



**Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN 2010)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization
(UNESCO)
Background Guide**

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2010 Montessori Model UN and especially to UNESCO.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that we will be debating at MMUN 2010. Please note that this guide will only provide the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information that you can on the topic and how it relates to the country that you represent. The more information that you have and learn about, the more you will take from debate and the whole MMUN experience.

I encourage you to learn all that you can about what your country is doing in regard to the selected topics.

Enjoy and see you in New York!

Montessori Model United Nations 2010 Secretariat

The Birth of the United Nations

The first half of the 20th century is remembered as a period of change and turmoil. After the First World War many people believed that it was necessary to create a world organization capable of keeping peace and preventing the horrors of war. The League of Nations was founded immediately, consisting of 42 countries, 58 at its largest point. Its goal was to preserve peace by solving international conflicts peacefully and promoting cooperation between nations in economic and international affairs. However, the Second World War unfolded and proved that the League had not accomplished its goal.

In 1944 representatives of China, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Russian Federation (In that moment USSR) meeting at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, prepared a blueprint for a new and stronger international organization. Towards the end of the war, representatives of 51 countries gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to prepare the final text that would lay the foundations of international cooperation. Most of the ideals and structure of this new organization were the same as the League's. The difference was that now, the organization had the support of the most powerful countries of the world. The UN came to exist officially when the Charter of the United Nations was supported by the five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, and France) and a majority of all other signatories on October 24, 1945.



The purpose of the United Nations is to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well being of all people. It affords the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests while addressing international problems. Currently, 192 countries are United Nations Member States. Representatives from these nations meet in the General Assembly, which is the closest event to a world parliament. Each country, large or small, rich or poor, has a single vote.

The United Nations Today

The United Nations is an international organization committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards, and human rights. Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 192 Member States to express their views, through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees.

The work of the United Nations reaches every corner of the globe. Although best known for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, there are many other ways the United Nations and its System affect our lives and make the world a better place. The Organization also works on: sustainable development, environment and refugees protection, disaster relief, counter terrorism, disarmament and non-



proliferation, promoting democracy, human rights, governance, economic and social development and international health, clearing landmines, expanding food production, and more, in order to achieve its goals and coordinate efforts for a safer world for this and future generations.

About the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November 1945.

UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on education and ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. In short, UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its Member States and six Associate Members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

Much of the work of UNESCO is centered on the promotion of education for peace, human rights, and democracy. The notion of a "culture of peace" was first elaborated for UNESCO at the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, held at Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, in 1989. The Yamoussoukro Declaration called on UNESCO to 'construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men' and to promote education and research for a this vision.¹

Through its strategies and activities, UNESCO is actively pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, especially those aiming to:

- Halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries by 2015
- Achieve universal primary education in all countries by 2015
- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005
- Help countries implement a national strategy for sustainable development by 2005 to reverse current trends in the loss of environmental resources by 2015.
- UNESCO and the United Nations Millennium Goals

Topics at MMUN 2010

As you know, the UNESCO will be discussing two very important topics during the conference:

1. United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all, especially women and girls.
2. Achieving universal access to information and knowledge, especially in rural areas

Topic 1 – United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all, especially women and girls.

About United Nations Literacy Decade.

Education is the basic human right of every man, woman and child. Access to training and information is critical for the realization of this fundamental right. But there are over 860 million adults worldwide who cannot read or write (one in five adults) and more than 113 million children out of school. In an effort to counter this problem, UNESCO launched the Literacy Decade (2003-2012) on 13 February 2003, under the theme, "Literacy as Freedom".

According to the UNESCO statistics, two thirds of the 860 million illiterate adults were women hence the most disadvantaged groups, especially women and girls were prioritized as a target to increase the efficiency and reach of the program. Educated woman can be the most effective tool in creating a healthy and prosperous world.

During the literacy decade, the first two years will focus on "Literacy and gender". "When women are educated and empowered, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings and reinvestment go up", says Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette". And what is true of families is true of communities—ultimately, indeed, of whole countries." There was no time to lose if the world was to meet the Millennium Development Goal of increasing literacy rates by one half by 2015, she said.



Education is crucial for enabling women and girls to participate and offer valuable contributions to their societies. Education unlocks a woman's potential, and leads to improvements in health, nutrition, and well-being of women and their families. Despite the general agreement on the above statement, women and girls continue to face discrimination at all levels of education, a fact which poses tremendous obstacles to their advancement.



By improving educational opportunities for girls and women, organizations like World Education help women develop skills that allow them to make decisions and influence community change in key areas. In turn, these programs have a positive impact on some of the most profound issues of our time: population growth, HIV and AIDS, peace and security, and the widening gap between the rich and poor.²

The obstacles for women's access to education are more pronounced in developing countries where women are burdened with tremendous social and economic responsibilities in the early age. Boys are often preferred over girls for education due to social and economic limitations. In developed countries, despite equality in access to education, gender discrimination is still an issue when it comes to income equality.

Discussion questions

Please answer the following questions about the topics we will discuss. Use all the investigation tools and links available:

1. Is your country a "developed" or a "developing" country?
2. How do education equality issues manifest themselves in your country?
3. Has the education system changed to promote women education in your country in the past

decade?

4. What are the main programs directed to women education and equality in your country?
5. What is the difference in literacy rates for men and women in your country?
6. Has the literacy rate difference increased or decreased during the last decade?
7. What suggestions can you give governments for improving the condition of women education in your country?
8. Compare your country to its neighbors: How many women leaders are there in your country's congress or parliament?
9. What is the general income difference per men and women in your country?

Topic 2 – Achieving universal access to information and knowledge, especially in rural areas.

Despite of rapid urbanization, there is a huge gap in the information access levels between urban and rural population of the world, with rural areas struggling with the limited access to the new technologies. With three billion people or 60 percent of the population in developing countries, and half of the world population, still live in rural areas, this gap can manifest itself as a gap in the awareness, education as well as the economic stability of these two groups. Education and training are essential in addressing rural poverty and ensuring sustainable development in these parts of the world.

Most people in developing countries still live in rural areas that are isolated and lack access to basic resources and opportunities that are necessary for development. In Asia, it is estimated that 75% of its population lives in rural areas. Rural dwellers are generally poor primarily because they are far from the metropolis where their markets are located. This creates a vicious cycle. Few potential customers mean high price, which further reduces the number of providers, and so on. These remote areas, according to the United Nations, also suffer from “information poverty” or the lack of access to basic information on health, education, and employment that will help better the lives of the people.

During the Johannesburg Summit, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and UNESCO jointly launched a new partnership initiative on Education for Rural People (ERP) to respond to this growing concern. Through advocacy at international level and technical support to countries, the initiative aims at:

- Increasing access to basic education for rural people.
- Improving the quality of basic education in rural areas.
- Fostering the national capacity to plan and implement basic education in a way that addresses the learning needs of rural people.



Access to information through telecommunication services is crucial for the development of rural areas. In developed countries, access to information through the internet is improving their economies and enhancing people's welfare. The improvement in communication technologies will play a crucial in addressing universal access and reducing the gap in the information access between rural and urban areas.

Discussion questions

Please answer the following questions about the topics we will discuss. Use all the investigation tools and links available:

1. What percentage of your country's population is living in rural areas?
2. What steps have your country's administration taken to improve access to information and knowledge in the rural areas?
3. What suggestions/ solutions would you provide for your country's government to address this issue?
4. What can your country suggest to other countries that have this problem?
5. What programs have been most successful in providing information access to the rural population in your country?

Recommended links

Information about the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/index.shtml>

UNESCO

[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3328&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

[URL_ID=3328&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3328&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

"Literacy as Freedom" — United Nations Launches Literacy Decade (2003-2012)

http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/webArticles/022103_literacy.html

Women, Human Rights & Education

The People's Movement for Human Rights Education

http://www.pdhre.org/rights/women_and_education.html

World Education

<http://www.worlded.org/WEInternet/projects/ListProjects.cfm?Select=Topic&ID=16&ShowProjects=No&qclid=C134wqHUqZ0CFc5L5OodSHrlig>

Rural Development

<http://cms01.unesco.org/en/esd/themes/rural-development/>

Achieving Universal Access: Developing a Philippine Business Model and Government Interventions Strategies for Viable Community Telecenters in Rural Areas - Project Proposal

http://www.ask.com/bar?q=universal+access+to+informaion+in+rural+areas+united+nations&page=1&qsrc=0&ab=6&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.idrc.ca%2Ffr%2Fev-68225-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) WFUNA TASK

http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc3/c/S03-WSISPC3-C-0088!!PDF-E.pdf

Global Trends that will Impact Universal Access to Information Resources

<http://www.isoc.org/isoc/unesco-paper.shtml>

United Nations/ACC Statement on Universal Access to Basic Communication and Information Services.

http://www.ask.com/bar?q=universal+access+to+informaion+in+rural+areas+united+nations&page=1&qsrc=0&ab=2&u=http%3A%2F%2Fconsiderthefuture.com%2FComputing%2FCompArticles%2Fcomp2_undivide.html

References:

¹ <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/frame2.htm>

² <http://www.worlded.org/WEInternet/projects/ListProjects.cfm?Select=Topic&ID=16&ShowProjects=No&qclid=CI34wqHUqZ0CFc5L5QodSHrlig>