible progress toward UNICEF's goals in recent years. Yet, more than 700 million individuals continue to live in abject poverty.[8] The impact is disproportionately felt on children. Despite making up one-third of the world's population, they account for half of individuals who are unable to make ends meet on less than $1.90 per day.[9]

Children who grow up in poverty frequently lack the nutrition, hygiene, housing, medical care, and education necessary for survival and growth. Around 1 billion children worldwide are multidimensionally poor, meaning they lack needs such as clean water and food.[10] Due to COVID-19, an additional 150 million children are now living in multidimensional poverty.[11]

There are severe repercussions when 356 million children live in extreme poverty. The likelihood of childhood death is twice as high for the world's poorest children as it is for wealthier children due to the risks poverty may bring such as food insecurity, poor nutrition, and homelessness. Risks of hardship and marginalization increase for those raised amid humanitarian situations.[12] Even in countries such as the United States, 1 in 7 children live in poverty.[13] Children who grow up in poverty experience low living conditions, lack of workforce readiness skills development, and lower adult salaries regardless of where they live. However, a very small percentage of governments have made ending child poverty a top priority.[14]

Lack of Education

The right to learn is an element of a child's right to an education. In spite of this, for far too many kids all throughout the world, going to school does not result in learning. Despite the fact that two thirds of children and adolescents globally are enrolled in school, more than 600 million of them are unable to reach minimum competency levels in reading and mathematics. Despite the fact that these kids are enrolled in school, illiteracy rates persist because of issues like a shortage of competent teachers, poor instructional materials, and inadequate sanitation. Foundational literacy and numeracy skills are farther out of reach for adolescents who are not attending school. Children are denied access to school and learning all across the world for a

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8 "Child Poverty." UNICEF, 16 Oct. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty.

9 "Poverty: UN Global Compact." Poverty | UN Global Compact, https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/social/poverty#:~:text=More%20than%20700%20million%20people,of%20conflicts%20and%20climate%20change.

10 "Child Poverty." UNICEF, 9 Mar. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty.

11 "150 Million Additional Children Plunged into Poverty Due to Covid-19, UNICEF, Save the Children Say." UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/eca/node/6786.

12 "Global Poverty and Hunger." Action Against Hunger, 15 Aug. 2022, https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/global-poverty-hunger-facts.

13 Haider, Areeba. "The Basic Facts about Children in Poverty." Center for American Progress, 3 Nov. 2021, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/basic-facts-children-poverty/.

14 Haider, Areeba. "The Basic Facts about Children in Poverty." Center for American Progress, 3 Nov. 2021, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/basic-facts-children-poverty/.

variety of reasons. One of the biggest obstacles continues to be poverty. Children who experience economic insecurity or become victims of political unrest, armed conflict, or natural disasters are more likely to be excluded from school, as are those who are disabled or who belong to racial or ethnic minorities.[15] Further, opportunities for girls to pursue higher education are still quite scarce in several nations.[16] Delegates are encouraged to explore this topic with the perspective of gender discrepancies. Without a high-quality education, children face significant obstacles to employment and future earning potential, endangering their ability to influence better futures for both themselves and their society.

There are discrepancies in literacy rates between different nations and continents. Education can promote social stability, not less through fostering knowledge and abilities to resolve conflicts without discrimination and violence, especially when schools are among the only places where students can interact with one another and experience the diversity of a nation. Education is a fundamental human right, a catalyst for growth, and one of the most effective means of eradicating poverty and advancing gender equality, health, peace, and stability.[17] It may provide significant, regular rewards in terms of income and is crucial for ensuring opportunity equality.[18] Gender inequities in education still exist despite research indicating how important girls' education is to development. 129 million females are not enrolled in school worldwide. Girls are more than twice as likely to be out of school in conflict-affected nations as they are in non-affected ones.[19] Education for girls boosts economies and lowers inequality. It helps create societies that are more resilient and stable, enabling everyone to reach their full potential, as shown in various research conduction, such as in the case study of Riau, Indonesia published by the Canadian Centre of Science and Education.[20] Access to education for girls entails more than just going to school. Additionally, it is important for girls to feel supported in their academic choices and secure in the classroom, even in fields where women are frequently underrepresented.

Youth Crime and Juvenile Justice

Experts in various disciplines, from sociologists to economists, have noted how poverty and criminal activity have an extremely "intimate" relationship.[21] The World Bank and the UN both place crime high on the list of challenges to a nation's development. As a result, children all around the world are impacted. Youth criminality does not have a single cause or origin. The main causes of crime include a variety of unfavourable social, economic, cultural, and family circumstances. Understanding the causes of crime is essential for its prevention. These are

15 "Education." UNICEF, 30 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/education.

16 "Education." UNICEF, 30 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/education.

17 Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports. https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/staff_reports/sr193.html.

18 Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports. https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/staff_reports/sr193.html.

19 "Girls' Education." UNICEF, 19 Jan. 2020, https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education.

20 Perceptions of Education Role in Developing Society: A Case ... - Eric. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1120826.pdf.

21 "Poverty and Crime: Breaking a Vicious Cycle of Discrimination." RSS, https://www.restlessstories.com/poverties/poverty-and-crime.

intricate and connected, however they can be categorized into three primary groups: family structures, the social environment, and poverty-related economic factors.[22]

In addition to a lack of money, poverty also shows up as a lack of opportunities for livable employment, inadequate housing, a lack of optimism, and discrimination toward those who live in poverty, especially children. Citizens and communities may see what is valued and how we prioritize things through their social structures. Inequality, the failure to share power, the perception of service inaccessibility, a lack of community leadership, and a low regard for children's and individuals' well-being are some of the social factors that contribute to crime. Families are in a unique position to help raise members of society. However, the responsibility to prioritize children extends far beyond the family and further includes communities and society.

For a variety of causes, children may be in violation of the law. The majority have engaged in misdemeanours or minor infractions like truancy, begging, or drinking. Children who commit crimes frequently feel pressured or used by adults.[23] Every year, millions of kids find themselves involved with the court systems around the globe.[24] Justice systems are frequently ill-equipped to meet the needs and rights of children, especially children in poverty. Police, prosecutors, lawyers, and judges who work in the justice system frequently lack the specialized training needed to support alleged offenders.[25] Many people might not be aware of the gender-specific risks that children face while dealing with the legal system. In other regions, social service professionals do not have the tools they need, including funding and facility connections, to assist children in finding safety and justice. Delegates are encouraged to concentrate on this matter at a broad scale. What can the international community do about lessening the risk of youth crime? It is well established that local/neighborhood efforts to combat youth criminality are the most effective. However, delegates are encouraged to concentrate on developing opportunities for justice, housing, educational, and rehabilitation programs for children, amongst other potential solutions.

Malnutrition

The United Nations and the international community have made the problem of malnutrition a top priority. Globally, one in three individuals suffer from malnutrition. Poor nutrition is a contributing factor in 45% of all infant deaths.[26] Without a healthy diet, neither individuals nor societies can function at their best. Families, communities, and nations all continue to experience poverty and inequality, with 60% of people who suffer from chronic hunger are women and girls.[27] The most economical approach to solving some of the biggest problems

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22 Root Causes of Crime. https://preventingcrime.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RootCauses.pdf.
23 "Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System." Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System | Youth.gov, https://youth.gov/youth-topics/juvenile-justice/youth-involved-juvenile-justice-system.
24 "Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System." Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System | Youth.gov, https://youth.gov/youth-topics/juvenile-justice/youth-involved-juvenile-justice-system.
25 "Justice for Children." UNICEF, 14 Nov. 2021, https://www.unicef.org/protection/justice-for-children.
26 "Fact Sheets - Malnutrition." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition.
27 "Fact Sheets - Malnutrition." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition.

facing the globe is to eradicate malnutrition. However, the pace of change is too slow to fulfill the UN's development goals such as the call to end poverty, zero hunger, and quality education. The effects of malnutrition are still particularly severe in vulnerable environments, which also primarily affect youth. These environments include places with high mortality rates, sickness, poor nutrition, and inadequate infrastructure.[28]

Typically, those who have the least social, economic, or political power suffer from hunger or malnutrition. Inequalities in social, political, and economic power are at the basis of this unequal distribution of hunger and malnutrition in all of its manifestations.[29] In order to address the issues of hunger, it is important to comprehend how the power disparities that exist in the food system contribute to and amplify these issues. Making sense of power interactions is difficult. Even the most sophisticated and cutting-edge strategies to combat hunger may fall short of achieving long-term success because they frequently function out of the public eye. No matter how practical, technical, or scaleable they are, policies that do not account for the underlying power dynamics are unlikely to be effective. Although power is an intangible idea, its effects are real.

The way that starvation intensifies the economic, social, and political divides that already exist in communities can be seen in the junction of malnutrition and other forms of inequality. The extreme food crises and famine that affected 108 million people in 2016–2017, with a disproportionate number of them living in East Africa and the Middle East, were the most severe expressions of inequality in the global food and financial system.[30] It is well known that one axis of nutritional inequality is gender inequality. The children who go without food are influenced by gender relations since families who must limit food frequently choose boys because they are expected to be the breadwinners in the future.

Lack of Mental Health Support

Armed conflict, natural catastrophes, and other humanitarian crises cause unimaginable suffering to millions of children around the world. Some of them may be torn away from their parents and caretakers when they flee their homes due to the distress. They may experience horrific violence, serious injuries, and the threat of being enlisted into armed groups during a crisis. As towns militarize, many people are shut off from essential facilities like clean water, healthcare, and education. Children frequently lack access to mental health and psychological care throughout it all, with potentially disastrous long-term implications.[31] For teenagers, intense distress and exposure to traumatic experiences can result in a number of negative effects, such

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28 "Goal 1: End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere - United Nations Sustainable Development." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/.

29 "Inequality, Hunger, and Malnutrition: Power Matters." Global Hunger Index (GHI) - Peer-Reviewed Annual Publication Designed to Comprehensively Measure and Track Hunger at the Global, Regional, and Country Levels, https://www.globalhungerindex.org/issues-in-focus/2017.html.

30 "Inequality, Hunger, and Malnutrition: Power Matters." Global Hunger Index (GHI) - Peer-Reviewed Annual Publication Designed to Comprehensively Measure and Track Hunger at the Global, Regional, and Country Levels, https://www.globalhungerindex.org/issues-in-focus/2017.html.

31 "Children Recruited by Armed Forces or Armed Groups." UNICEF, 26 Feb. 2020, https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces.

as drug and alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, health problems, subpar academic performance, self-harm, and suicide.[32]

When mental health and psychosocial problems are not addressed, a child's growth is halted as they are denied opportunities to engage in meaningful social interactions. Children who have mental health issues all too frequently experience stigma, discrimination, and even infringement of their human rights.[33] They might be shunned by their communities or exposed to more violence, even in the settings where they ought to feel safest. Despite the fact that more than 23% of all young people in the world who are between the ages of 15 and 24 experience mental health issues, youth mental health remains a taboo subject for many.[34] Destigmatizing youth mental health can help with this issue by improving access to mental health care and fostering ongoing discourse and education on the subject. Young people are frequently reluctant to seek the care and assistance they require due to the stigma associated with mental health, which exposes them to prejudice and isolation.

It is believed that by the time a person reaches the age of 14, 50% of all adult-onset problems have manifested.[35] These illnesses can have negative impacts that last a lifetime if ignored or mistreated. The underutilization of existing services by some groups of the population, most notably minority racial/ethnic children, has been recognised as a likely critical factor in the access and usage of mental health treatments.[36] Although it is assumed to be important, the role of stigma in research on child mental health care has not been fully characterized. The conceptual frameworks that link stigma to parental responses to children's emotional and behavioural issues, such as seeking professional help, must be acknowledged by all nations. Delegates are urged to limit conversation to topics relevant to the committee's objective. The discussion of how to alter the ingrained attitudes of individuals who do not legitimize mental health is also encouraged among delegates.

32 "Children Recruited by Armed Forces or Armed Groups." UNICEF, 26 Feb. 2020, https://www.unicef.org/protection/children-recruited-by-armed-forces.

33 "Adolescent Mental Health." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health.

34 "Adolescent Mental Health." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health.

35 Kessler, Ronald C, et al. "Age of Onset of Mental Disorders: A Review of Recent Literature." Current Opinion in Psychiatry, U.S. National Library of Medicine, July 2007, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1925038/.

36 Kessler, Ronald C, et al. "Age of Onset of Mental Disorders: A Review of Recent Literature." Current Opinion in Psychiatry, U.S. National Library of Medicine, July 2007, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1925038/.

Case Studies

Lack of Education - Burkina Faso and Pakistan

Burkina Faso's basic education system is extremely flawed and has numerous issues, such as its poor infrastructure and lack of adequate staff. About 15 out of 100 of children do not attend school. The incidence of illiteracy is close to 70% of the population (almost 80% for girls), and there is unequal access to schooling, and only 41.2 percent of the population over the age of 15 is literate in Burkina Faso as a result of the displacement of school closures.[37] Around 22.8 million kids between the ages of 5 and 16 do not attend school. [37] This is explained by the fact that Burkina Faso is a low-income nation with little natural resources.

The main factors contributing to poverty in this nation are an expanding population, uncontrolled rural exodus, and a lack of rural productivity. West African Burkina Faso is a landlocked nation with little natural resources and low levels of human development. Its economy is still based on agriculture, with a particular emphasis on cotton and food products.[38]

Another case can be seen in Pakistan. With an estimated 22.8 million kids between the ages of 5 and 16 who aren't in school right now, Pakistan currently has the second-highest percentage of OOSC in the world, accounting for 44% of all kids in this age range.[39] Lack of an adequate budget, lack of policy execution, a flawed examination system, subpar physical facilities, poor teacher quality, and numerous other issues plague Pakistan's educational system.

This might be linked to Pakistan's economic situation as well as its federal and national governments, comparable to Burkina Faso. The economy of Pakistan is now shackled by high unemployment, high inflation, and slow development. This results in an inadequate budget, a lack of policy execution, subpar facilities, a lack of qualified teachers, as well as other issues.[40]

Youth Crime - Brazil

According to the World Health Organization Statistical Information System, homicides among youth have nearly doubled over the past 20 years, placing Brazil sixth among nations with the highest rates of homicides among young people (WHOSIS). This can be seen in Sao Paulo, known as the financial hub of Brazil and one of the most populous cities in the world. Police records show that in the state of Sao Paulo alone, arrests of children for robbery and murder

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37 "Giving Everyone in Burkina Faso the Chance to Access Basic Education - Burkina Faso." ReliefWeb, 5 Mar. 2016, https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/giving-everyone-burkina-faso-chance-access-basic-education.

38 Reports, Staff. "What Are the Causes of Poverty in Burkina Faso?" BORGEN, 8 Oct. 2017, https://www.borgenmagazine.com/causes-of-poverty-in-burkina-faso/.

39 "Education." UNICEF Pakistan, https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/education.

40 "Critical Analysis of the Problems of Education in Pakistan" Critical Analysis of the Problems of Education in Pakistan: Possible Solutions, International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education , June 2014, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1091681.pdf.

have increased by 138% over the last ten years.[41] The economic development in Brazil can be attributed to part of the cause of the rise in youth criminality. In many places in Brazil, there is no daycare and no proper preschool for Brazilian children. Kids in less affluent communities spend their entire childhood living on the streets.[42]

Sergio Moro, the minister of justice and public safety, has said that lowering deadly violence is a critical issue to address, however his top priorities are battling corruption and organized crime, which directly relates to youth-committed crime.[43] This is because organized crime, including those committed by youth, continues to exist as corrupt public officials shield these organizations from law enforcement and other disruptions.[44]

There are instances of subnational initiatives to address the issue, despite the fact that Brazil currently lacks a federal plan to prevent and reduce homicidal violence. This is hardly surprising because, according to the constitution, the state is in charge of maintaining order. Espirito Santo, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, and So Paulo are just a few of the states that have implemented a variety of cutting-edge violent crime prevention strategies.[45] Researchers in Brazil have also begun assessing the results and effects of these and other projects. Although not all interventions have been successful, they provide insight into what does and does not work.

Malnutrition - Somalia

Due to years of conflict, the breakdown of fundamental social services, and the gradual loss of resistance, malnutrition prevails in Somalia. More than 1.2 million children were malnourished in 2018. Both in terms of quantity and nutritional variety, many Somali children do not consume enough food.[46] Thus, violence and conflict, as well as abrupt changes from drought to flooding, are aspects to blame for Somalia's food crisis. Crops all around the country have been destroyed by bad rainfall and harvests over several years.[47]

With assistance from agencies like UNICEF, Somalia has produced and contributed to a solution for malnutrition. The feeding and hygiene habits of infants and young children are directly related to malnutrition. A pregnant woman who is malnourished is more likely to have an underweight baby, which increases the risk of infection, starvation, and even death for the

41 "Violent Crime in São Paulo Has Dropped Dramatically. Is This Why?" World Economic Forum, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/violent-crime-in-sao-paulo-has-dropped-dramatically-this-may-be-why/.
42 "Violent Crime in São Paulo Has Dropped Dramatically. Is This Why?" World Economic Forum, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/violent-crime-in-sao-paulo-has-dropped-dramatically-this-may-be-why/.
43 Brito, Ricardo, and Gabriel Stargardter. "Brazil Minister Proposes Tougher Laws to Stem Deadly Crime Wave." Reuters, Thomson Reuters, 4 Feb. 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-politics-crime-idUSKCN1PT20U.
44 Fromiti. "Organized Crime Module 4 Key Issues: Links to Corruption." Organized Crime Module 4 Key Issues: Links to Corruption, https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-4/key-issues/links-to-corruption.html.
45 *Brazil Is Tackling High Murder Rates with a New Wave of Crime Programs*, Apolitical, 25 Mar. 2015, https://apolitical.co/solution-articles/en/brazil-is-tackling-high-murder-rates-with-a-new-wave-of-crime-programs.
46 "Nutrition." UNICEF Somalia, 13 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/nutrition.
47 "Nutrition." UNICEF Somalia, 13 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/nutrition.

unborn child.[48]

Pregnant women should have access to high-quality healthcare, and young children should receive micronutrient supplements and vitamins such as iron, zinc, and vitamin A. Additionally, pregnant women should have access to clean water and sanitary facilities.[49] Somalia collaborates with the government and partners to design and implement crucial nutrition measures as part of the emergency response in order to lessen and control shocks related to nutrition. Offering therapeutic meals to treat acute malnutrition and micronutrients to address deficiencies are a few of these. Counseling is another, which aims to encourage families to adopt useful dietary and health habits at home.

UNICEF works in Somalia to strengthen systems, empower people, and stop malnutrition before it starts. The group collaborates with partners and the Somalian government to put malnutrition control measures into action. The first 1,000 days of a child's life, from the beginning of a woman's pregnancy to the child's second birthday, are crucial for implementing solutions.[50]

The provision of micronutrient supplements and vitamins, the promotion and support of exclusive breastfeeding for infants under the age of six months, as well as assuring pregnant women's access to high-quality healthcare are some of these solutions.

Lack of Mental Health Support - China and The United States

The two most common mental health diseases in China are anxiety and depression, with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and intellectual difficulties like autism are among other mental health conditions.[51] China has made significant efforts over the past ten years to remove obstacles that prevent people from receiving diagnosis and care, including the introduction of a mental health law that mandates the expansion of facilities, the hiring of more mental health professionals, and increased public awareness, though there is still a pervasive sense that mental health is taboo.[52]

In order to improve the workforce in the mental health field, increase awareness, and integrate mental health services, the Chinese government has implemented the 686 programme and a mental health law.[53] With regard to the management, medical therapy, and rehabilitation of patients with severe mental disorders (SMD), the 686 programme in China attempts to address the

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[48] "Women and Hunger Facts - World Hunger Education." World Hunger News, 9 Dec. 2019, https://www.worldhunger.org/women-and-hunger-facts/.

[49] Darnton-Hill, Ian, and Uzonna C Mkparu. "Micronutrients in Pregnancy in Low- and Middle-Income Countries." Nutrients, MDPI, 10 Mar. 2015, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4377879/.

[50] "Nutrition." UNICEF Somalia, 13 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/nutrition.

[51] "Mental Health." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/china/health-topics/mental-health.

[52] "Mental Health." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/china/health-topics/mental-health.

[53] Liu, Jin, et al. "Mental Health System in China: History, Recent Service Reform and Future Challenges." World Psychiatry : Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), Elsevier Italy, Oct. 2011, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3188776/.

present issues around the lack of integration between hospital and community health care.[54] The creation of an all-encompassing network of mental health management services is the program's specific purpose in order to increase the equity and accessibility of mental health services for those with severe mental disorders. The spread of the coronavirus disease in 2019 had a serious impact on everyone, both physically and psychologically. A mental health support system was established in China to help people deal with the massive psychological stress experienced during the epidemic and its aftermath, in addition to proactive actions addressing physical survival needs and health protection.[55] Even though many efforts have been made to fulfill the requirements of people with mental illnesses, there is still significant space for improvement in the accessibility, acceptability, and efficiency of the support system.[55]

This lack of mental health support can also be seen in the United States. Over 27 million adult Americans with mental disease go untreated, or more than half of all individuals with mental illness in the country. Children and teenagers have been particularly affected because COVID losses and changes to routines and connections have caused social isolation, anxiety, and educational loss.[56] Due to the persistent social stigmas and lack of services, providing for mental health is particularly challenging. This has led to a mental health crisis in America. [57]

In response to this, current American president Joe Biden has announced a strategy to address this mental health crisis. This plan strives to increase system capacity because a significant lack of behavioral health professionals is at the root of the country's current mental health crisis. To do this, Biden has stated that it is also vital to improve the crisis response infrastructure so that persons dealing with severe mental health issues can easily access the treatments they require. The White House has outlined a number of actions under this policy, including investing in tested programmes that integrate clinicians into mental health and experimenting with novel approaches to teach a range of paraprofessionals.[58]

The significant lack of behavioural health professionals lies at the heart of the country's mental health crisis. More than one-third of Americans reside in areas with a shortage of mental health professionals, which are places where there are fewer mental health professionals than what is necessary for a population of that size.[59] The fragmentation of the present system makes

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54 Ma, Hong. "Integration of Hospital and Community Services-the '686 Project'-Is a Crucial Component in the Reform of China's Mental Health Services." Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry, Editorial Department of the Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry, June 2012, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4198849/.

55 Liang, Di, et al. "Integrated Mental Health Services in China: Challenges and Planning for the Future." Health Policy and Planning, Oxford University Press, 1 Jan. 2018, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5886187/.

56 "The State of Mental Health in America." Mental Health America, https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america.

57 "The State of Mental Health in America." Mental Health America, https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america.

58 "Fact Sheet: President Biden to Announce Strategy to Address Our National Mental Health Crisis, as Part of Unity Agenda in His First State of the Union." The White House, The United States Government, 15 July 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/01/fact-sheet-president-biden-to-announce-strategy-to-address-our-national-mental-health-crisis-as-part-of-unity-agenda-in-his-first-state-of-the-union/.

59 USAFacts. "Over One-Third of Americans Live in Areas Lacking Mental Health Professionals." USAFacts, USAFacts, 14 July 2021, https://usafacts.org/articles/over-one-third-of-americans-live-in-areas-lacking-mental-health-professionals/

it challenging for mental health clinicians to meet individuals where they are, even outside of these shortage areas. The plan therefore asks for funding tested initiatives that involve practitioners in mental health and the development of a national certificate program for peer specialists.

Previous UN Involvement

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

A unifying framework for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, both now and in the future, is provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was accepted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call to action for all nations—developed and developing—in a global partnership, are at the centre of it.[60]

The first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to eradicate poverty in all of its forms. Target 1.A of the SDGs contains the main mention of eradicating poverty. The goal aims to make sure that significant resources are mobilized from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, to provide developing countries with adequate and predictable means to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all of its dimensions.

Currently, the SDGs and their related thematic issues, such as water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanization, transport, science and technology, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), collaborations, and Small Island Developing States, are supported by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG).[61] The DSDG is crucial to the review of the 2030 Agenda's implementation across the whole UN system as well as to advocacy and outreach efforts for the SDGs. The SDGs must be widely embraced by all stakeholders in order for them to be implemented in order for the 2030 Agenda to become a reality.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

In 2015, the International Summit for Social Development featured the biggest conglomeration of world leaders ever seen. More than 14,000 individuals attended, including delegates from 186 nations, 117 of which had Heads of State or Government in attendance. Governments committed at the summit to prioritize eradicating poverty, achieving full employment, and promoting social integration as the main goals of development.[62] Governments endorsed a Declaration and a Programme of Action at the Summit's conclusion, signalling a newfound agreement on the necessity of putting people at the center of development.[63]

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60 "The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development." United Nations, United Nations, https://sdgs.un.org/goals.

61 "About | Department of Economic and Social Affairs." United Nations, United Nations, https://sdgs.un.org/about.

62 "Celebrating 25 Years of Championing Social Inclusion | DISD." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included.html.

63 "Celebrating 25 Years of Championing Social Inclusion | DISD." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included.html.

The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, identified three key issues: eradicating poverty, creating jobs, and promoting social integration. These issues are crucial to fostering the development of an international community that enables the creation of safe, just, free, and harmonious societies that provide opportunities and higher living standards for all.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and accompanying Program of Action, which were adopted during the World Summit for Social Development, have governed international social development action ever since. The Declaration underlined the moral, social, political, and economic necessity of ending poverty.[64] The strategy demanded that values, aims, and priorities be set in a way that will advance social progress and improve everyone's quality of life and well-being. By guaranteeing complete involvement from everyone, it seeks to put people at the centre of progress.[65]

Movement for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

Before the SUN Movement was established, there had been an increasing awareness of the issues with undernourishment on a worldwide scale, as well as concern that the international system was not adequately addressing them.[66] An increase in food prices worldwide and the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009 raised worries about the world's poorest people and revealed the true cost of hunger and malnutrition.

This movement's guiding idea is that everyone has a right to wholesome food and nutrition. Donors, members of the government, and especially the UN, support this effort. By working together and executing programmes, this movement aims to combat malnutrition.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Strategy 2021–2025 (SUN 3.0) places an emphasis on supporting systemic change at the national level and gives priority to country leadership. It aims to embody the ambition of SUN Countries and direct the activity of all stakeholders at all levels - national, subnational, regional, and global - by coordinating concerted effort behind and in response to generally accepted national priorities put out by governments in SUN Countries.[55] SUN 3.0 intends to help achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as part of these efforts.[67]

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64 "Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development – Introduction | DISD." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-summit-for-social-development-1995/wssd-1995-agreements/cdosd-introduction.html.

65 "Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development – Introduction | DISD." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-summit-for-social-development-1995/wssd-1995-agreements/cdosd-introduction.html.

66 "Sun Movement.." Scaling Up Nutrition, 7 Sept. 2022, https://scalingupnutrition.org/.

67 Sun Strategy 3 - Scaling up Nutrition. https://scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SUN-Strategy-2021-2025_ENG_web1.pdf.

Next Steps Forward

Investment in the Creation of Jobs

Creating and funding jobs for the poor can help combat poverty and hunger while simultaneously boosting the economy and lowering unemployment. UNICEF may aid in encouraging and donating to government projects, small company investment, and removing barriers to employment and business development. By creating more jobs and increasing the amount of money available to those on the verge of starvation and poverty, underprivileged communities will be significantly assisted. Numerous initiatives that UNICEF may support the funding of farmers to help combat extreme poverty. These farmers foster prosperous communities by eliminating starvation and fostering economic activity. However, due to the worsening effects of climate change, farming is already a difficult vocation. Over 75 percent of people on earth are farmers, according to the World Bank.[68]

The success of job creation depends on the ability of the employed poor to stay in that position. Primary education and vocational training are crucial in this regard, with the aid of UN organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through funding and resources, steps can be taken to make programmes accessible and affordable to everyone.[69] As a result, those who are poor will have access to the essentials they require in order to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves.

The Encouragement of Policy Enactment

Legislation-making or law-enactment are not UNICEF's responsibilities. However, UNICEF can help with advocacy and encouragement for governments to adopt stronger legislative frameworks and policies, which will in turn positively affect children. In order to ensure that by 2030 all men and women have equal rights to economic resources, including access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services, UNICEF can advocate for the development of sound policy frameworks at the national and regional levels based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies.

UNICEF continues to encourage government-led, cross-sector integration of child-sensitive social protection in the areas of health, nutrition, and education. The strategy strives to address the numerous difficulties poor children confront, which are rarely restricted to financial hardship.[70] Children's lives are improved in two ways by this activity. First, UNICEF advocates for social assistance programmes that can raise standards of living and lower child poverty, putting a special emphasis on outreach to make sure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people

68 "Overview." World Bank, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/overview.
69 "Employment and Decent Work | Poverty Eradication." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/issues/employment-and-decent-work.html.
70 "Ending Child Poverty." UNICEF Europe and Central Asia, 10 Mar. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/eca/what-we-do/ending-child-poverty.

can obtain the benefits to which they are entitled. Second, UNICEF advocates for social transfer systems that integrate with other services to guarantee that marginalised kids and teenagers have access to programmes for HIV/AIDS, education, and job training.

Questions to Consider:

      1. How successful has your country been in eradicating extreme poverty both domestic and international?

      2. What services can we provide to those experiencing low socio-economic statuses to assist them in becoming self-sufficient?

      3. How does the presence of poor populations affect the stability of the political, social, and economic aspects?

Topic 2: Child Marriage

It is a serious human rights violation for a child to be married. A child's risk of marriage is influenced by a number of factors, including poverty, the idea that marriage offers "security," family honour, social standards, customs or laws that support the practice, an inadequate legal system, and the quality of a nation's civil registration system.[71] Although girls are more likely than boys to engage in the activity, it is nonetheless illegal for anyone to do so.

It is understood that ending child marriage itself is the only way to stop the detrimental effects it has on the children in our world, and the best way to prevent these harmful situations is to ensure child marriage does not happen. Though it is tempting to resort to these solutions during committee, it is the unfortunate reality that many states will continually allow this to happen. Delegates are thus urged to diversify their solutions as much as they can while still stating clearly and critically that child marriage itself must end in order for the other issues to be resolved. Any discussion tolerating child marriage will not be condoned.

Disproportionate Influence on Female Children

Anyone child of any gender can be forced into child marriage. Though, girls are particularly more likely to be impacted by child marriage because it frequently results from pervasive gender inequity. In the world, boys are one sixth as likely to marry children as girls, still representing a significant amount. Many girls lose their youth through child marriage, which also endangers their lives and wellbeing. Poverty, illiteracy, negative societal norms and practices, and insecurity make it worse.[72] The direct effects of child marriage are already felt by more than 650 million women who are still alive today. Globally, the number of child marriages is dropping, but the rate of change is still slow. By 2030, 150 million more females will be married than before the pandemic.[73]

Increased Risks of STDs, HIV, AIDS, etc.

Poverty, poor levels of education, and gender disparities that restrict girls' ability to make decisions about their own health, sexual partners, and marriage are risk factors for both child marriage-related HIV infections, and other sexually transmitted diseases.[74] Young married girls' vulnerability to HIV infection may rise as a result of frequent engagement in unprotected sexual activity, caused by the pressure to demonstrate their fertility. Young girls in child marriages are also more prone to encounter intimate partner violence, which increases one's chance of contracting HIV.

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71 Child Marriage Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions among a ... - UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/1031/file/Child_marriage_report_2018.pdf.

72 "About Child Marriage." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage/.

73 "About Child Marriage." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage/.

74 "Three Things You Need to Know: Child Marriage and HIV." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/articles/child-marriage-and-hiv/.

In particular, the United Nationa Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF, as part of the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Women, and World Health Organization (WHO) are helping member states in their efforts to combat child and forced marriage.[75] The last ten years have seen a shift in the focus of policy toward concerns relating to teenage social and reproductive development. During that same decade, the proportion of women with HIV/AIDS increased to 50%. In several regions of the world, most notably sub-Saharan Africa, young women between the ages of 15 and 24 have HIV prevalence rates that are two to eight times higher than those of men in the same age range.[76] The fact that most sexually active girls in developing nations between the ages of 15 and 19 are married is of significant relevance yet is largely disregarded.[77]

UN organisations have urged some states to: 1) Ensure a national legal framework that complies with international human rights standards, including with regard to the legal age of majority and the age at which girls and boys may marry, the outlawing of forced marriages, and the registration of births and marriages, and 2) Assist comprehensive programmes to address child, early, and forced marriage, including those directed at married girls, especially those who suffer from sexually transmitted illnesses, with enough financial and medical resources.[78]

Increased Child Pregnancies/Mortality

Child marriage has drawn more attention recently as a danger to women's autonomy and health. Due to their immaturity and lower socioeconomic level, child brides are more likely to experience domestic violence and are less likely to participate in family decision-making. The strain on parents to raise children while they are still children themselves and have little experience with sexual and reproductive life is one of the main issues with child marriage. Child marriages are linked to a number of poor reproductive outcomes, including abortion, miscarriage, stunting, and stillbirth.[79] Negative reproductive consequences are quite likely for both the mother and the child in cases of childhood pregnancy.[80]

Adverse effects could be avoided by implementing programs and regulations against underage marriage. In order to counteract the high illness and mortality rates among children

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75 "UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage." UNICEF, 28 June 2022, https://www.unicef.org/protection/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage.

76 Ramjee, Gita, and Brodie Daniels. "Women and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa." AIDS Research and Therapy, BioMed Central, 13 Dec. 2013, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3874682/.

77 Ramjee, Gita, and Brodie Daniels. "Women and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa." AIDS Research and Therapy, BioMed Central, 13 Dec. 2013, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3874682/.

78 "Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages." OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-consent-marriage-minimum-age-marriage-and.

79 Yaya, Sanni, et al. "Prevalence of Child Marriage and Its Impact on Fertility Outcomes in 34 Sub-Saharan African Countries - BMC International Health and Human Rights." BioMed Central, BioMed Central, 19 Dec. 2019,

80 Yaya, Sanni, et al. "Prevalence of Child Marriage and Its Impact on Fertility Outcomes in 34 Sub-Saharan African Countries - BMC International Health and Human Rights." BioMed Central, BioMed Central, 19 Dec. 2019, https://bmcinthealthhumrights.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12914-019-0219-1.

under the age of five, many UN organizations have pushed toward rapid intervention through the strict enforcement of regulations and a variety of initiatives to raise the age of marriage in various states.[81]

Increased Vulnerability to Abuse and Violence

In their lifetime, one in three women and girls will endure physical or sexual abuse. An expression of this violence is seen in child marriage. The abilities, resources, knowledge, social support, mobility, and autonomy of young females are constrained by child marriage.[82] Young married women have limited influence over their husbands and future spouses. As a result, they are incredibly susceptible to abuse, abandonment, and domestic violence. [83]Abuse that is physical, sexual, or psychological is considered violence.

Women who get married young are more likely to be illiterate and impoverished. Spousal age differences, power inequalities, social exclusion, and a lack of female autonomy are characteristics of child marriages. These elements have been shown to be risk factors for domestic abuse.[84] The same unfair gender norms that encourage underage marriage also support violent behaviour.[85] Delegates should consider what states can do to protect young girls from this violence.

Long-Term Trauma and Mental Health Impact

The victims of child marriage suffer both physical and mental side effects. Those who were married as children recognised poverty, difficulties after delivery, intimate partner abuse, and isolation as societal issues connected to emotional discomfort.[86] The most frequently reported mental illness was depression. Less often reported conditions were anxiety, phobias, psychological distress, substance abuse, poor wellbeing, and antisocial personality disorder.[87] The results show that although child marriage is associated with severe emotional suffering and particular mental health disorders.[88]

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81 "Child and Forced Marriage, Including in Humanitarian Settings." OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/women/child-and-forced-marriage-including-humanitarian-settings.

82 "Gender-Based Violence and Child Marriage." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-and-health/gender-based-violence-and-child-marriage/.

83 "Gender-Based Violence and Child Marriage." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-and-health/gender-based-violence-and-child-marriage/.

84 "Child Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence: a Comparative Study of 34 Countries ." Academic.oup.com, https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/46/2/662/2417355.

85 "Child Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence: a Comparative Study of 34 Countries ." Academic.oup.com, https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/46/2/662/2417355.

86 Rakovec-Felser, Zlatka. "Domestic Violence and Abuse in Intimate Relationships from Public Health Perspective." Health Psychology Research, PAGEPress Publications, Pavia, Italy, 22 Oct. 2014, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4768593/.

87 "Associations between Depression in Parents and ... - NCBI Bookshelf." Associations Between Depression in Parents and Parenting, Child Health, and Child Psychological Functioning, National Library of Medicine, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK215128/.

88 "Associations between Depression in Parents and ... - NCBI Bookshelf." Associations Between Depression in Parents and Parenting, Child Health, and Child Psychological Functioning, National Library of Medicine, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK215128/.

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The practice's detrimental effects on reproductive health are acknowledged, but its effects on mental health are widely disregarded. Understanding the effects of child marriage on mental health is crucial since poor mental health has the potential to exacerbate other health and social problems.

Young girls who get married young lack the maturity to handle responsibilities, early pregnancy, and pregnancy-related mortality and morbidity, leading to serious physiological and psychological health problems in adolescent girls and a loss of relationship confidence and the ability to maintain a healthy relationship.[89]

An analysis of psychological disturbances, depression rates, and educational withdrawal in married young girls was done by the International Journal of Endorsing Health Science, specifically in contrast to unmarried young girls of the same age. On the basis of the aforementioned study, it is determined that early marriage, becoming pregnant young, and having many obligations such as a job and taking care of the household, all pose risks for depression. It is also determined that married females had greater levels of depression than unmarried girls.[90]

Discussing mental health and what the state can do to create a reliable system for it is encouraged among the delegates. Delegates are urged to keep in mind that we are still dealing with young girls and that remedies like medicines and medicine are not always the best options.

The Influence of Culture/Tradition

Children's rights are violated by child marriage customs, which are also a result of children's rights abuses. The root reasons of the child marriage phenomena are numerous and interconnected. Standards, values, and behaviour are influenced by social, cultural, religious, and economic influences at the individual, group, and societal levels. While poverty is a significant factor in child weddings, another justification for child marriage has to do with maintaining the traditional value of girls' virginity and chastity.[91]

Female child marriage is widespread in various societies. This encourages the mistreatment of women and girls as commodities to be exchanged for money, products, or status, as well as prejudice against them. The notion that a girl's existence is tied to marriage and motherhood restricts her options and increases the possibility of severe mistreatment.

One manifestation of gender imbalance is child marriage, which is still prevelant and

89 Marphatia, Akanksha A, et al. "Women's Marriage Age Matters for Public Health: A Review of the Broader Health and Social Implications in South Asia." Frontiers in Public Health, Frontiers Media S.A., 18 Oct. 2017, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5651255/.

90 Sezgin, Aysen Ufuk, and Raija-Leena Punamäki. "Impacts of Early Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy on Mental and Somatic Health: The Role of Partner Violence." Archives of Women's Mental Health, Springer Vienna, Apr. 2020, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7183488/.

91 Child Marriage: Legal and Socio-Cultural Aspects. https://www.law.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/documents/reprohealth/lgh-01-child-marriage.pdf.

respected in many cultures and traditions. Girls' sexuality and reproductive options are restricted by patriarchal systems which place value on a girl's chastity. This may entail having control over a girl's appearance, behaviour, where she goes, who she sees, and whether or not she marries and to whom.[92] However, it can also make her sexuality a crime and prevent her from getting the care and knowledge she needs. Many places condemn females for bringing "shame" on their families or even forbid them from attending school if they have relationships or get pregnant outside of marriage. Parents may view early marriage in these situations as a means of defending their daughters and their family. Girls may concur and aspire to become wives and mothers.

Case Studies

Niger and Mali

Niger has one of the hightest rates of child marriage in the world. Over 75% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are married in Niger, where the prevalence of child marriage is the highest in the world. 77% of women aged 25 to 49 who participated in the 2012 Niger Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) were married for the first time by the age of 18, with a median age of 15.7.[93] This is the lowest of all the countries for which DHS data are available.[94]

Niger has taken action to prevent child marriage. The Spotlight Initiative, with assistance from the UN, is one of them. Through community mobilisation, education for girls, institutional assistance, religious and traditional leaders' involvement, and awareness-raising initiatives, The Spotlight Initiative has collaborated with the Government of Niger to prevent child marriage and gender-based violence.[95]

According to Mali's Persons and Family Code ("Family Code"), children may marry as early as age 15 with the approval of their mother or father for a boy kid, but only the father for a girl child. This can be attributed to the patriarchy, a system of society in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it. Thus, the father or eldest male is head of the family. The minimum age for contracting marriage is established at 18 for men and 16 for women. Though, in Mali, 16% of females are married before they become 15 and 54% get married before they turn 18. Worldwide, Mali has the fifth-highest proportion of child marriage.[84] In Mali, 2% of boys get married before becoming 18 years old. Ending child marriage in Mali might increase output by an additional USD 174.8 million, according to a 2017 World Bank/ICRW research.[96]

Mali began its national campaign, "Education for girls: a method to reducing early child

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92 "Child and Forced Marriage, Including in Humanitarian Settings." OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/women/child-and-forced-marriage-including-humanitarian-settings.

93 "Child Marriage." Related UNICEF Sites, https://www.unicef.org/niger/topics/child-marriage.

94 "Child Marriage." Related UNICEF Sites, https://www.unicef.org/niger/topics/child-marriage.

95 "The Spotlight Initiative: Ending Violence against Women and Girls." UN Women – Headquarters, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/spotlight-initiative.

96 Calimoutou, Emelyne, et al. "Compendium of International and National Legal Frameworks on Child Marriage." Compendium of International and National Legal Frameworks on Child Marriage, World Bank Group, Sept. 2016, https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/420311476766346454/pdf/109260-REVISED-PUBLIC-Compendium-of-International-and-National-Legal-Framework-on-Child-Marriage.pdf.

marriage," in 2015 as a part of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa.[97] The First Lady is the driving force behind the initiative, which emphasises the need of keeping girls in school to prevent child marriage.

Bangladesh

The rate of child marriage before the age of 18 in Bangladesh is the fourth highest in the world. Since 1929, child marriage has been prohibited in Bangladesh, and since the 1980s, the minimum age for marriage has been set at 18 for women and 21 for men.[98] However, there are still an estimated 38 million child brides in Bangladesh, including women who were originally married as children and females who are now married, with 13 million of these had marriages before they turned 15.[98] In Bangladesh, 51% of young women get married before becoming 18 years old.[99]

Despite how frequent child marriage is there, Bangladesh does have laws that forbid it. The legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 years for women and 21 years for men, as per the Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929). According to the Act, child marriage carries a one-month prison sentence, a fine of up to 1,000 taka, ($12.64 CAD) or both.

The National Plan of Action (NPA) to End Child Marriage was announced in August 2018 with the goal of eradicating child marriage through institutional initiatives, programmes, and collective efforts from all parties. The NPA aspires to stop child marriage by the year 2041, lower the rate of marriage for girls under the age of 18 by one-third, and end child marriage altogether by the year 2021.[100] The action plan was collaboratively organized by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNICEF Bangladesh, and work on it is still ongoing.

Canada

While much research has concentrated on developing nations, customs of child marriage are disregarded and understudied in wealthy countries like Canada. Canada is leading international efforts to put an end to child marriage abroad.[101] However, child marriage is still practised nationwide. According to a recent study from academics at McGill University, more than 3,600 marriage licenses were given out to minors in Canada between 2000 and 2018, most of them were girls and under the age of 18. Common-law relationships have emerged in an

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97 "African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage." African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage | African Union, 29 Sept. 2022, https://au.int/en/sa/cecm.

98 "Bangladesh: Girls Damaged by Child Marriage." Human Rights Watch, 28 Oct. 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/09/bangladesh-girls-damaged-child-marriage.

99 "UNICEF Bangladesh." UNICEF, 19 Sept. 2022, https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en.

100 "Plan of Action Launched to Eliminate Child Marriage in Bangladesh." Plan of Action Launched to Eliminate Child Marriage in Bangladesh, UNICEF, 14 Aug. 2018, https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/plan-action-launched-eliminate-child-marriage-bangladesh.

101 Rodriguez, Jeremiah. "Child Marriage in Canada Means Country's Efforts to End It Abroad Are 'Insincere': Researcher." CTVNews, CTV News, 15 June 2019, https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/child-marriage-in-canada-means-country-s-efforts-to-end-it-abroad-are-insincere-researcher-1.4467778.

increasing number of child weddings in recent years.[102] However, that figure just represents the tip of the iceberg, it was discovered, as an increasing number of child weddings in recent years have been common-law partnerships, unofficial unions that offer less rights.

As of 2016, there were at least 2,300 common-law partnerships, which are officially defined as unions in which a couple has cohabited for at least a year.[103] The researchers discovered that child marriage is still commonplace from coast to coast using data from vital statistics organisations and recent censuses. The highest estimates of formal marriage were discovered in Alberta (0.03%) and Manitoba (0.04%), and the highest estimates of any type of child marriage (formal or common-law) were discovered in Saskatchewan (0.5%) and the territories (1.7 per cent).[104] The report, which was released in Population and Development Review, is the first to provide information on the prevalence of child marriages in the nation.

Previous UN Involvement

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

In order to address child marriage in the 12 countries with the highest prevalence or burden, UNICEF and UNFPA established a global programme in 2016 in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen, and Zambia.[105] The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage promotes adolescent girls' rights to delay marriage and parenthood and gives them access to alternative career paths and educational opportunities so they can realise their dreams.

The Global Programme helps families adopt a positive outlook, assisting them in adopting a confident attitude about life's difficulties and the situations they encounter so that they are sure they can handle them. The programme also gives girls the power to shape their own futures, and improves the services that enable this, such as social protection and programmes for sexual and reproductive health. As it advocates for laws and policies that defend girls' rights while underlining the significance of using solid data to guide such policies, it also addresses the underlying factors that support child marriage. The governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union and Zonta International, financially support the global programme.[106]

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102 "Child Marriage Is Legal and Persists across Canada." Newsroom, 8 Jan. 2021, https://www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/channels/news/child-marriage-legal-and-persists-across-canada-327554.

103 Child Marriage in Canada - Koski - 2021 - Wiley Online Library. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/padr.12369.

104 Child Marriage in Canada - Koski - 2021 - Wiley Online Library. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/padr.12369.

105 UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage." UNICEF, 28 June 2022, https://www.unicef.org/protection/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage.

106 "UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage." UNICEF, 28 June 2022, https://www.unicef.org/protection/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage.

UN Women

The International Day of the Girl Child was established by UN General Assembly Resolution 66/170, which was adopted on December 19, 2011.[107] This year, it will focus on child marriage for the first time because it is a basic violation of a girl's human rights and affects every part of her life. Girls' growth is hampered by child marriage, which frequently leads to early pregnancies and social seclusion.[108]

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right to "free and full" consent to marriage, with the understanding that such consent cannot be "free and full" if one of the parties is insufficiently mature to make an educated choice for a life partner. In order to combat this and other pervasive forms of violence against women and girls where it matters most, at the local and community level, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, managed by UN Women, is supporting initiatives in Cambodia, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Liberia, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Tajikistan[109].

A blueprint for advancement that is sustainable and leaves no one behind may be found in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by world leaders in 2015.[110] As stated by the UN, "Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations."

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted its sixth resolution on child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) on October 8, 2021.[111] With 74 co-sponsors and significant cross-regional participation, the resolution, sponsored by the Netherlands, was adopted by agreement. It calls on UN Member States to enhance and expedite their response to CEFM, with a particular emphasis on the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.[112]

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107 "International Day of the Girl Child." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day#:~:text=On%20December%2019%2C%202011%2C%20United,girls%20face%20around%20the%20world.
108 "International Day of the Girl Child." United Nations, United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day#:~:text=On%20December%2019%2C%202011%2C%20United,girls%20face%20around%20the%20world.
109 "Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs)." UN Women – Headquarters, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs.
110 "Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs)." UN Women – Headquarters, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs.
111 "Human Rights Council Adopts Four Resolutions on Child Early and Forced Marriage, the Negative Legacies of Colonialism, a Democratic and Equitable International Order, and the Death Penalty." OHCHR, United Nations, 8 Oct. 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/10/human-rights-council-adopts-four-resolutions-child-early-and-forced-marriage.
112 "Human Rights Council Adopts Four Resolutions on Child Early and Forced Marriage, the Negative Legacies of Colonialism, a Democratic and Equitable International Order, and the Death Penalty." OHCHR, United Nations, 8 Oct. 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/10/human-rights-council-adopts-four-resolutions-child-early-and-forced-marriage.

The CEFM resolution is significant because it keeps up the pressure on member states to stop child marriage within a human rights framework and makes them accountable for their actions. In a human rights-based framework, it upholds international pressure on member nations and keeps them accountable for their commitment to ending child marriage.[113] Strong wording on girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, notably on bodily autonomy and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), as well as on their participation in decision-making, presented some of the biggest obstacles. Throughout the procedure, civil society organizations were crucial in urging countries to back the resolution and use the strongest language possible to defend the human rights of girls.

Next Steps Forward

Increased Empowerment of Young Girls

Girls must be aware of and be able to sustain their own life goals in order to refuse marriage. Numerous initiatives should support females' engagement, wellbeing, and diversity. Programs created at a macro-level should offer safe spaces and support networks in addition to providing training, knowledge, and skills for girls. This entails giving females the opportunity to interact with and assist one another as well as formal support services. It also depends on the availability of viable alternatives to marriage, such as alternative ways of living and career paths that girls and their families can respect and value. Through the partnership of both governmental and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF can aid in the creation and funding of such programs.

Mobilizing Families and Communities

In order to raise awareness of girls' rights and the effects of child marriage, an increasing number of organisations are turning to mass media campaigns and other cutting-edge techniques including radio, TV, and digital media.[114] Changing norms at a large scale is essential to the process of transformation. Positive signs point to the effectiveness of messages that support new standards, role models, and positive outliers in transforming attitudes and actions towards the value of girls and women.

Working with men, boys, and other male leaders is a crucial component of efforts to eliminate child marriage, according to UNICEF programmes and practises. In many cultures, men are in positions of authority and influence. Interventions aimed at dads, brothers, spouses, and potential husbands are crucial for getting men and boys to consider the status quo and realize the advantages of living in a society that appreciates and encourages girls and women to reach their full potential.

113 "UN General Assembly Adopts 4th Resolution on Child, Early and Forced Marriage." Girls Not Brides, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/articles/un-general-assembly-adopts-4th-resolution-child-early-and-forced-marriage/.
114 "UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage." UNICEF, 28 June 2022, https://www.unicef.org/protection/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage.

Providing Services

A key method for preventing child marriage and ensuring married girls have the opportunity to finish their education is to provide access to secure, high-quality, and accessible education systems. Education increases knowledge, creates new opportunities, and can influence community standards on the worth of girls.

The best approach to stop girls from getting married is to keep them in school, but this is insufficient. To transfer to secondary school, girls require support. Schools should support and encourage married females to pursue further education in both formal and informal settings, such as participating in safe space programmes or pursuing part-time, remote, or vocational training. Through UNICEF, high-quality, youth-focused healthcare services can be funded or offered. To live healthy and secure lives, girls—married and single—need access to high-quality, youth-friendly health care. Many girls in the developing world don't receive the sexual and reproductive health care they need, which increases their risk of getting pregnant too soon and getting HIV and other STIs. Girls should be educated about their bodies as well as the different services and healthcare options that are accessible to them. It is crucial to guarantee that health services are kid-friendly and that girls can get care without fear of judgement or male supervision.

Questions to Consider

1. How does housing insecurity impact divorce in child marriages, for both males and females?

2. Do higher literacy rates among spouses lead to lower rates of child marriage in your country? - while it might seem obvious, research would say otherwise, actually quite shocking how high literacy rates in both men and women sometimes cannot influence anything due to external pressures and generational gaps.

3. Is your government able to support acts of action for women attempting to leave child marriage? If yes, what are they? If not, why, and what is the country doing to change this?

4. How does your government support domestic abuse victims as children? Are they helped as children, or as adults in an adult-like situation?

5. How much child support is "enough" on behalf of the government?

General Tips for Research, Writing Position Papers, and the Conference

Start with the Background Guide! We can all agree that it might be a long and frightening document, but in the end, it is a tool that can aid you and get you started. You'll get a basis for the topics and be more on track to producing useful working papers and speeches the more closely you tie your work to the background material.

Find trustworthy sources! These consist of scholarly writings, studies that have undergone peer review, anecdotal work, UN documents and resolutions, legal frameworks and laws, etc. Do not feel constrained by what you can and cannot research; instead, focus on finding reliable sources that are accurate. If you're unsure, send us an email and inquire!

In your position paper, be as detailed as you can. Which structure, law, or policy do you like, and why? What are the benefits to your state?

Obey the foreign policy of your nation. As a distinct nation, you have your own set of moral standards, worldviews, and political ideas. Be selective about the people you join blocs with since they might disagree, and that's fine!

Equity is always important. Please be careful in how you handle your country's political stance, even if it is somewhat controversial, as we are dealing with really delicate issues. You play a big part in helping UTMUN ensure the comfort of all Delegates!

Get involved in every manner you can! Model UN is only fascinating when you participate in conversations, pass notes, create blocs, write working papers, discuss, etc. Don't let us down; we depend on you to keep the conference interesting! Please do not ever hesitate to reach out to your Dias!

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