

## **What is Model United Nations?**

Model United Nations is a simulation of the UN General Assembly and other multilateral bodies. In Model UN, students step into the shoes of ambassadors from UN member states to debate current issues on the organization's agenda. The Model United Nations is an interactive and a popular experiential learning program that engages students through cooperative learning techniques and multicultural education. The process affords participants an understanding of how the process of international debate and negotiation that we commonly call diplomacy functions. In this interdependent world, Model UN makes for informed global citizens who not only understand the decisions their nation makes but also how those changes effect politics nationally, regionally, and globally. The purpose of the MUN is to advance knowledge and understanding of the international system and to highlight the eternal search for consensus as a necessary factor for international peace and security in today's world. In addition, the MUN provides for its participants a working knowledge of other countries and the relationships between these countries.

Before playing out their ambassadorial roles in a Model UN simulation, students research the issue that their committee will address. Model UN participants learn how the international community acts on its concerns about topics including peace and security, human rights, the environment, food and hunger, economic development and globalization. Model UN delegates also look closely at the needs, goals and foreign policies of the countries they will represent at the event.

### **How did Model UN begin?**

The Model UN started as the Model League of Nations Assembly. In 1947 the Model League of Nations Assembly made the transition the League of Nations had made in 1945 and became the Model United Nations Assembly. In 1946, WFUNA (World Federation of the United Nations Associations), a global non-profit membership organization was formed to represent and coordinate a membership of over 100 national United Nations Associations and their thousands of members. It promotes the engagement of people who share a global mindset and support international cooperation – global citizens. The first MUN was organised by Harvard University in the year 1951 and since then there has been an exponential increase in the number of MUNs being organised in the world.

The popularity of Model UN continues to grow and more than 400,000 middle school, high school and college/university students worldwide participate every year. Many of today's leaders in law, government, business and the arts participated in Model UN during their academic careers.

### **What is a Model UN conference?**

Some Model UN exercises take place in the classroom and others are school-wide. Model UN events that are regional, national or international are called conferences. More than one million people have participated in Model UN conferences around the world since they became popular over 60 years ago. Today there are more than 400 conferences that take place in 52 countries. Conference can have as few as 30 students or as many as 4,000.

### **What types of topics are discussed in Model UN conferences?**

The agenda items discussed in committee vary at each conference. Most conferences tend to focus on current affairs issues that are being discussed in the United Nations. These issues can highlight political, financial and/or social concerns. However, the task of some committees might be to address hypothetical concerns or issues from the past or future. For example, many conferences have "crisis" committees, in which delegates must react to a hypothetical or actual crisis situation and 'think on their feet' to solve the crisis. Other conferences host historical or future Security Council simulations.

### **Who is a Model UN Delegate?**

A Model UN delegate is a student who assumes the role of an ambassador to the United Nations in a Model UN simulation. Prior to a conference or event, a Model UN delegate does not need extensive experience in international relations. Anyone can participate in Model UN, so long as they have the ambition to learn something new and to work with people to try and make a difference in the world. Model UN students tend to go on to become great leaders in politics, law, business, education and medicine. It will be relevant here to mention that H.E. Mr. Ban Ki Moon started his career as an MUN delegate.

### **Why should students participate in Model UN?**

The value of the Model UN experience for a student is based on what benefits a student can gain from participation. Many different kinds of talents that are important for personal development and future success can be developed by participation in Model UN conferences. It not only involves young people in the study and discussion of global issues, but also encourages the development of skills useful throughout their lives, such as teamwork, negotiation, research, teamwork, expository and

persuasive writing, public speaking, problem solving, consensus building, conflict resolution and compromise and cooperation.

### What are some of the educational benefits of Model UN?

- The Model UN environment, as a cooperative learning centre, is a valuable education technique, more effective than traditional individualistic techniques for high-level cognitive learning outcomes, such as identifying concepts, analysis of problems, judgment, and evaluation. *“Cooperative learning promotes higher achievement, greater motivation, more positive interpersonal relations among students, more positive attitudes toward the subject area and teacher, greater self esteem and psychological health, more accurate perspectives, and greater social skills”.*
- Participation in the Model U.N. teaches students that they are members of a global community. Through engaging activities that unite students around a common cause, the program is an excellent tool for meeting the objectives of multicultural education.
- Through the hands-on experiential learning approach, the students who participate in Model UN throughout each year gain a global perspective on world problems and develop many life skills that can be applied to their future lives.
- The nature of this active involvement in learning allows students to witness the consequences of their decisions and actions. Beyond the verbal and writing skills students gain, Model UN can contribute to the mental development of students as well. They can expand both cognitive ability and subject matter tolerance. In practical terms, participation in large group develops self-confidence of students.
- It is often assumed that the MUN is a simulation of a political institution, in reality, the increasing prominence of economic, trade, and environmental issues on the **United Nations'** agenda has turned MUN as an effective mechanism for providing Business / Commerce stream students with the international and multicultural experiences they need to function in a global business environment. MUN activities often include international business, international finance, international economics, international marketing, international accounting, international management, or business and government relations. Participation in MUN is therefore an effective way to develop knowledge and skills that are essential in the global business environment. Students participating in MUN simulations are more likely to develop global perspectives and to appreciate the dynamics of an interdependent world.

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