



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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DIRECTORS WELCOME LETTER:



Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2020. This conference has been the home of fruitful debate, practical resolutions, dedicated moderators, spectacular delegates, and diligent advisory and executive boards for the past twelve years and is continuing to do so for its thirteenth year. With 1000 delegates registered from more than 45 national and international educational institutions, this conference will be the biggest one yet!

This year's theme 'Embracing Diversity, Shaping the Future' has been designed to capture the essence of issues that surround our globalized society. Even though we have come this far in time, there has been little to no improvement in accepting diversity as portrayed by the latest atrocities in several countries around the world. However, the future can be successfully shaped for us, the youth, only by embracing diversity in every sector of life and we hope to draw attention to this.

This background guide has been formulated by our hard-working chairs and the research team to provide delegates with the starting point of their preparation for this three-day conference. The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue by highlighting important events, terms, history, and global implications. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous action that has been taken and latest development in terms of the last actions taken with regards to the issue. At the end of each issue, delegates will find sections of Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address and Suggestions for Further Research that aim to streamline the process of delegate's research. However, in order to grab a better understanding of the topic and be able to position yourself better to participate during the conference, it is advised to go beyond the background guide since this guide does not encapsulate enough information to be sufficient for every country and is only a brief introduction to the issues at hand. It is highly encouraged for delegates to view the 'Delegate Handbook' on the AUSMUN website and the 'How to Research' video on YouTube created by AUSMUN.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the contributors to this background guide. It is the collaborative work of the Moderators, AUSMUN Research Team, and the AUSMUN Media Team. On behalf of them all, I truly hope that this guide will be of great help to you.

All the very best for the conference and if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at research@ausmun.com.

Sincerely,
Manaswi Madichetty
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2020

MODERATORS WELCOME LETTER:



Naser Taifour

Esraa Alaraby



Assem Ahmed

Yasmine Naccache

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is our esteemed honor and pleasure to welcome you all to the thirteenth annual installment of AUSMUN. We would like to express how enthusiastic and thrilled we are to be your chairs. We are hoping to create a very productive conference filled with exciting debates and constructive resolutions.

The UNICEF committee has been instrumental in helping restore a spark of hope for those who have been tragically affected by the on-going refugee migrant crisis. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a United Nations agency operating in more than 190 countries and territories. UNICEF was established in 1946 as a specialized agency caring for children that provided them with food and shelter following the second World War (UNICEF, 2014). The United Nations Agency is governed by an Executive Board consisting of 36 members that establish policies, approve programs, and oversee administrative and financial plans. The board is made up of government representatives elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, usually for three-year terms. Each region that UNICEF serves is allocated a number of seats on the Executive Board, so all regions are represented (UNICEF, 2017). Currently, the agency aims to provide humanitarian as well as developmental aid to children in need all over the world by ensuring their vaccination, education and security.

UNICEF has taken part in Model United Nations for as long as there was MUN as it is one of the most essential committees of the United Nations. We believe that UNICEF is a vital part of the AUSMUN committees due to its association with the current child migration crisis world over. It is a great honor for both us and you to be a part of this committee and place children's lives under our scope. We are thrilled to be moderating the discussion revolving around the displacement of young refugees and the reunification with their families. We believe in your research and debate capabilities and wish you a fruitful and lively debate.

Should you have any concerns or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us on the following email: unicef.ausmun@gmail.com

Sincerely,
UNICEF Chairs



UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

Topic I

Improving the educational opportunities for displaced minors.

1. Summary & History

As of 2018, there were about thirty million children around the world forcibly displaced by political conflict (UNICEF, 2018). This number of displaced minors is the highest it's been since World War II. However, despite the global nature of the young refugee crisis, children are overlooked and focus is directed towards political conflict. Displaced children are in fact at an increased risk of trafficking, exploitation, violence, and abuse. In order to minimize this risk, UNICEF has been working with all its partners to provide these children with basic rights to safe and consistent access of financial support, healthcare and education. However, this task has proven to be difficult since "a lack of capacity, resources and persistent insecurity, social tensions and discrimination are all significant barriers to education in many displacement situations" (UNICEF & IDMC, 2019, p. 2). In addition, there is no valid national data that accurately tracks the number of displaced children, which makes it difficult to understand the problem as a whole and find a targeted solution. Moreover, there may be other factors deterring UNICEF from providing for displaced children. These factors must be identified and dealt with promptly to make it easier for UNICEF to provide displaced children with financial support, healthcare and education. This assistance will help refugee children become a functional part of the society. Not only will this aid ensure that children do not miss out on important opportunities due to their circumstances, the host countries will benefit as well. For instance, studies show that each extra year of education for a migrant child is linked to a surge in national GDP per capita between 13 and 35 per cent.

Currently, UNICEF is putting in all efforts to secure the right for proper access to education for all children. In fact, the international community has been working on this for years. Since the agreement of the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924, the world has put special attention on the protection of children's rights (League of Nations, 1924). Since then, the international community has met once again at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 where they agreed upon and stated in the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that, children's basic rights include access to quality education (UNICEF, 2006). Then in 2005, UNICEF set a target to achieve gender equality by providing equal access to primary education for both boys and girls (UNICEF, n.d.). The implementation of this target involved allocation of 233 million dollars to launch global campaigns that aimed to raise awareness about the importance of primary education, especially for girls.

2. Discourse on the Issue

Education is a basic right for all children according to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in December 1948 (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). For children, education is considered the key to a life with less obstacles and decreased threat of poverty, and it's a way to widen their horizons and build a better future. During times of crises, education for displaced children becomes even more crucial. This need is especially critical since education can offer the child protection and stability and schools can become a place for destressing and deviating away from catastrophes (UNICEF, 2017). Additionally, there are multiple barriers that can hinder the children in war zones from receiving their education. For instance, in countries like Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, infra-

structures were destroyed during times of conflict. The destruction extended to school buildings, electric systems, and water systems that eventually lead to the shutdown of many institutional facilities. Therefore, the closure of lack of available infrastructure lead to scarcity of seats available for children to receive their education. In May 2017, an assessment was performed in Syrian governates that revealed the lack of competent teaching staff and supplies in school. Additionally, the report revealed that destroyed facilities were the main reason that prevented children from attending schools (Relief Web, 2017).

It is estimated that around 66% of refugees live in places where none of their native languages have representation in the receiving countries. This underrepresentation makes basic school education even more complicated for displaced children (UNHCR, 2018). For the international community to be able to provide quality education for the displaced children it should be understood that this effort requires substantial financial support, political determination and commitment to children and their futures (UNICEF, 2017, p.13). UNICEF has called on partners to integrate all displaced children, invest in quality education, strengthen education systems, engage with other partners, co-create solutions, and seek innovative ways to design internationally accepted portable systems that protect children' identities and allow them to pursue their education and find work in the future (UNICEF, 2017).

3. Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

As an agency providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children around the world, UNICEF has already declared an "Education Strategy" report to cover 2019 until 2030. The vision of UNICEF's Education Strategy is "every child learns" (UNICEF, 2019). As quoted in their report, "the Strategy adopts the following three goals: (1) equitable access to learning opportunities; (2) improved learning and skills for all; (3) improved leaning in emergencies and fragile contexts." (UNICEF, 2019). The Education Strategy focuses on six main approaches to solve the issue of education and learning by 2030. Some of these approaches are: collection of data and evidence that pertain to the numbers of displaced minors in and out of education, communication and advocacy, and service delivery. Through this action towards equitable education, UNICEF believes that by 2030, the numbers of displaced minors out of schools will decrease drastically. For example, the Malala Fund was established as an international organization aimed specifically for providing of educational communities for girls all around the world. With a focus on Pakistan, where in fact there any many internally displaced families due to conflict, the Malala Fund was able to fund the building of several schools in Pakistan through donations that were able to provide education to over 1000 girls (Malala Fund, n.d.). Another example is the Dubai Cares Foundation that has involved itself in many initiatives that follow its larger goal of achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 4 of "quality education" (United Nations, n.d.). In September of 2015, Dubai Cares announced that it would be "championing Education in Emergencies in order to address the critical need to provide quality education to children affected by crisis" (Dubai Cares, n.d.). Later in May of 2016, Dubai Cares pledged to increase the share of its financial portfolio for the 'Education in Emergencies' program to 33% (Dubai Cares, n.d.).

4. Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address

- How does providing educational opportunities to internally displaced minors differ, in principle, from providing educational opportunities to externally displaced minors?
- Could an improvement be achieved regardless of financial aid?
- According to current trends in the education sector around the world, will UNICEF be able to reach the goals it has set for itself within the "Education Strategy"?

- What are the more specific obstacles that undocumented displaced minors might face in the pursuit of education?
- Should education for displaced minors be obligatory? If so, how would the international community make sure of their adherence to the obligation?

5. *Suggestions for Further Research*

- Internally Displaced Minors vs Externally Displaced Minors (the question of language and how that filters into the obstacles)
- Undocumented Displaced Minors in the Pursuit of Education
- The Question of Obligatory Education

Topic II

Relocating unaccompanied minor refugees and fast-tracking family reunification.

1. Summary & History

In 2017, around 20,000 (UNHCR, UNICEF, & IOM, 2017) children arrived in Europe without an adult. The circumstances that led to this substantial number of minors to end up unaccompanied in a different continent vary according to multiple sources, but they all stem from unrest back home. When such instability occurs, either the children are orphaned and left to seek asylum on their own, or their parents send them along with other groups of migrants to safer and more developed countries in search of better opportunities. The most notable example of this type of family separation was when some Syrian civil war refugee parents separated themselves from their children in Jordan and Lebanon and sent them off to Europe (Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2017). However, this issue of displacement is not limited to Europe, the same effects have been observed in many places around the world. For instances, Rohingya refugees have escaped Myanmar to go to Bangladesh and African refugees have entered South Africa in the same manner.

The issue of unaccompanied child migration seems to be getting increasingly severe as the number of refugees around the world rises year by year. In fact, the total number of refugees, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) included, has increased in Asia from 803,500 in 2008 (UNHCR, 2010) to over 31,000,000 in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016). Similar increases were observed across other continents as well. Although it would be more efficient to tackle the root of the refugee problem, UNICEF does not take this approach as solving civil unrest in different countries is not within the committee's mandate. Instead, the committee focuses on relocating UASCs and reunifying them with their families if possible. It is important to realize that reunification is not always in the child's best interest as the child might have been abused by the parents or the parents might not be in a safe situation to be capable of caring for the child properly (Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2017).

In addition to affecting the minors involved, it is also important to consider the impacts UASCs have on their host countries. Some host countries are already overcrowded, and as a result, do not have the capacity to take in more refugees. These host nations then choose to only take in individuals who could potentially benefit the workforce and many unaccompanied minors are left in camps with their lives on hold for long periods.

2. Discourse on the Issue

As previously mentioned, the increasing number of asylum seekers worldwide is increasing at an immense rate. The refugee crisis has resulted in a significant number of children unaccompanied and abandoned. Since these children usually have no concept of human rights and have no guardians to protect them, they are often subject to human rights abuses. Additionally, they are forced to work in inhumane conditions with low pay. This potential abuse and labor is a serious violation of the UN charter which states that the UN shall "reaffirm faith in fundamental

human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" (United Nations, 1945). In addition to affecting the minors involved, "the exodus of migrants in 2015 caught Europe unprepared, sowing bitter divisions among EU states, straining social and security services and fueling support for populist, anti-immigration, Eurosceptic and far-right parties" (Aslan, 2019). Although said issues were caused by refugees as a whole, the UASCs are at the forefront as they require the most care from the receiving countries.

In recent times, there have been many cases of civil wars causing large regions of some countries to remain outside the jurisdiction of their government. In such cases, UNICEF and other organizations must "negotiate with armed non-state actors to gain access to populations, including UASC, or indeed to negotiate for the release of children recruited by armed forces or armed groups" (Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, 2017).

3. Past IO Actions and The Latest Developments

Ever since its establishment, UNICEF has played a big role in troubled countries by ensuring the safe relocation of unaccompanied minor refugees. The agency's humanitarian response has tried to ensure that "all migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children have access to adequate and safe accommodation, child protection support, education and health" (UNICEF, 2019). UNICEF does not only try to care for children's well-being whilst on the move, but it also has taken necessary action to ensure the fast-tracking of family reunifications. This rapid reunification is accomplished by either returning displaced children to their parents, or by offering a safe relocation for the entire family in order to remain with their children.

Following the recent instability in the Middle East, and the increasing dangers of living in troubled countries due to civil wars, the European Union has seen a flood of unaccompanied children immigrants flowing into its member states. According to UNICEF (2018), "Some 30,000 children arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain between January and December of 2018, 42% of which are unaccompanied and separated." This refugee influx has led the UNICEF, in cooperation with the European Commission, to introduce rules and regulations in order to ensure the safety of both the child migrants and the receiving countries. Drawing on expertise from all relevant policy areas, the European Commission along with UNICEF proposed a number of priorities for Member States to focus on. Such areas included: swift identification and protection upon arrival, adequate reception conditions for children, and durable solutions and early integration measures (European Commission, 2017). In Jordan and Lebanon, UNICEF helped over 10,000 children reunite with their parents after living years not knowing anything about them. In fact, in 2013, it is reported that 41,000 Syrian refugee children in Jordan were reunited with their families within a few years of their separation. UNICEF has been working on fast-tracking family reunification for years as it believes that this step is of primary importance for young migrants.

The UNICEF's 'Agenda for Action' is one of the most crucial policies the agency has undertaken to resolve the refugee issue at its roots and ensure smooth operation of the process. The agenda calls for six actions to protect all refugee and migrant children including, the accessibility to education and healthcare, providing legal status to children, and combating xenophobia and discrimination among others (UNICEF, 2017). The actions stated in the agenda would radically improve the basis on which countries prioritize the crisis at hand presented by refugee children, and also ease the stress and void caused by relocation on children.

4. Questions The Discussions and The Resolutions Should Address

- What policies can help fast-track family reunification for more minors?

- What can be done to ensure the emotional and physical well-being of orphans or children whose families could not be traced back?
- What measures may be taken in the future to prevent families from being separated in the first place?
- How can UNICEF evacuate unsafe children from conflicted areas?

5. *Suggestions For Further Research*

- UN procedures in dealing with UASCs
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Countries' policies and efforts in easing the immigration process for unaccompanied minors.
- The effects of family reunification on children's mental and psychological health.

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