



ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2010
BERGEN COUNTY ACADEMIES

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PROGRAMME

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Hello Delegate,

My name is Cecilia An and I will be your co-chair for AMUN 2010 UNDP. I am currently a senior in the Academy for Business and Finance. Our committee will focus on sustainable development to improve living conditions and use aid and resources more effectively. We will be debating the topics of Universal Education, world hunger, and maternal health and focusing on delivering adequate resolutions in our committee. Just like some of you, my first experience in Model United Nations was in the Academy Model United Nations Conference my freshman year. Since then, model UN has always been a club I have stayed with because I appreciated the eye-opening experience it gave its participants about the rest of the world and I have gone on to participate in NAIMUN and WAMUNC. I met countless new friends at these conferences and learned so much about international issues.

My name is Sunjoo Paik and I will be your co-chair for AMUN 2010 UNDP. I am currently a senior in the Academy for Medical Science Technology. I first started Model UN as a freshman. Clueless to what MUN was, I attended my first conference in Washington, DC, NAIMUN, with almost no knowledge of how these debates worked. By the end of the conference, I was knowledgeable on parliamentary procedure, working papers, and resolutions. By the time WAMUNC came around, I was more prepared and was able to effectively debate and sponsor several resolutions. I went on to participate in AMUN 2008 and also staff for AMUN 2009. The main reason why I continued to participate in Model UN was the sense of accomplishment I felt passing a working paper into a resolution after hours of debating and compromising. Also, the skills I acquired from participating in the debates were crucial in other aspects of my academic career. I am excited to be a part of this committee and see the debate from the other side as a chair and hopefully pass some great resolutions as a committee. I hope that those participating in this committee will have a great experience and learn a lot about issues facing the United Nations today.

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at peian@bergen.org or sunpai@bergen.org

Sincerely,
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TOPIC 2: UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

General Background and History

The UN has gone through great means to achieve universal primary education and fulfill Target 2.A of the Millennium Development Goals to allow children to reach their full potential and achieve their basic human right to knowledge. The knowledge that needs to be implemented in schools of developing nations includes not only basic literacy and math skills, but also includes knowledge on how to protect themselves from diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. This may be the first time in history that the number of children out of primary school is below the 100 million mark. The net primary school enrollment ratio has peaked at 71 percent recently and in Southern Asia above 90 per cent. In Haiti, joint efforts between the government, NGOs, and UN agencies have aided 4,300 children of the country's poorest to attend school, funded by a \$70,000 donation from soccer stars Zidane and Ronaldo, both UN Goodwill Ambassadors. In this education program, the right to an education was promoted through the provision of 33 schools with educational supplies and materials, mostly to students in Cité Soleil who suffer from a lifestyle of insecurity and violence.

Current Conditions and Issues

However, the current prediction for the fulfillment of the UNDP Millennium Development Goals is looking grim – it is not likely that 58 out of the 86 countries that

have not yet reached universal primary education will by 2015. Some areas are better off than others – according to UNICEF “the countries in the Middle East/North Africa, East Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean regions appear to be on course for 2015”. Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) are also in the ballpark of the target, though the rate of increase needs to pick up. On the other hand, UNICEF’s statistical data predicts that the regions of the Middle East/North Africa, South Asia and West/Central Africa will not reach the gender parity goal of primary education by 2015, and will clearly have to achieve average annual rates of increase, AARIs, that are significantly higher than current ones to meet the Millennium Goal. Although the

number of children of primary school age who were out of school fell from 103 million in 1999 to 73 million in 2006, areas such as Southern Asia still have over 18 million children of primary school age not enrolled. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa still suffer from school fees that consume most of a family’s income. Countries such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda have done away with school fees, causing enrollment to soar. For example, Ghana experienced a change of student enrollment from 4.2 million to 5.4 million between 2004 and 2005.



Unfortunately, these increases have caused additional problems such as a lack of teachers and school buildings. Girls from poor households, especially those living in rural areas are the majority of drop outs. Many girls in these areas drop out of school to help with farming and other family duties. In Cambodia, there is a high correlation between low levels of education among females and sexual exploitation. “With an estimated 30 per cent of sex workers in Cambodia under 18 years of age, having less than three years of basic schooling and little or no vocational skills, the link between the lack of education and vulnerability is clear,” says Sok Kimsroeung, Program Manager for OPTIONS Program Prey Veng. OPTIONS is a UNICEF-run organization that provides scholarships for girls such as Seng Srey Mach, a fifteen year old girl in Prey Veng Province, Cambodia. Kimsroeung’s programme includes skills education, as well as education on trafficking and sexual exploitation. The Cambodian government is also committed to remedying the situation, and other organizations have been reaching out, providing scholarships so that if families are forced to migrate due to floods or other natural disasters, the girls are protected from being trafficked.

Gender-based inequalities are usually passed down through generations, and many are culturally based. Many times female dropouts blame marital status or pregnancy. Furthermore, governments must work with law enforcement agencies, health care providers and community leaders to protect girls against violence and sexual violence which cause them to be trafficked, exploited, and abducted by militant groups. Securing the rights of adolescent girls is essential to promoting universal education.

Despite the increase from \$1.6 to \$5 billion between 1999 and 2006, it is estimated that

\$11 billion in aid is required per year to reach the UN’s goal of universal primary education by 2015. Education at the secondary level is also a main concern because a large number of children at the appropriate age, nearly 45 per cent, do not attend secondary school. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only a quarter receive the privilege of receiving this higher education. This connection must be made to equip the “new generation” of developing countries with skills needed to break the cycle of poverty and create the foundation for sustainable development.

Common issues that developing nations encounter are the lack and difficulty retaining professional staff, difficulties raising domestic spending on education in national budgets where it has yet to become a priority, difficulties eliminating school fees and providing cash transfers to those families still forced to pay, a necessity in providing basic health services to promote cognitive development, a lack of training for teachers, and inadequate educational materials for all students. The shortage of teachers is a severe setback due to the fact that the success of education is highly due to the quality of instruction the students receive, and even if many new teachers were found and trained, they would still not be guaranteed to be good instructors. The quality of education is specific; it should be gender-sensitive and tailored to the needs of each age-group. Curriculums should be specific to children of a certain age. Furthermore, school fees could consume up to 25 per cent of a poor family’s total income in sub-Saharan Africa, keeping students out of classrooms. Tuition is not the only cost, but PTA and community contributions, textbook and educational material fees, mandatory uniforms and a variety of other costs. Innovative measures must be initiated to rid schools of these fees

that consume much of the money that provides a family with basic necessities.

To provide the necessary resources to run these schools, countries must be helped in policymaking and implementation. Stronger educational information and management systems must be built in countries for collecting and sharing data on children's educational status.

Beyond enrollment, it is quality education that is essential to developing nations, including basic literacy and numeracy skills. Also, their educations must be completed on time to limit consumption of resources. Additionally, without basic health services and certain free meals, it is difficult for students not to accumulate absences due to illness or suffer intellectually due to hunger. There is also discrimination in schools towards the mentally disabled and ethnic minorities.

Another issue that lacks attention is the necessity of motivating attendance among students of primary education. Since there are more than 960 million illiterate adults, two-thirds female, many parents have not received an education themselves and therefore encounter difficulties providing even basic living resources for their families. Many times this is due to civil unrest and humanitarian crises, and girls are usually the first to be pulled out of school. Also, education for children is hardly a priority in many households, and in certain cases it is merely too much for the parents to

arrange for discipline over their children's studies.

Alternatives

One proposed solution to the lack of resources was Kofi Annan-termed "webucation" because at the 1990 Jomtien Conference, delegates agreed that without significant changes in education it will be impossible to reach the 2015 goal of universal education. Unfortunately, webucation had several failures including a high dropout rate because the system lacked authority and found it boring without interaction with other students and teachers. Furthermore, since the increase in computers in American schools did not significantly change scores on the National Assessment of Education test between the years of 1994 and 1999, it is assumed that there will be similar results in other parts of the world.



Benefits of Education

Education has shown correlation with gender equality, the spread of disease, and many other aspects of developing nations. According to ActionAid, "Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing an education. Universal primary education would prevent 700,000 cases of HIV each year – about 30% all new infections in this age group." School attendance is necessary for spreading knowledge to eradicate poverty and hunger, prevent and combat disease, and ensure environmental sustainability, therefore

making the goal of universal primary education essential to maintaining a number of other Millennium Development Goals. Without it, other initiatives may crumble without a place to educate participants.

Furthermore, there has shown to be a correlation between education and maternal and child health, another two Millennium Development Goals. Educated girls have been shown to be comparatively more productive at home and paid better in the workplace, causing them to marry later and raise healthier, better-nourished children. The knowledge gained also allows them to participate in more social, political and economic decision-making situations. Likewise, uneducated children face a higher risk of being abused and exploited, the risk being higher for girls when they are not in school. School is a refuge for kids in many countries, providing adult supervision, possibly clean water and meals, and even health care.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some policies that local and federal governments should implement to make universal education a priority?
2. What policies should be implemented to protect the rights of girls to universal education?
3. What ways can families be motivated to discipline children over schoolwork?
4. How can we ensure quality education for children?

Sources

- ♦ <http://www.unicef.org/mdg/education.html>
- ♦ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>
- ♦ <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/goals/universal-education>
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