

UN Children's Fund

*Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations
Conference*

TechMUN XXVI



Middle School General Assembly

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TechMUN || Thomas Jefferson High School for
Science and Technology || April 20-21, 2018



Hello Delegates,

Welcome to TECHMUN 2018! We are excited to be your chairs at this conference and we look forward to hearing well thought out and interesting ideas that will help children all over the world. As the United Nations Children's fund, our job is to protect and advocate for the rights of children by giving them the proper aid they need. Here in UNICEF you will be working together to address the needs of our future generations while keeping into account each nation's individual policy and belief system.

For our committee, all delegates should come prepared for committee by knowing your country's stance on each topic as well as what is already in place and ways we can build off of pre-existing solutions. We expect all of you to remain diplomatic with each other and to remember to take these issues seriously as they are real world issues that have affected many people across the globe. We also want you all to have fun so don't be afraid to try something new and step out of your comfort zones! We look forward to meeting you all and if you have any questions at all, you can contact us at uniceftechmun2018@gmail.com!

Best,

Ankitha and Timmy



An Introduction to the United Nations Children's Fund

The United Nations Children's Fund, or UNICEF, was originally created in December 1946 by the UN to provide food, clothing and health care to European children in the aftermath of World War II. Following this in 1953, the UN General Assembly extended this program and made UNICEF a permanent part of the United Nations ("Our history").

Today, UNICEF is active in more than 190 countries around the world. They work to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed in 1990 and became the most widely and rapidly accepted human rights treaty in history ("Convention on the Rights of the Child"). UNICEF also works to uphold the Millennium Development Goals and for the progress promised in the UN Charter.

UNICEF currently works to promote girls education, to ensure all children are immunized against common childhood diseases and have proper nutrition, and to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in children, among many other things("About UNICEF").



Topic A: Combating HIV/AIDS In Children

Background

Although occurrences of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are decreasing across the world, many children are currently unable to receive treatment. Originating in West Africa, HIV was originally transferred to humans from other primates. Before 1983, this world wide epidemic was unheard of (“Where Did HIV Come from?”). As of 2016, 2.1 million people under the age of 15 are living with HIV and merely 49% of these children have access to health care (“Children and HIV Fact Sheet.”) HIV is transmitted through vertical transmission (from mother to child), through sexual contact and through blood contamination where bodily fluids carrying these diseases come into contact with other people (“HIV”). HIV and AIDS have the ability to weaken immune systems and cause even more life threatening infections especially in children.



Figure 1. The amount of children with HIV and AIDS that have access to antiretroviral treatment. Source: UNICEF analysis of UNAIDS 2017 data

However, even with the recognition of the issue and its many causes, the presence of HIV and AIDS in children is much more prevalent in developing nations due to a variety of



social, political and economic factors. In rural areas, children are unable to access health care that could help them identify whether they have the disease due to a lack of medical coverage. The clinics and doctors that are available are often unsanitary, where needles are reused. These clinics consist of more factors that help the disease spread rather than those that help stop it. Areas of higher poverty rates are also more at risk for having these diseases (“Annual Report 2015”).

In Africa, AIDS still remains the leading cause of adolescent death (“Annual Report 2015”). Children are especially at risk due their developing immune systems. Since children and adolescents are still growing, their bodies have higher metabolisms making it easier for them to outgrow treatment used to mediate the symptoms of HIV. In many cases, children live with these diseases unknowingly. If not treated immediately, these life threatening disease can have fatal consequences including liver and kidney damage (“HIV Medicines and Side Effects Understanding HIV/AIDS”). Even though treatment for HIV exists, a negative stigma about the children’s condition is still present in their daily lives in the forms of discrimination and harassment.

The main source of treatment available for people with HIV is antiretroviral treatment, or ART (“HIV Treatment Overview”) There are currently no direct cures but this treatment reduces the risk of transmitting disease and its symptoms. By undergoing ART, patients are able to reduce the risk of developing AIDs. With the advent of this form of treatment, between the years of 2000 and 2010, the cases of HIV decreased by nearly half, but people still do not have sufficient access to treatment. These drugs are meant to be consumed on a daily basis but often people don’t even have access to this treatment as a whole. Although a lot has been done to help people gain access to ART, HIV is still a global epidemic and further action needs to be taken to help children be safe.

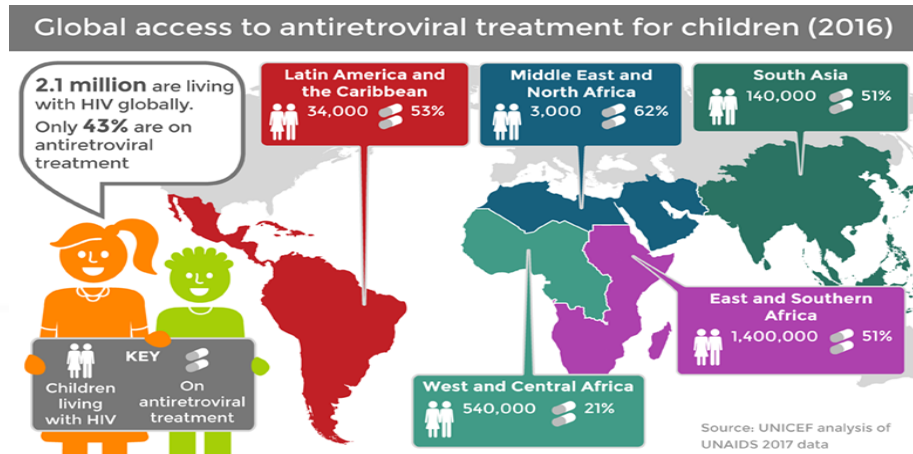


Figure 1. The amount of children with HIV and AIDS that have access to antiretroviral treatment. Source: UNICEF analysis of UNAIDS 2017 data

Past Action

Ever since the World Health Organization (WHO) started the Global Programme on AIDS in 1987, officials worldwide have been raising awareness of the issue. Later that year, AIDS became the first disease that the United Nations General Assembly talked about during committee. In June 2001, when the HIV epidemic was at its peak, the United Nations General Assembly declared HIV/AIDS as a global emergency (“HIV / AIDS”). All UN member states were required to follow a set of specific goals to help decrease the rates of HIV in their respective nations. These long term preventive methods were especially helpful in areas that had stronger economies but even today families in developing regions are unable to receive treatment which only leads to further spread.

In 2000, The Millenium Development Goals were created to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS. All member nations were required to try and accomplish these goals. Goal number six of this plan was targeted towards preventing the spread of AIDS. In 2015 it was the first goal to actually be achieved when the amount of people receiving AVT doubled in distribution from its rate five year prior. The Sustainable Development Goals, aimed to conclude around



2030, include identifying symptoms of HIV in early stages and providing immediate treatment (“AIDS”). This goal also aimed to address the issue of discrimination that many children living with HIV have to face everyday.

Questions to Consider

1. How can UNICEF ensure that children in developing nations have access to affordable treatment?
2. What policies can be adopted to make sure that children with AIDS don't face discrimination?
3. How can nations distribute antiretroviral treatment to rural areas where there tend to be high rates of HIV?
4. How can nations ensure that recommendations by the World Health Organization are implemented within one another?
5. What steps can be taken to make sure that children are prioritized in the distribution of HIV treatment?

Helpful Links:

<https://www.unicef.org/aids/>

<https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/children>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs360/en/>

Topic B: Children in Armed Conflict

Background

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as a person under 18. Currently, one in nine children are living in areas that are affected by armed conflict and over 250,000 children are currently serving as child soldiers in armed conflicts



across the world (UNICEF). A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity. Children are used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes (“Paris Principles Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict”). In armed conflict, children are often coerced into committing horrific acts of violence, frequently abused and beaten, and forced to take drugs to increase their daring in battle. Sexual abuse is often common for child soldiers, as rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are high among current and former child soldiers(Nagle). Serving in armed conflict can also cause children to have physical and psychological damage.

Why do nations or organizations use child soldiers? Traditionally, children have not been utilized as soldiers because of their small size and strength. However, the proliferation of lighter and smaller weapons after WW1 has allowed children to wield weapons that are cheaper more efficient, and deadlier. Along with purchasing cheaper and smaller weapons, many armed groups have utilized children because they are less expensive to recruit and control than adults. Also, children are small and unsuspecting, which means they can be used effectively for covert operations. Essentially, to armed groups, children represent a low-cost way to mobilize force and labor when the combatants do not generally care about public opinion (Singer). Additionally, many groups have taken advantage of a child’s mental immaturity, as it makes them easy to recruit, manipulate, and control. Children are often more reckless and bold than adults because they often do not understand the concept of death and the consequences of their decisions. Armed groups will use this to send children to do dangerous jobs such as fighting on the front lines and searching for mines(Nagel).

How are children recruited to fight in armed conflict? Often children are kidnapped and abducted, and forced to fight on behalf of an armed group. Other times children are

intimidated or lured to join under false premises. Children join as a result of economic, social, or security pressures and displacement and poverty make children even more vulnerable to recruitment (“Child recruitment by armed forces or armed groups”). Because armed conflict often happens between multiple nations, crossing many borders, children are recruited without regard for national laws. Because of this, the issue requires the attention of the international community.



Figure 2. Map of countries in which children fight as soldiers in armed conflict. Shaded in red are countries where armed forces recruit children while shaded in orange are countries where non-state groups recruit children

Source: *Child Soldiers International*

Past Action

While the international community generally agrees about the necessity of protecting children in armed combat, the UN has not taken substantial protective action and has not enforced previous agreements. Since the beginning of the United Nations, the UN has valued children's special status. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Geneva Convention, both passed in 1948, classify children as civilians, which means that they are to be excluded from hostilities. More recently, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed in 1989,



which banned the compulsory or voluntary recruitment of children under the age of 15 as soldiers (“Convention on the Rights of the Child”). It has been ratified by 191 states, making it one of the most inclusive documents regarding children in armed conflict. However, it does not govern the enlistment of those between 15 and 18 years of age. Because of this, many UN agencies and advocacy groups drafted two optional protocols to address this loophole. The *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict* was created in 2002, and has currently been ratified by 167 nations. It raises the age of compulsory service from 15 to 18 and discourages states from accepting voluntary recruits under 18 (“Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict”).

In 1999, the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child was passed, making it the first regional treaty on the issue. It banned all use of children in armed conflict under the age of 18. However, Africa is the most prevalent region for child soldiers and children in armed conflict, so improvements to this treaty and related treaties are needed.

In 2007, The Paris Principles and Commitments were adopted, which helped develop programs for demobilizing and reintegrating former child soldiers back into society. However, this is currently a slow and painstaking process and needs to be made more efficient. At the same meeting, the "Cape Town Principles and Best Practices: Prevention of Recruitment of children into the armed forces and on demobilization and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa" was also reviewed and currently serves as the formal guideline on this issue.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your country’s position on using child soldiers and rights of a child?
2. What agreements has your country ratified or signed relating to child soldiers?
3. How can UNICEF protect children in armed conflict?



4. How can UNICEF prevent children from being recruited to fight?
5. How can UNICEF ensure that child soldiers are able to reintegrate into their communities after conflicts have ended?
6. How can UNICEF build upon and enforce previous agreements that have been created by the UN?

Helpful Links

<https://www.brw.org/topic/childrens-rights/child-soldiers>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/effects-of-conflict/six-grave-violations/child-soldiers/>

https://www.unicef.org/media/media_pr_childsoldiers.html

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Nagle, Luz E. *Child Soldiers and the Duty of Nations to Protect Children from Participation in Armed Conflict*. 11 Nov. 2011.



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“Where are child soldiers?” *Child Soldiers International*, Child Soldiers International, www.child-soldiers.org/where-are-there-child-soldiers

Position Paper Requirements

Overview

The Position Paper that you will be writing is the climax of the preparation process for Model United Nations conferences, acting as a summary of research and the representative view of your state on the issues presented to your council. Position Papers are due, in hard-copy format, before the first committee session on Friday. Any delegate without a Position Paper will be deemed ineligible for awards, so remember to bring a copy for collection, and a copy for personal use! Remember to not plagiarize any aspect of the paper - our chairs and directors will be checking every paper for plagiarism and we expect a full MLA works cited for each. Failure to do so might result in delegate or school delegation disqualification!

Basic Structure

- Times New Roman, 12pt font, single spaced
- A cover page with delegate name, nation, council, school



- Try adding color to your cover page by adding in national flags, seals, watermarks, or other official edits — this demonstrates thoughtful presentation and focus on details
- One page per topic with titled sections: background, country policy and possible solutions
- Background: This section should include an overview of the topic. What is the current situation, and what are the main nations affected? This should be the shortest section on the paper
 - Country Policy: What past actions has your country taken to address the issue at hand? What does your nation think about the topic? This section should take up a majority of your paper, as delegates should be representative of their countries view throughout committee
 - Possible Solutions: This part of your paper is where delegates can combine their research and creativity. Feel free to come up with unique solutions to the dilemmas at hand which you plan to bring up during committee
- Complete MLA bibliography and in-text citations for all statistics and sources used

Helpful Hints

- Remember to avoid first person pronouns!
- Always use the active voice!
- Avoid flowery language which can distract from the meaning of your paper!
- Your position paper is the first impression that your chairs will have of you. Remember to remain formal when writing it and try to show all the research that you have done for committee!