



34th Annual

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies
Friday, October 27, 2023 – Provo, Utah

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the 34th annual Brigham Young University Model United Nations Conference! Your attendance at the conference shows your passion and dedication to igniting change in our global society and becoming a more involved global citizen.

My name is Emily Whitcomb, and I am excited to be the committee director for the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). I am currently a Junior at BYU in the Sociology program with a minor in International Development. After BYU I hope to go on and receive my master’s in public administration and dive deeper into researching and crafting solutions to different social issues that plague our world. This past spring, I had the privilege of representing India at the National Model United Nations (NMUN) in New York as a member of the Human Rights Council (HRC). Last year was my first experience participating in Model United Nations (MUN) and I loved how it opened my eyes and broadened my understanding of what can be done on the macro level for change in this world. I have a passion for researching and creating innovative solutions with those around me, and I hope you take this conference as an opportunity to enhance your own diplomacy skills.

This year, the issues before UNICEF will be as follows:

- I. Combating the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children
- II. Achieving Higher Child Literacy Rates

The mandate of UNICEF is simply to advocate for the rights and protection of children—this includes meeting their necessary requirements for life and helping to expand opportunities for children to achieve their full potential.

Within the Background Guide you will find a general context of this committee and the two topics up for discussion at our conference. This guide does not contain everything about the two topics but is meant to encourage learning and inspire your own personal research. As you do so, you will better be able to work with your peers and create sustainable solutions to help children in need throughout our global society. While building your understanding of these challenges, please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

I am excited to work with each of you and wish you the best of luck with your preparation!

Sincerely,

Emily Whitcomb
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SECRETARIAT

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Megan Alder
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Committee History

“We have significant yet dwindling opportunities to act on a range of issues that could shape the lives of children for generations to come. And we must act—because children are our most precious resource, they are our future leaders, innovators, caregivers, educators, and advocates, and they are our planet’s best hope for creating a greener and more sustainable future. We need to set them up for success...”

- Catherine Russell, UNICEF Director-General

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 as an organization that would help work to keep peace throughout the ever-changing world. As the international community continues to evolve and new challenges arise the UN takes on the role of being a place where 193 Member States are able to gather together and discuss the problems that they all face and then generate shared solutions. The UN started with only 51 Member States and fewer committees than there are today. There are six main organs of the UN: the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, and the Trusteeship Council.¹ Within the principal organs there are also subsidiary bodies, different programs, and some research and training institutes. UNICEF is one of the subsidiary bodies of the GA.

Shortly after the organization of the UN, UNICEF was created by resolution 57(1) of the GA in December of 1946 with the initial purpose of providing aid to children post World War II. Under this resolution, UNICEF acted primarily as a temporary relief fund to children throughout the world, but it later evolved into an organization that not only funded children in need but also gave them the mandate to assist these vulnerable children.² In 1959, the UN adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which outlines that the basic rights of a child include education, healthcare, good nutrition, shelter, and protection.³ The purpose of UNICEF has remained the same through its adoption of new declarations and conventions, but they have widened their scope of reaching out to “every child” rather than just those affected by disaster.⁴

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Under the direction and organ of the GA, UNICEF has a mandate—or official authority to act—which is simply “to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.”⁵ UNICEF is bound to follow this mandate in their committee meetings and discussions for solutions to challenges. This mandate acts as a guide to what they strive to accomplish in addressing the many needs of

¹ United Nations. “About Us - United Nations.” *United Nations, Secretary General*.

² General Assembly. “Convention on the Rights of the Child.” *UN GA*.

³ UNICEF. “Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁴ UNICEF. “UNICEF Mission Statement | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁵ General Assembly. “Convention on the Rights of the Child.” *UN GA*.

children throughout the world. In addition to the mandate outlined by the GA, UNICEF is also under the direction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—a document published in 1989 which acts as a human rights treaty for children which has helped change their lives since its passing.⁶

The Convention outlines the goals of what UNICEF works to achieve in how it functions which includes the idea that children are individuals with their own rights and deserve the time and space to grow, learn, and develop. Because of this Convention and UNICEF’s acceptance of it, it has encouraged governments to change laws and policies that further the rights of children which has proved to be successful in investments made for the progression and development of children.⁷ This and other important documents help lead UNICEF toward exercising their powers in the most productive ways and creating resolutions that uphold these goals.

The functions of UNICEF and what they can accomplish within their work are a reflection of their mandate to protect the rights of children. UNICEF works to advocate for the rights of children in how they are reflected in policy and legislation and works to provide humanitarian assistance which includes their emergency response services for children in realms related to healthcare, education, and sanitation.⁸ Within building up healthcare for children, UNICEF works to combat malnutrition, establish clean water sources, and fight disease by partnering up with other organizations. In protecting children against violence and abuse, UNICEF focuses on ending forms of sexual exploitation, child trafficking, child marriage, and any form of violence against children in addition to strengthening systems to provide aid to children who are victims of violence. With all of the challenges that UNICEF attempts to fight, they work to establish equality for every child; to create spaces for children where any kind of discrimination is erased, and opportunity is easily accessible.⁹

Based on previous resolutions passed by UNICEF and accepted by the GA, UNICEF holds the power to work with governments, their organizations, NGO groups, and other society groups to review and create policies and programs that protect the rights of children. Campaigns by UNICEF show their power in being able to advocate for children throughout the global society on all different macro and micro levels to help raise awareness and push for change within every community. Most programs and systems that UNICEF has created and continues to run are ones that focus on the collection of data and research and then sharing that data to find solutions to the challenges that children are facing.¹⁰

Conclusion

As one of the original subsidiary bodies of the GA, UNICEF was created with the main purpose to advocate for the protection of the rights of children. They work to help children develop to reach their full potential through the elimination of all types of discrimination, bolstered

⁶ UNICEF. “Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁷ UNICEF. “Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁸ UNICEF. “What We Do | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁹ UNICEF. “What We Do | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

¹⁰ UNICEF. “UNICEF Mission Statement | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

healthcare, and nutrition, combatting violence against children, establishing stronger educational systems, and changing policies and legislation to better support children. In remembering these pillars of UNICEF, Member States can work together to remember the rights of children and find more peace despite global turmoil.

Annotated Bibliography

General Assembly. “Convention on the Rights of the Child.” UN GA. 20 Nov 1989. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/crc.pdf>.

This document is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which outlines the framework that UNICEF follows in its functions. It is GA Resolution 44/25 and was passed on 20 November 1989. The articles review the different rights children are entitled to concerning health, protection, safety, education, legislation, and healthcare.

UNICEF. “Convention on the Rights of the Child | UNICEF.” UNICEF, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>. Accessed 9 July 2023.

This webpage provides both a link to the document of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and gives explanation of the document and what purposes it is meant to achieve. In addition to the basics of the Convention it shares the successes of the document since its publishing and what good it can continue to do. The page also provides links to more articles related to the Convention.

UNICEF. “UNICEF: History of a Logo | UNICEF.” UNICEF, edited by Martina Tomassini and Ruthia Yi, UNICEF, 2016, <http://www.unicef.org/about-unicef/unicef-logo-history#:~:text=1946,fund%20of%20the%20United%20Nations>. Accessed 9 July 2023.

This article goes over the history of UNICEF in the UN and important dates related to its development. It gives an overview of the evolution of the UNICEF logo and how it has changed in relation to different purposes and roles UNICEF has taken on over the years. The basic roles and important documents related to the establishment of UNICEF are shared throughout the timeline.

UNICEF. “UNICEF Mission Statement | UNICEF.” UNICEF, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/about-us/mission-statement>. Accessed 9 July 2023.

UNICEF’s mission statement and mandate and main powers are outlined here. It focuses on the responsibility that UNICEF has in protecting rights of child and each of the specific categories they choose to pool their resources in to. It is a very basic outline of their works and how they function.

UNICEF. “What We Do | UNICEF.” UNICEF, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do>. Accessed 9 July 2023.

This webpage better dives into the different functions of UNICEF and what realms they spend their energy in. It highlights the efforts of UNICEF in child protection, child survival, education, social policy, aid emergencies, gender equality, supplying resources

for children, and researching solutions. The article clearly outlines what UNICEF works to accomplish in their address to different types of challenges.

United Nations. "About Us - United Nations." United Nations, Secretary General, 21 June 2021. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us>. Accessed 9 July 2023.

The United Nations webpage gives a brief outline of their history and important dates to know. It provides videos to easily display the timeline and highlights the different organs and the evolution and add-ins of the UN.

I. Combating the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children

“Keeping children and adults safe from potential sexual exploitation and abuse requires actions across UNICEF... Our priority is ensuring that children and women are protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, and that victims are provided with the support and protection they need.”

- Beechey, UNICEF Worker

Introduction

In this rapidly changing world, the sale and sexual exploitation of children is on the rise as moderating variables like technological and digital platforms expand, migration flow increases, and natural disasters or conflict lead to the upheaval of children. In an effort to begin to combat this social plague in our society, UNICEF teamed up with the UN Special Rapporteur to share a report of the challenge. Special Rapporteur Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio shared that, “child dignity cannot be an afterthought”¹¹ and this message framed the report and inspiration that all Member States should take while understanding the importance of this issue.

According to UNICEF, sexual exploitation includes any attempted or actual abuse or intrusion of a sexual nature—this could be from force or under coercive conditions perpetrated by workers against children and families.¹² Children who are in emergency-related settings are at the highest risk of sale and sexual exploitation and recent events in tumultuous regions of Africa and South Asia have brought these rates to new highs.

There are 152 million children, approximately 64 million girls and 88 million boys, who are exploited in a laborious setting as well as in the sexual realm.¹³ In South Asia alone the issue grows as sexual exploitation expands into the digital realm and children are being exposed to pornography by adults.¹⁴ The consequences of sexual exploitation of children are both long and short-term as children are denied education, and their physical and mental health is also undermined.

In alignment with the 2020 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), combating the sale and sexual exploitation of children would help fulfill at least 3 of the goals. SDG 5 is targeted at achieving gender equality; SDG 8 targets decent work and economic growth which pertains to a safe workspace and eliminating exploitative behaviors; and, SDG 16 focuses on finding peace, justice, and strong institutions.¹⁵ As solutions are beginning to be implemented to combat this challenge and new innovative ideas are coming to the forefront it is imperative to remember the bigger picture of what can be done to achieve these universal goals among Member States.

¹¹ De Boer-Buquicchio, Maud. "Preventing the Sale and Exploitation of Children in a Rapidly Changing World." *UNICEF*, 23 Mar. 2020

¹² UNICEF. "UNICEF's Fight against Sexual Misconduct." *UNICEF*

¹³ UNICEF. "Child Labour and Exploitation." *UNICEF*, 1 Apr. 2018

¹⁴ UNICEF. "Child Labour and Exploitation." *UNICEF*, 1 Apr. 2018

¹⁵ United Nations. "The 17 Goals." *United Nations*

Current Situation

Annually, 200 million children face sexual violence.¹⁶ This global epidemic knows no Member State boundaries and occurs in all parts of society. The challenge rages on in India as a child is sexually abused every 15 minutes.¹⁷ Despite the high poverty levels and marginalization of individuals in India which may be correlated to these higher rates of sexual exploitation and sale of children, this scourge occurs everywhere.

An estimated 1.2 million children are sold and trafficked each year, with many of them being girls, who are then exploited for sex work.¹⁸ The sale and sexual exploitation of children presents a challenge to all Member States as it inhibits and marginalizes an entire group of individuals presenting a challenge to these children when it is expected for them to enter the workforce. Results of the sale and sexual exploitation of children include lower educational levels, low physical, mental, and emotional health, and a lack of equality between all members in society.

A large part of the rising statistics related to the sexual exploitation of children is the growing digital realm that connects our global society. Risks posed to children increase as items like mobile phones and access to the internet increase in their accessibility to children.¹⁹ This digital fight is one that also transcends the boundaries of Member States as digital platforms open up dangerous exposure of material or spread of sexual abuse materials which facilitates child prostitution.²⁰

As UNICEF works to fulfill their mandate and goal of eliminating this challenge, they work to train their own personnel aid givers and work with other organizations to help these children. They have worked to build support and protection for these victims and are moving towards tracking their results and working through this issue in three priority areas: first, having safe and accessible reporting; second, having support and assistance for sexual exploitation and abuse survivors; and third, creating enhanced accountability, including in investigations.²¹

UN and Global Efforts

UNICEF has been working to combat this issue for years with the aid of Member States and organizations within certain regions that are heavily affected by this. As mentioned previously, UN Special Rapporteur Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh created a mandate regarding the sale and sexual exploitation of children back in 2020 which outlined 3 different reports that are all

¹⁶ Lu, Joanne. "Here's How Every Country Ranks When It Comes to Child Abuse and Child Safety." *UN Dispatch*, 18 Jan. 2019

¹⁷ Ministry of Home Affairs. "Director's Message." *Government of India National Crime Records Bureau*

¹⁸ Chatterjee, Siddharth. "Child Abuse Is a Global Epidemic — We Need Global Action to Eradicate It." *The Hill*, 25 Jun. 2019

¹⁹ Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY." *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

²⁰ De Boer-Buquicchio, Maud. "Preventing the Sale and Exploitation of Children in a Rapidly Changing World." *UNICEF*, 23 Mar. 2020

²¹ UNICEF Programming. "Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." *UNICEF*

believed to be reasons of why it exists and what good practices can be implemented to prevent it.²²

In 1990, the Special Rapporteur specifically for the sale and exploitation of children was established and the first resolutions were passed regarding this challenge. From the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, resolution 1990/68 passed which was one of the first to create the mandate for the Special Rapporteur to investigate this challenge further and write and submit reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.²³ The reports include recommendations that can be done for the children involved in exploitative circumstances. Following this an updated version of the mandate was released from Human Rights Council resolution 7/13 where the mandate widened for the Special Rapporteur to work with governments to find the root cause of the problem, analyze patterns of the sale and sexual exploitation of children, promote productive strategies to prevent it, and make recommendations for how different regions and communities can safeguard children.²⁴

To further assess situations which may include the sale and sexual exploitation of children, the UN has granted the Special Rapporteur to perform country visits and make suggestions to Member States to improve the prevention of these human right violations of children.²⁵ In addition to this, the Special Rapporteur attends seminars, conferences, and other public or private events where they are able to raise awareness of the issue.

Digital Technology

As there is an increase in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) throughout the entire world there is also an increase of access to implications related to the sale and sexual exploitation of children. Due to devices like mobile phones or platforms like the internet becoming so popular and attainable to reach for children, sexual crimes are more likely to occur as sexual abuse materials for children are disseminated, child prostitution is facilitated, sexual exploitation occurs, illegal adoptions take place, and soliciting children for sexual purposes.²⁶

While the many forms of the sale and sexual exploitation of children are increasing, the number of websites that facilitate this is also increasing. In order to combat this, UNICEF is currently working with Member States to improve legislation on making Member States responsible for strengthening their understanding of Human Rights and what is constituted as such.²⁷ In addition

²² Special Rapporteur. "Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children." *United Nations*

²³ Special Rapporteur. "Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children." *United Nations*

²⁴ Special Rapporteur. "Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children." *United Nations*

²⁵ Special Rapporteur. "Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children." *United Nations*

²⁶ Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY." *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

²⁷ Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY." *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

to this, UNICEF has worked to implement a universal reporting system that will help individuals throughout the global community become comfortable with self-reporting internet related sexual exploitation or sale of children.²⁸ This self-reporting system is a safe and accessible system for all to use and was developed as a part of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Champion for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

On a more regional level, NGO “End Violence Against Children” launched a research project in numerous Member States in Southeast Asia which works to help these different communities bolster their prevention and response mechanisms.²⁹ The research project “Disrupting Harm” works with UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti to help produce surveys designed for children to understand their online/digital behavior and what risky behaviors they encounter, so that they can figure out what preventative measures can be taken.

Challenges with Migration

There are numerous instances in which children are required to move, either by themselves or with others. Reasons for migration can include forced displacement, civil conflict, a need to escape from poverty, climate related crises, or a journey to seek for better opportunities. The International Organization for Migration stated in 2018 there were 36.1 million children who were international migrants.³⁰ These children are exposed to a much higher rate of violence and risk being sold or exploited. Children who are unaccompanied or separated from family are more likely to be victims.³¹

Specifically looking at what has been done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for working towards stopping the sale and sexual exploitation of those migrating, they have tackled the issue through a 4-pillar strategy that they are attempting to implement throughout all Member States.³² The 4 pillars include following a victim-centered approach in all practices, equipping UNHCR and all partners with the tools to prevent, identify, and respond to the situation, uphold the accountability for tackling sexual misconduct for migrants, and maintaining a role in interagency efforts.³³ This strategy is one that Member States can work to implement through the help of the UNHCR and UNICEF and partner organizations as they work to stop this issue at the border.

Within the European region there are numerous events that both happened and are ongoing which force migration. Currently, the Ukrainian refugee crisis forces families to flee conflict making them—but specifically children—vulnerable to potential sale and sexual exploitation. As UNICEF works to aid this crisis and prevent the risk of child trafficking, they can look back to previous solutions they have used in similar situations in both Moldova and Slovakia. To limit

²⁸ UNICEF Programming. "Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." *UNICEF*

²⁹ End Violence Against Children, "Disrupting Harm," *End Violence Against Children*

³⁰ Elisa Mosler Vidal & Jasper Dag Tjaden. "GLOBAL MIGRATION INDICATORS." *United Nations*

³¹ UNHCR, Asia Pacific. "Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment." *The UN Refugee Agency*

³² UNHCR, Asia Pacific. "Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment." *The UN Refugee Agency*

³³ Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: MIGRATION." *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

the risk children can face in migrating, UNICEF released “The Practical Guide on Identification of Victims/Persons ‘At Risk’ of Trafficking in Human Beings” which helps provide information on skills that responders can use when supporting children at risk of trafficking and identifying children who have been trafficked.³⁴

Sports and Sporting Events

One of the challenges that children face as a result of being sold or sexually exploited is low physical, mental, and emotional health. Typically, sports are something that would have a positive effect on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of children—but this is a setting that can also bring up the challenge of falling victim to child trafficking, sexual exploitation, or sale of children. The participation of children in sports can lead to exposure of violence and harm by the adults involved or others. Because this is an unexplored root cause, there is not enough research to fully understand the issue. The sports realm exists throughout all Member States, so the risk of the sale and sexual exploitation of children is something that everyone is in danger of.³⁵

In 2017, the UN adopted the Kazan Action Plan which aims to strengthen notions of peace and policy development in the sports realm.³⁶ This framework works to create a space where physical education and participation helps in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda with the SDGs. Creating and following similar frameworks can help mitigate the crisis that children face in their participation in the sporting world.

Conclusion

UNICEF faces the current issue of trying to combat the sale and sexual exploitation of children throughout the world. With a rise of digital and technological connectedness, the risk increases and as migration continues to be a life event for most people at least once in their life the challenge remains relevant to all Member States. UNICEF has worked within its mandate to try to start new programs to eradicate the issue and has worked alongside other organizations within certain regions. While there has been success with the issue, there is still a long way to go.

Questions to Consider

1. What more can UNICEF do to partner with local organizations to maximize its efforts?
2. In what ways would a community benefit from reducing the sale and sexual exploitation of children?

³⁴ UNICEF. “Preventing and Countering Trafficking in Human Beings.” *UNICEF*

³⁵ Office of Research - Innocenti. “THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: SPORT & SPORTING EVENTS.” *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

³⁶ Office of Research - Innocenti. “THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: SPORT & SPORTING EVENTS.” *UNICEF*, 25 Sept. 2019

3. What kind of programs or solutions are best for both the short-term and long-term effects of this challenge?
4. How can the current solutions be expanded and enhanced to better achieve their purposes?

Annotated Bibliography

Chatterjee, Siddharth. "Child Abuse Is a Global Epidemic — We Need Global Action to Eradicate It." The Hill, 25 Jun. 2019, thehill.com/opinion/international/446848-child-abuse-is-a-global-epidemic-we-need-global-action-to-eradicate-it/. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This is an extremely interesting article which addressed and provided additional links to statistics related to abuse of children and sexual exploitation of children. In addition, it shares the real-life experiences that children have faced to show the severity of the challenge. This article is best for starting research on the issue and finding other articles that give more information.

De Boer-Buquicchio, Maud. "Preventing the Sale and Exploitation of Children in a Rapidly Changing World." UNICEF, 23 Mar. 2020, www.unicef-irc.org/article/1970-preventing-the-sale-and-exploitation-of-children-in-a-rapidly-changing-world.html. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This article highlights recent reports by the UN Special Rapporteur and UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti on preventing the sale and exploitation of children. It provides access to the three separate research reports and a brief overview of each report. The different reports are as follows: children and digital technology, children who migrate, and children and their participation in sports.

Elisa Mosler Vidal & Jasper Dag Tjaden. "GLOBAL MIGRATION INDICATORS." United Nations, publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/global_migration_indicators_2018.pdf. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

The report was used to give more statistics of migrating children and the risk they face in regard to being sold or sexually exploited or abused. The document goes into extensive detail of global trends in migration and in specific regions throughout the world. It provides a good base understanding of the severity of the problem.

End Violence Against Children. "Disrupting Harm." End Violence Against Children, www.end-violence.org/disrupting-harm. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023

The webpage gives information on an NGO that is working with UNICEF to combat this challenge through a research project. The article disseminates information about the nature of the research project and the different Southeast Asian countries the project is

taking place in. It shares that there are different solutions for each country based on the survey data collected.

Lu, Joanne. "Here's How Every Country Ranks When It Comes to Child Abuse and Child Safety." UN Dispatch, 18 Jan. 2019, undispatch.com/here-is-how-every-country-ranks-on-child-safety/.

UN Dispatch shares their index of ranking countries and their safety levels for children. The article supports and shows how this index can go into achieving SDG 16. This shows an interesting perspective of the crisis on a broad level in each country and provides resources to further look into regarding Member States.

Ministry of Home Affairs. "Director's Message." Government of India National Crime Records Bureau, ncrb.gov.in/hi/%E0%A4%A8%E0%A4%BF%E0%A4%A6%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B6%E0%A4%95-%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%A6%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B6. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This article gives insight of the issue in India and provides some statistics to provide evidence of the challenge this country faces. It goes into the Ministry of Home Affairs in India and specific measures they have taken to combat this issue.

Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY." UNICEF, www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Post-Consultation-Brief-Sale-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-Digital-Tech.pdf. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This is the research report from UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti specifically on the sale and sexual exploitation of children with a focus on this challenge in the realm of digital technology. It provides context of the issue and also solutions that have been tried. Within the report it discusses a reporting a surveying technique tried.

Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: MIGRATION." United Nations, 25 Sept. 2019, www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Post-Consultation-Brief-Sale-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-Migration.pdf. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This research report is from UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti specifically on the sale and sexual exploitation of children with a focus on this challenge in the realm of

migration. It provides context of the issue and also solutions that have been tried. One of the solutions discussed goes over a reporting system that can be used to track children who are migrating.

Office of Research - Innocenti. "THE SALE & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN: SPORT & SPORTING EVENTS." UNICEF, 25 Sept. 2019, www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Post-Consultation-Brief-Sale-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-Sport.pdf. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This is the research report from UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti specifically on the sale and sexual exploitation of children with a focus on this challenge in the realm of sports and sporting events. It provides context of the issue and also solutions that have been tried, because this is a newer field of exploration—there is less on this topic in this report.

Special Rapporteur. "Special Rapporteur on the Sale, Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children." United Nations, www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-sale-of-children. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

A report from Special Rapporteur Ms. Mama Fatima Singhateh which gives the mandate of UNICEF and provides links to recent Resolutions passed related to both the sale of children and sexual exploitation of children. The webpage also provides links to previous resolutions passed such as A/77/140 and A/HRC/49/51 both which are related to addressing the sexual exploitation of children.

UNICEF. "Child Labour and Exploitation." UNICEF, 1 Apr. 2018, www.unicef.org/rosa/what-we-do/child-protection/child-labour-and-exploitation. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This article from UNICEF gives further context of the issue and solutions that they have tried implementing in various locations and its future plans in different regions throughout the world. Specifically, the page gives statistics related to the crisis in South Asia. It also shares solutions that have been attempted throughout the world and how successful they been.

UNICEF. "Preventing and Countering Trafficking in Human Beings." UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/preventing-and-countering-trafficking-human-beings>. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This article gives context to how UNICEF has helped children who are migrating and at risk of sale or sexual exploitation. It shares the creation and use of the Practical Guide on the Identification of Victims/Persons ‘At-Risk’ of Trafficking in Human Beings” and links the document. The article also shows how UNICEF has implemented these solutions in the context of the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis and in Moldova and Slovakia.

UNICEF. "UNICEF's Fight against Sexual Misconduct." UNICEF, www.unicef.org/our-fight-against-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment#:~:text=Sexual%20abuse%20is%20the%20actual,Read%20about%20UNICEF's%20work. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

UNICEF published this document to define terms such as sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment. They also share what strides they are taking to stop these harmful acts for all demographics of individuals. The article highlights an initiative they’re taking to protect children called “Child Protection Programming.”

UNICEF Programming. "Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." UNICEF, www.unicef.org/protection/protecting-children-from-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This article dives into a specific solution taken against child sexual exploitation called the IASC Acceleration Plan. This solution is something UNICEF has adopted to use to report, support, and hold individuals accountable for the sale and sexual exploitation of children. The page sufficiently goes over the plan in detail and provides sources to other information about the solution.

UNHCR, Asia Pacific. "Tackling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment." The UN Refugee Agency, www.unhcr.org/asia/what-we-do/how-we-work/tackling-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment. Accessed 21 Jun. 2023.

This document takes on the perspective of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and what this branch is doing in response to this global challenge. It highlights a four-pillar strategy they adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of the pillars are then discussed in further detail and different occasions where they have implemented it.

II. Achieving Higher Child Literacy Rates

“Under resourced schools, underpaid and underqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and archaic curricula are undermining our children’s ability to reach their full potential. The trajectory of our education systems is, by definition, the trajectory of our future. We need to reverse current trendlines or face the consequences of failing to educate an entire generation. Low levels of learning today mean less opportunity tomorrow.”

- Catherine Russell, UNICEF Director-General

Introduction

Under the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF recognizes the right every child has to an education and the need for every child to have access to an education.³⁷ Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention give children the right to an education; it states that primary education must be free, and the system must be purposed with developing a child’s personality, mental and physical abilities, and prepare the child to live with a “spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all people”. These rights given to all children provide the basis for achieving SDG 4: quality education, and SDG 10: reduced inequalities, as children everywhere are given opportunity for growth.

In understanding the importance of education in a child’s life, UNICEF is working to achieve higher literacy rates for children in our global society. Even with this Convention established and the right that every child has to an education, a present school does not always lead to learning and growth. There are over 600 million children and adolescents who do not reach the minimum proficiency levels for math and reading—even with two thirds of them in school. For the third of children not in schools, illiteracy rates are even higher.³⁸

There are many barriers for children truly developing educationally—rampant poverty, an unstable political scene, living within a region vulnerable to conflict and natural disaster, having a disability, or being an ethnic minority.³⁹ Within communities where there are schools, there remains to be the challenge of a lack of trained teachers, few educational materials, or poor infrastructure which can make it difficult for students to make it to school. Children can also face the challenge of malnutrition or poor health which stunts their educational growth, or their schools and households may not have access to the internet.

³⁷ Rights of the Child Committee. “Convention On The Rights of the Child.” *United Nations*.

³⁸ UNICEF. “Two Thirds of the World’s School-Age Children Have No Internet Access at Home, New UNICEF-ITU Report Says.” *UNICEF*.

³⁹ UNICEF. “Education.” *UNICEF*.

Low literacy rates will result in children who are not fully developed and ill-equipped to face their responsibilities in society. Children will not grow into adults who are adequately equipped for the work force, nor will they be able to make choices and take opportunities that give them a better future for both them and those around them.⁴⁰

Current Situation

According to data collected from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), many children around the world are receiving an education but a lot of those children do not have sufficient foundational literacy or numeracy skills to help equip them for their futures.⁴¹ The UN defines literacy as “the percentage of the population that can both read and write a short, simple statement about their everyday life.”⁴² Based on data collected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) there are 773 million illiterate adults in the world and the statistic is rising.⁴³ This rate of under-educated adults stems from low literacy rates in children and a lack of quality education for children.

SDG 4 promotes to ensure that there will be inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for everyone by 2030. SDG 4.5 aims to eliminate all discrimination in education and SDG 4.6 aims to achieve universal literacy and numeracy.⁴⁴ There are gender disparities and a lack of equality of access to education at all levels which marginalizes certain groups and keeps them from being able to receive any kind of education. In Member States like Afghanistan the difference in youth literacy rates between males (74%) and females (56%) is vast and there are other Member States who suffer in similar ways. In Benin the youth literacy rates are males, 70% and females, 52%.⁴⁵ This disparity and discrimination against young girls disadvantages them in their futures and lowers their literacy and numeracy rates because of this discrimination and different expectations and realities between the genders. These statistics are evidence of a gender gap in global literacy rates.

While much of the world is still in recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic more than 635 million students are still affected by both partial and full school closures.⁴⁶ Closures of schools have led to major academic gaps in a child’s educational development in both the literacy and numeracy realm. Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Chief of Education shared that, “While the disruptions to learning must end, just reopening schools is not enough. Students need

⁴⁰ UNICEF. “Education.” *UNICEF*.

⁴¹ Roser, Max, and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. “Literacy - Our World in Data.” *Our World in Data*.

⁴² The United Nations. “Goal 4: Quality Education - The Global Goals.” *The Global Goals*.

⁴³ UNESCO. “Dhaka Declaration Adopted at ILD Event in Bangladesh | UIL.” *UIL | UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*.

⁴⁴ The United Nations. “Goal 4: Quality Education - The Global Goals.” *The Global Goals*.

⁴⁵ Roser, Max, and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. “Literacy - Our World in Data.” *Our World in Data*.

⁴⁶ Thompson, Georgina. “COVID:19 Scale of Education Loss ‘Nearly Insurmountable’, Warns UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

intensive support to recover lost education. Schools must also go beyond places of learning to rebuild children's mental and physical health, social development, and nutrition."⁴⁷ The effects of the pandemic are present in all Member States and to return to the literacy levels the world used to be at and to exceed those previous levels, change must incur.

Along with UNICEF, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) published in 2020 that two-thirds of the world's school-age children do not have internet access in their homes. This equates to 1.3 billion children who are falling behind in their educational development.⁴⁸ In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of internet in the home led to no at-home virtual learning and a loss of months and in some cases, years of important literacy growth. Full and partial school closures from COVID-19 and disparities between rural and urban areas have created a need for children to have internet access to increase literacy and numeracy in the home—however, these barriers keep children from developing in the way they need to.⁴⁹

UN and Global Efforts

Achieving higher literacy rates for children has been a key goal of the UN since its beginnings. In its 56th session, the GA passed the notion to name the period of 2003 to 2012 as the “Literacy Decade” where communities could become locally sustainable literate environments.⁵⁰ The purpose of this decade was to channel energies toward those who are most marginalized against in literacy movements like girls, ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, disabled individuals, and those out of school. The Literacy Decade inspired further movements and pushes in advocating for and spreading awareness of this challenge.

A Digital Disparity

On the global scale, the digital disparity between children in the education is grave and millions of children are without proper access to the internet in some of their schools and in more homes. UNICEF is currently partnered with Generation Unlimited, an organization with the goal of equipping children and adolescents with the skills necessary for a successful work-related future. This partnership has produced “Reimagine Education” which is working with numerous sectors

⁴⁷ Thompson, Georgina. “COVID:19 Scale of Education Loss ‘Nearly Insurmountable’, Warns UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁴⁸ Arora, Anshana. “Are Children Really Learning? Exploring Foundational Skills in the Midst of a Learning Crisis - UNICEF DATA.” *UNICEF DATA*.

⁴⁹ Arora, Anshana. “Are Children Really Learning? Exploring Foundational Skills in the Midst of a Learning Crisis - UNICEF DATA.” *UNICEF DATA*.

⁵⁰ Literacy, Committee. “UNITED NATIONS LITERACY DECADE (2003-2012) LAUNCHED AT NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS | UN Press.” *Frontpage | UN Press*.

and organizations across the world to expand education and invest in providing digital learning for every child.⁵¹

In addition to the “Reimagine Education” initiative, UNICEF has launched “Giga,” an initiative working to connect every school and surrounding communities with Internet and digital learning resources. Giga teams up with local governments and groups in both the private and public sector to build funding for the necessary infrastructure for the digital learning solutions.⁵² This initiative has successfully mapped over 800,000 schools in 30 different countries with reformed digital access, which will ultimately result in improving the child literacy rate in those regions. ITU, which helps with the data collection and dispersion is established in 193 Member States and is partnered with more than 900 companies, universities, and different local and global organizations. This effort to increase literacy rates among children due to an increase of internet access and digital learning in the home and in schools has proven to be successful in achieving SDG 4.6 so far.

Campaigning Literacy

The UN declared September 8 to be International Literacy Day, in celebration of this promotional event, the government of Bangladesh hosted an international conference on girls’ women’s literacy rates and education.⁵³ In partnership with UNESCO, this conference was attended by over 2,000 participants where they held sessions to discuss the importance of girls’ literacy rates and how to fund, monitor, and set up policy related to improving the rates throughout the world. At this conference the Dhaka Declaration was adopted which set forth different actions to accelerate progress in literacy.⁵⁴ Following this conference and declaration, many Member States and organizations have chosen to adopt and follow this framework to improve child literacy rates.

In 2012 the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) started and was led by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon which works to advocate for and inspire others of the power in education and improving literacy rates.⁵⁵ The main purposes of GEFI are to put children in school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship. GEFI will achieve these priorities by teaming up with other campaigns and organizations of similar values to push forward this agenda. GEFI has partnered with groups like UNICEF on the launch of the “Business

⁵¹ UNICEF. “Reimagine Education | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁵² UNICEF. “Reimagine Education | UNICEF.” *UNICEF*.

⁵³ UNESCO. “Dhaka Declaration Adopted at ILD Event in Bangladesh | UIL.” *UIL | UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*.

⁵⁴ UNESCO. “Dhaka Declaration Adopted at ILD Event in Bangladesh | UIL.” *UIL | UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*.

⁵⁵ Ki-Moon, Ban. “Global Education First Initiative.” *United Nations*.

Engagement Framework for Education and Learning,” “Educate-a-Child” which helps bring quality education to children without formal schooling, and the “Education Cannot Wait” campaign.⁵⁶

“Malala Day” was established by the UN to remember and recognize Malala Yousafzai, an education activist.⁵⁷ This is recognized around the world as educational rights are pushed for in all Member States to help achieve SDG 4. Because millions of children remain out of school and UNESCO and UNICEF have both worked to lower illiteracy rates, campaigns, and days like this have been a platform for advocating for the framework and vision of the educational rights outlined for children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Conclusion

UNICEF faces the challenge of raising the current literacy rates for children throughout the world. Improving the literacy rates is important because of the implications that educated children have on their futures and the success of the world they will live in. SDG 4 prioritizes a quality education for all individuals and targets to end discrimination of all kinds in education and also eliminate illiteracy. In order to reach this goal, the UN and UNICEF have worked to attack the issue of a digital disparity in educative materials and also working for better advocate and campaign for children’s needs. These efforts along with others in the future can help improve child literacy rates.

Questions to Consider

1. How can UNICEF match the efforts of UNESCO in this realm of child illiteracy?
2. What are short-term solutions or long-term solutions for helping raise child literacy rates in urban versus rural areas?
3. How can we make campaigns and conferences already established most effective in achieving their purposes?
4. Why does improving child literacy rates matter for our global society?
5. How does the digital disparity affect different regional areas?

⁵⁶ Ki-Moon, Ban. “Global Education First Initiative.” *United Nations*.

⁵⁷ Soken-Huberty, Emmaline. “What Is Malala Day?” *Human Rights Careers*.

Annotated Bibliography

Arora, Anshana. "Are Children Really Learning? Exploring Foundational Skills in the Midst of a Learning Crisis - UNICEF DATA." UNICEF DATA, UNICEF, 29 Mar. 2022, <http://data.unicef.org/resources/are-children-really-learning-foundational-skills-report/>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This report provides access for the full report published by UNICEF on the current situation of children and their literacy rates. It touches on the negative effects that COVID-19 has had on the education system worldwide. The report also provides data on specific regions and what literacy skills they are lacking.

Ki-Moon, Ban. "Global Education First Initiative." United Nations, United Nations, 1 Sept. 2012, www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Global%20Education%20First%20Initiative.pdf. Accessed 11 July 2023.

The Global Education First Initiative was started by the UN Secretary-General in 2012. This article goes over the main goals of GEFI and groups/campaigns they have teamed up with to reach these priorities. It also shares the successes of GEFI from the last couple of years and other groups/campaigns that have come as a rest of it.

Literacy, Committee. "UNITED NATIONS LITERACY DECADE (2003-2012) LAUNCHED AT NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS | UN Press." Frontpage | UN Press, United Nations, 13 Feb. 2003, <http://press.un.org/en/2003/obv322.doc.htm>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This article gives basic information on the establishment of the UN Literacy Decade back in 2003-2012. It cites the origin of it from the 3rd Committee of the GA in the 56th session. Additionally, it cites quotes from important UNESCO and UN leaders in speaking to the importance of literacy.

Rights of the Child Committee. "Convention On The Rights of the Child." United Nations, United Nations, 2 Sept. 1990, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/crc.pdf>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This is the document outlining the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. Articles 28 and 29 were primarily used in this guide to show its relevance to the educational needs of children and what that entails. It gives the framework of what children need to fully develop educationally.

Roser, Max, and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. "Literacy - Our World in Data." Our World in Data, Global Change Data Lab, 20 Sept. 2018, <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This page provides present data for the literacy rates of both children and adults. It provides an interactive world map that shows percentages of rates in different regions and how they've changed over the years. This is a good article for an overall understanding of how literacy has increased/decreased in certain regions over the years.

Soken-Huberty, Emmaline. "What Is Malala Day?" Human Rights Careers, 22 May 2022, www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/malala-day/#:~:text=On%20July%2012%2C%20the%20United,to%20the%20UN%20in%202013. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This webpage outlines the details of "Malala Day" on July 12 each year. The day has the purpose of raising awareness for the current status of education for children and pushes for greater educational rights and advancements for children everywhere. It mentions and provides a link to details on its partnership with UNESCO.

The United Nations. "Goal 4: Quality Education - The Global Goals." The Global Goals, The Global Goals, http://www.globalgoals.org/goals/4-quality-education/?gclid=CjwKCAjw2K6lBhBXEiwA5RjtCeEkRiFwV-Ds4hCEsaX0Tltf5jN6QJVtixY2bpd9MF3rK9roE0H92BoCZ9oQAvD_BwE. Accessed 11 July 2023.

The SDGs are broken up in this article to different targets specifically for SDG 4. In looking at 4.5 and 4.6, the targets discuss how they can be achieved and some of the barriers behind the current situation. This article provides sufficient context to how the SDGs are being reached in the present day.

Thompson, Georgina. "COVID:19 Scale of Education Loss 'Nearly Insurmountable', Warns UNICEF." UNICEF, UNICEF New York, 24 Jan. 2022, <https://www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/covid19-scale-education-loss-nearly-insurmountable-warns-unicef>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This article discusses some of the negative effects of COVID-19 on the education system. It shares relevant statistics for certain countries throughout the world on how their literacy and numeracy rates have dropped. The page links to the State of the Global Education Crisis Report.

UNESCO. "Dhaka Declaration Adopted at ILD Event in Bangladesh | UIL." UIL | UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, UIL, 17 Sept. 2014, <http://uil.unesco.org/fr/node/2786>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This article educates and explains the purposes of the "International Conference on Girls' and Women's Literacy and Education" held in Bangladesh in 2014. It discusses the major

events of the conference and the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration. This is an example of a previous solution that has worked to improve child literacy rates.

UNICEF. “Education.” UNICEF, 27 Apr. 2023, www.unicef.org/education#:~:text=UNICEF%20aims%20to%20have%20every,solutions%20that%20offer%20personalized%20learning.&text=A%20TIME%20Best%20Invention%20of,close%20the%20learning%20poverty%20gap. Accessed 11 July 2023.

The webpage outlines the belief that UNICEF has that every child has a right to an education. It gives relevant statistics for children and their education as a whole and discusses different barriers to entry that children face in receiving an adequate education.

UNICEF. “Reimagine Education | UNICEF.” UNICEF, UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/reimagine/education>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

Reimagine Education, the global initiative by UNICEF is explained in further detail here. The article reviews why it was started and what actions have been taken so far in its progress. It reviews some of the important costs of the initiative and other groups the initiative has teamed up with.

UNICEF. “Two Thirds of the World’s School-Age Children Have No Internet Access at Home, New UNICEF-ITU Report Says.” UNICEF, UNICEF, 3 Nov. 2020, <http://www.unicef.org/press-releases/two-thirds-worlds-school-age-children-have-no-internet-access-home-new-unicef-itu>. Accessed 11 July 2023.

This article touches on the lack of internet that children face in certain regions of the world based on their geography or as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It gives recent statistics related to the challenge and also provides region specific data. The article also touches on the present solution called Giga that UNICEF is working to implement.