

The Montessori Model at the United Nations in many ways is structured to meet the following adolescent needs.

**1. Adolescents need to reinvent their own society as a fundamental need.**

In middle school the students form their own society. They create a micro-economy based on interest and a civil code of behavior for how their members should conduct themselves. The MMUN project gives them the opportunity to study how another country or cultures within that country have developed their economies and their laws.

**2. Adolescents need real-life experiences.**

Although the main component of the MMUN experience involves role-playing, the experience involved in finding the means and funds to travel to and navigate New York City is very real. Students become more aware of the economics involved in living and traveling to large metropolitan areas and what is necessary to survive or prosper in different components of their own culture.

**3. The adolescent curriculum is the medium used for social understanding.**

One of the main components of the adolescent curriculum in humanities is the essence of role-playing, and the part of the dramatis persona fills this so well. For the MMUN the students also role-play. They assume the role of an ambassador from another country, and in simulations at their schools and when they arrive at the United Nations, they portray those ambassadors to protect the interests of another country. This allows them the opportunity for understanding and tolerance on an international basis.

**4. The adolescent learns about civilization through its origin in agriculture.**

Again, since many developing countries are still encountering the problems of agriculture, the study of these societies further solidifies the students' understanding of how societies begin, struggle, flourish, flounder, succeed, or fail.

**5. Adolescents need to understand that when people settled on land, production and exchange began and continue today.**

For the MMUN project students study the economies of other cultures. Since they have already studied how economies began in ancient civilizations, this study of other cultures helps them better understand how their own micro-economy functions and possibly make improvements to their own systems.

**6. The aggregate of human society is based on the division of labor, which the adolescent comes to understand through various business ventures.**

Adolescents study the development of the division of labor in humanities classes, and they experience it through their micro-economy. The study of other countries through the MMUN project allows them to study the development of other countries through the division of labor. When they study developing countries, their understanding is greater when they see that development still in process. When they study developed countries, they again see how far the division of labor has taken human societies in other social settings.

Although upper-elementary students conduct the MMUN project in much the same way as the middle-school student, the experience is different because of their plane of development and how they approach the work. The adolescent is in the “social embryo” stage, meaning he is much more attuned to the problems of society. He has been studying society not so much as to the “what” as to the “why” and the “how.” He no longer gathers facts for information and intellectual knowledge as much as social understanding. On the verge of entering adulthood, the adolescent is much more aware than the elementary student in terms of social justice. The elementary student is aware of fairness from a personal perspective. The adolescent is becoming aware of fairness from a social perspective, and the MMUN project allows him to research, study, interpret, and eventually role-play that social perspective from the viewpoints of other world citizens into a better understanding of human society.