

## SUMUNC Youth Assembly



### **Welcoming Remarks from the Chairs**

Welcome to the Youth Assembly of SUMUNC 2021. It will be our greatest pleasure to serve as the Dais for this committee, and we look forward to meeting delegates who seek to challenge themselves to their fullest and demonstrate passion in taking on the responsibility of debating pertinent world issues.

At SUMUNC 2021, delegates of the Youth Assembly will tackle two topics: Addressing the Rise of Materialism Among Youth and Addressing Teenage Pregnancies. As social media and mass consumerism increase, so do youths wishing to have more possessions in their lives to feel important among their peers. Concurrently, the lack of parental guidance and sex education are some of the many factors that lead to underage pregnancies that need to be properly mitigated.

As much as MUN is an academic sport, is also a platform of self-growth and progress. As your Dais, we have experienced how transformative MUN can be, so we want all of you to be able to experience it in SUMUNC. For those of you who are new to MUN, the first speech is always the hardest, yet liberating. Do not let your fears hold you back, but instead take SUMUNC as an opportunity to learn. Believe that the things you have to say are as important as the other delegates'. As for you who are currently building your MUN resume, remember to always bring something home from your conferences: connections, self-awareness, valuable feedback, fun memories, etc. Do not let awards be your sole motivation. Be someone you can look back fondly and say, 'I'm glad I had this delegate in my committee'. Speak up, take action, and good luck! This Study Guide is designed to provide an overview of your topic to guide your research into the topics, to ensure we have engaging debates in!

Sincerely,  
Youth Assembly Dais

### **Chair Descriptions**

**Nikolas Banzuela**

Nikolas is a MUNer hailing from the Philippines. He started his MUN career back in 2016 and never looked back as he attended as many MUNs as he could in both the local and international community. In his MUN journey, he heavily participated in online MUNs once the pandemic hit which led him to the Malaysian MUN Community, where there are many new aspiring MUNers eager to learn about the UN. He hopes that the delegates for this year will be able to immerse themselves in the academic rigor that the conference has in store as it pushes for critical thinking, public speaking, and diplomacy with so many different nationalities across Asia and the Pacific. Aside from MUNs, Nik has a new hobby of binge-watching Netflix shows and studying romance stories during the quarantine.

**Haziqah Kamaruzzaman**

Haziqah is an ambitious woman from Malaysia. She is currently in her senior year, reading Communication in Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah. Residing in Kuala Lumpur, she started her MUN career in 2019 after joining the MUN club in her university. She described MUN as her comfort space to indulge in the social and political issues internationally. This is her first time co-chairing Youth Assembly council. She hopes that all delegates will gain new knowledge and ready to rock their MUN experience and just have fun.

## **Youth Assembly (YA)**

### **Introduction to The Council**

*Youth Assembly is a platform designed for young voices to have their voices heard. The council promotes the work of youth organisations in areas such as democracy, environment, human rights, population, health, drugs, community development, leadership training, and cultural and religious tolerance. Established in 2004 by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, their work aims to empower the next generation of leaders with opportunities to connect with like-minded peers, trailblazers, and influencers, develop global competence and critical skills, and transform their vision for a better future through innovative action.*

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## **TOPIC A: ADDRESSING THE RISE OF MATERIALISM AMONG YOUTH**

### **Introduction to the Topic**

Philosophically, materialism can be defined as a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values. Materialism is a metaphysical stance that denies metaphysics altogether. Some examples of materialism are status symbols, wealth, commoditization of experience, and identity. In the age of technology, it is easy for young, impressionable adolescents to be sucked into a world where physical traits are valued far more than character traits, with the innovation of social media. These values can be highly damaging to one's self-esteem, leading to many societal problems.

### **Key Terms**

1. Materialism- a theory that physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter
2. Metaphysics- the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, identity, time, and space.

### **Causes**

1. Societal pressure
  - a. As sad as it is, we live in a society where our worth is measured by the facility of materials we possess. With this engraved in the roots of our society, it is only believable that we too have grown to adapt to having this toxic mindset.
2. Social media influences
  - b. Famous celebrities and influencers often take to social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to show off their trendy cars and picture-perfect bodies, where they receive millions of followers and likes. While a lot of these pictures are edited, young children are brainwashed to believe that possessing these physical quantities is a measure of their worth.

### **Problems**

1. Self-esteem issues and bullying

- a. Looking at all your peers who have the best possessions, whether it being the most attractive deemed body in society or the latest iPhone, can bring your self-esteem to a new low. As if that isn't bad enough, the mishandled insecurities may lead to problems such as bullying.

2. Mental health issues

- b. Mental health issues among youth such as depression and anxiety may be a result of materialism. Furthermore, eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorders are at an all-time high due to the exposure to ruthless comparisons in terms of bodies. At any given point in time between 0.3-0.4% of young women and 0.1% of young men will suffer from anorexia nervosa.

### **Solutions**

1. Mental health support

- a. Providing counseling, assessments, support groups and various programs is vital in educating and empowering patients to step bravely in their recovery journey. Affordable and attainable mental healthcare support should be provided to teenagers of all income groups.

2. Parenting courses

- b. Parenting courses are educational courses parents attend to learn about caring for their children. Parents attend the classes based on court orders, or simply as a way to learn better parenting skills. These courses are essential in helping parents raise children who value courtesy, generosity, self-control, and kindness.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. Why does having more things equal more happiness?
2. What steps should be taken to overcome the rise of superficiality in teenagers?
3. How can parental participation be in play to mitigate mass consumerism?

### **Links to Further Research**

1. [Materialism - By Branch / Doctrine](#)
2. [Materialism: a system that eats us from the inside out | Money | The Guardian](#)

### **Bibliography**

1. [Materialism - Twentieth-century materialism | Britannica](#)
2. [Causes/Effects - materialism \(weebly.com\)](#)
3. [Materialism | Definition of Materialism by Merriam-Webster \(merriam-webster.com\)](#)

## **TOPIC B: ADDRESSING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES**

### **Introduction to the Topic**

Imagine this, it's an early Tuesday morning. You've just woken up and are currently packing your bag in a haste, trying your best to make it to school in time. Just as you're about to leave your house to receive an education, you are greeted with a gentle kick in your stomach. Fear creeps in as you feel your heart pounding against your ribcage. You had a feeling this may happen, you knew it was a mistake. Who do you have to tell? Confiding in anyone wouldn't do much, you'd only be invalidated with the harsh judgments of society. Your teenage years, as you knew it, are now over.

As heart-wrenching as this situation sounds, it's often the reality millions of girls have to face worldwide. For many of them, motherhood begins even before their childhood ends. It is common knowledge that pregnancies are often huge and sometimes, dangerous investments. Growing another human in you is not an easy job. It is estimated that approximately 12 million girls aged 15–19 years and at least 777,000 girls under 15 years give birth each year in developing regions.

Parenthood is a beautiful thing when you are financially stable and emotionally equipped to handle it. The prevalence of this issue often goes unnoticed while people are too busy judging young girls for being victims of rape. While it takes both guys and girls to engage in sexual activity, it's generally the girls who have to deal with the repercussions of the act, including the painful stigma that comes with it.

Working towards helping these young girls be better equipped in handling such tough decisions is what this council aims to achieve. It should be noted that while putting in effort to discourage teenage pregnancies is vital, it is equally important that we support already teenage mothers.

### **History of The Issue**

Knowledge of the history of teen pregnancy prevention is vital in recognizing the historical misinformation and biases against unwed pregnant adolescents. Teenage pregnancies have been in existence since time immemorial. It became an issue when childbearing, regardless of age, was associated with adulthood.

### **Key Terms**

1. Pregnancy - the time during which one or more offspring develops inside a woman, as known as gestation.
2. Adolescence - a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to legal adulthood.

## **Causes**

### **Lack of sex education**

A comprehensive understanding of sex education covers understanding of emotional relations and responsibilities, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe sex, birth control and sexual abstinence. Due to the stigma and 'embarrassment' surrounding intimate issues such as sex, it is rarely talked about. Since it is deemed "awkward" to talk about, students now lack basic understanding of their reproductive health as well as rights.

### **Limited access to affordable birth control**

Birth control such as condoms, "morning after" pills and IUD, are methods used to prevent pregnancy while participating in sex. Many teenagers who already actively participate in sexual activities currently don't have enough access to birth control. Thus, it increases the chances of impregnation a lot.

### **Poverty**

The issue of poverty and teen pregnancy go hand in hand. Poor teenage mothers lack access to pregnancy and motherhood resources as well as female healthcare. On the other hand, most teenage mothers are deprived of an education and on extension, well-paying job opportunities.

## **Problems**

### **1. No more education**

With the enormous pressure of having to take care of another's life at a very young age, topped with the lack of support from family, teenage mothers very rarely get the education they deserve. Many of them are forced to drop out of school to engage in the full-time job that is motherhood. These circumstances not only deprive them of their civil right to education, it strips them from any form of future independence.

### **1. Introduces teenagers early to the workforce**

Without a college education, lack of qualifications forces them to work informal jobs which underpay them far below the minimum wage. This, in turn, leads to many financial problems.

### **1. Additional health risks**

Teenage pregnancies carry additional health risks to both the mother and the baby. Health risks for the baby include premature birth and low birth weight. On the other hand, the mother is more prone to pregnancy-induced hypertension, anemia, depression, infections, malnutrition, diabetes, and eclampsia, to name a few. Statistics show that pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading cause of mortality in girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide.

## **Solutions**

### **1. Planned parenthood**

- a. Planned Parenthood, is a nonprofit organization that works to provide reproductive health care. Services offered include access to birth control, other forms of contraceptives, and abortion clinics.
2. Increased access to birth control
  - b. Increasing access to contraceptives such as ligation, morning-after pills, and condoms is an obvious way to curb pregnancies that teenagers are unprepared for. Teenagers should be provided with the opportunity to avoid the risk of pregnancy.
    1. Implementation of comprehensive and medically accurate sex education
  - c. A study showed that kids who understand sex education are 60% less likely to get pregnant. By understanding how your body works and how to use contraceptives if you wish to engage in sexual activities with partners of legal age, you are able to reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancies.
    1. Legalization of abortion
  - d. It is important to note that abortion is not a question of morality. It is a question of providing options to prevent and mitigate risks in certain circumstances. By legalizing abortion, we are able to prevent illegal abortions among teenage mothers, minimize the suffering of mother and child. It is also a step in providing women, a portion of society who have been discriminated against for centuries, their birthright of bodily autonomy.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What are the underlying factors that worsen the problem of teenage pregnancies?
2. What steps should we take to support teenage mothers, without encouraging teen pregnancies?

### **Links to Further Research**

1. [Teen Pregnancy and Poverty – Vittana.org](#)
2. [The History of Teen Pregnancy Prevention](#)
3. Teenage Pregnancy: Who Is To Blame? [https://umsc.my/umsc\\_news/teenage-pregnancy-who-is-to-blame/](https://umsc.my/umsc_news/teenage-pregnancy-who-is-to-blame/)
4. Prevalence of teenage pregnancy in 2015-2016 and its obstetric outcomes compared to non-teenage pregnancy at Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar Seremban (HTJS), Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia: A retrospective case-control study based on the national obstetric registry. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7430313/#:~:text=Evidence%20suggests%20that%20approximately%2014,overall%2C%20become%20pregnant%20each%20year.&text=The%20Malaysia%20Welfare%20Department%20reported,women%20aged%2015%2D19%20years.>

### **Bibliography**

1. [Adolescent pregnancy \(who.int\)](#)
2. (20) Rethinking Teenage Pregnancy Prevention | Juliana Marquez Salej | TEDxColegioAngloColombiano - YouTube
3. [Child Marriage: What You Need To Know And How You Can Help End It \(globalcitizen.org\)](#)