UNICEF: Adapting Technology to Global Education

JACKRABBITMUN III

L.B. POLY – MAY 22nd

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HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

My name is Justin Lim and I am excited to be the chair for JackrabbitMUN III's UNICEF Committee. This is my fourth year in Poly's program and I can easily say that Model UN has been one of the most influential parts of my high school experience. I have grown so much through MUN both as a confident debater and eloquent communicator, and I am privileged to be a part of your journey and see you guys grow through this program as well.

Outside of Model UN, I am a co-president for our math team as well as a director for our PACE Mentorship Program. I'm also the president for Poly's UNICEF club and I am heavily involved with the UNICEF Clubs program as a National Council member so understandably, I chose to be the chair for the UNICEF Committee.

I am an avid listener of Korean and Indie Pop with some of my favorite artists being LOONA, GOT7, Rina Sawayama, and No Vacation. Parks and Recreation, Brooklyn 99, and New Girl are also some of my favorite shows. I also love learning languages (English fluent, Chinese and Khmer intermediate, learning Japanese and Korean) and recently took up knitting, so that's how I've been spending my time in quarantine.

I truly can't wait to see you delegates debate the topic as I definitely find it quite pertinent to create these understandings and regulations of the technology we use so often before we apply it all around the world.

Sincerely,

Justin Lim

justinlim0223@gmail.com

unicef.jackrabbit@gmail.com

VICE CHAIR LETTER

Greetings Delegates!

My name is Angelica Gonzalez, and I have the lovely honor of being your committee's Vice-Chair. I am currently a Senior at Long Beach Polytechnic Highschool and for the past two years I have been a part of the Model UN Class where I have attended multiple conferences as a delegate. This year I am part of the Model UN class leadership as a returning member to the class.

Other than Model UN, throughout my high school career I have been part of school organizations such as the Female Leadership Academy (FLA), Red Cross, Hearts for Hearts, JROTC, and the Poly Chamber Orchestra. Additionally, my activities extend to outside extracurriculars where I have volunteered for over four years at the Long Beach Mark Twain Library and the Long Beach Symphony. I am also a part of multiple college-bound programs such as the UCLA Riordan Scholars, the Better Angels organization, and the Quarter Zero Entrepreneurship Alumni Association.

Through these clubs, organizations, and extracurriculars I have built strong leadership and speaking skills. It is therefore my privilege to get to hear your voices as you either endeavor to build your speaking skills or showcase them. Nevertheless, I can't wait to witness your potential as a delegate of the UNICEF committee.

Sincerely,

Angelica Gonzalez

angelica.g.04287@gmail.com

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

JACKRABBITMUN POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Sunday, May 16th, 2021** in order to be eligible for **research AND committee awards**.
- Position Papers are due at 11:59 PM on **Friday, May 21st, 2021** in order to be eligible for **committee awards ONLY**.
- Position Papers can be submitted through the committee email:
  - Email to: unicef.jackrabbit@gmail.com

- At the top of each paper, include your country, first and last name, and committee.

      Argentine Republic
      First Last
      UNICEF

- Papers should be emailed as a PDF file.
  - Paper content should also be copied and pasted into the body of the email so it can still be graded in the event of any technical difficulties
  - Please name file and subject line of email [Committee_Country]
    - Ex. UNICEF_ Argentine Republic

- Papers should be 1-2 pages in length with any additional pages for citations.

- Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures or graphics.
- Please include the following sections for each committee topic:
  - Background
  - UN Involvement
  - Country Policy
  - Possible Solutions

If you have any questions or concerns, please email your chair (justinlim0223@gmail.com)

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

Created following World War II, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created as an agency that offered to provide humanitarian relief to individuals worldwide. Throughout its seventy years of relief projects and aid programs, UNICEF's mission has slowly shifted from providing reliable sources for food, water, and medicine, and towards global development via education and job training institutions. This has been done in tandem with political advocacy and civic engagement campaigns that ensure that the rights of children are on the agenda in every country. UNICEF's incredible work that has impacted billions across the world has put this organization at the forefront of global development and a leading advocate in the fight for children's rights.

TOPIC SYNOPSIS

Technological advances over the past few decades have allowed for enormous progress within many fields such as business, medicine, and most importantly, education. Especially with the recent COVID-19 crisis, the world has learned how vital technology will be in transforming how schooling will function in the future. However, this standard isn't set worldwide as many countries are still behind in terms of implementing technology, and on top of that, the pandemic has halted education for many of those in developing countries. In light of these issues, it's our highest priority, not only to make education more technologically accessible but more broadly, make the transition to implement technology all around the world.

BACKGROUND

Technology Access

With many seeing the value that technology has in shaping education, this isn't the first time global technological implementation has been tried. International Programs such as One Laptop Per Child(OLPC) have been prime examples of movements that were created to offer technological resources on a global scale. However, within these institutions, there has been a lackluster effort overall to construct a stable foundation that sustains these systems for the long term. In fact, with OLPC specifically, the laptops, although sturdy, were overall unusable in the long run due to its heavy electrical dependency as well as its little device storage. The laptops themselves were also advertised at $100 per laptop but costs increased over time to $180, with many issues in the parts used in the devices alongside it. Therefore, when looking at solutions, a framework should be prioritized to provide these communities with stable and accessible technology to learn effectively.

Not only is the aforementioned requirement for robust technology imperative, but it is also notable to take into account both access to Wi-Fi and electricity. Broadband may be available to over 80% of individuals in more global economies, however in more developing countries, this privilege is only available to about 10% of those that make it up. On top of that global access to electricity meets similar proportions with many areas in Central Africa having little to none electricity available to them. Thus, not only are the devices important to take note of, but also the particular resources that are required to make them work need to be figured out. Some alternative solutions have been to adapt abandoned vehicles into solar powered facilities for students to use, bringing these facilities even to the most isolated communities. While these solutions may bring hope, subsidiary issues that also need to be addressed such as construction and maintenance to make these facilities widespread are some of the obstacles that stand in the way.

Education

In regards to the more educational aspect of this issue specifically, the establishment of an effective curriculum is imperative. While traditional schooling is heavily dependent on a professional being readily available, more isolated communities may have a difficult time with that privilege. Contrarily, more compact communities such as those in Southeast Asia have kids of varying age levels placed into compact classrooms, making it difficult to have a tailored education to each student's level. This makes adapting technology optimal when looking at schooling on a much more global basis, as it gives access to a teacher and with a classroom more suited to their understanding. On top of the existing difficult access to some resources needed for virtual learning though, ensuring that well-trained professionals with a stable curriculum set for what students need to learn will be necessary. Not only will this require the basic foundational subjects in curriculum that currently exists, but it is also important to establish a more global sense of awareness with the incorporation of studies focused on ongoing world issues as we begin to take on issues on an internationally united front.

Covid - 19

Covid-19 served as a wake-up call to the world of education. With school closures occurring across a spectrum of 188 countries, education systems were left grappling to find solutions to provide continuous education for students. Over 90% of countries switched their in-person instruction to online curriculums. However, 31% or approximately 463 million students globally do not have the ability or resources needed to access online-based remote learning. In addition, 3 out of 4 students globally are unable to adopt remote learning and come from rural areas and/or poor households. The technology needed such as internet access, personal computers, tablets, TV's, or even radios are largely unavailable for many families who do not have the funds or resources to accommodate the new learning environment. This has unfortunately had the effect of inflating already existing learning inequalities. More than one billion students globally are now at risk of falling behind in their study as families are being faced with limited means to continue their children's education.

Moreover, in the face of COVID-19, many families have lost their jobs. To combat this issue many families have been forced to take their children out of school altogether and place them in the workforce prematurely, prioritizing the economic well being of their families instead of their education. Children are being depended on to provide for their families and with their introduction into the workforce the likelihood that these children will return to their education once the pandemic is over is close to none. Now, children who had promising futures in education will in all likelihood never return to their studies after leaving them.The progress made by educational facilities, NGO's, and local governments globally in the span of many years is now being undone in the course of a little over a year. In conclusion, the damage to education around the world will likely be permanent.

Moreover, Educational facilities in the face of Covid-19 have revealed the large disparity between countries who have integrated technology within their educational systems and those that have not, mainly developing countries. With the continuous advancement of technology and its integration within the daily lives of people around the world, educational systems around the world are being left behind.

Poverty

Ensuring programs that offer basic resources to live is the first step to secure education for everyone around the world. By ensuring funding is secured for these programs, we can help support families around the world so their children are guaranteed an education and a future.

What these types of programs need to focus on should not only be food and water access though, but also medical access, sanitation facilities, and reliable infrastructure. Although aid is much appreciated on the journey to global development, sustainability should be the core objective. That means providing programs that reinforce systems within these communities that guarantee a sustainable future. Whether that be providing upgraded living areas that will not collapse to changes in the weather or agricultural programs that ensure a stable source of food, hopefully these can be kept in mind towards the future of incorporating technology globally.

While this may not be the core topic of discussion for this committee, poverty still takes precedent as an issue as schooling is only accessible to these individuals if basic resources are available. A hindering factor of going to school for many of these families is ensuring that their families are provided for, so a plan made to have stable, livable infrastructure with basic resources should be taken into consideration.

UN INVOLVEMENT

Since 2017, the UN has deemed education as the key to achieving all 17 Goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the multitudes of increasing support to expand access to education for children around the world, many UN agencies are working together towards this united objective. UNESCO believes that quality education is a basic human right that everyone is entitled to, with the organization being the only UN agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education through the implementation of the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA). Similarly, UNICEF works in more than 144 countries around the world to provide learning opportunities that help equip children and adolescents with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.

In addition, the UN passed various resolutions, policies, and initiatives to ensure better access to education. In 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution "Education for Democracy," which encourages authorities in each state to integrate several education models into their education standards in order to facilitate citizen empowerment and increased participation in policy-making decisions. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a new Resolution in 2017 that calls for states to give full effect to the right to education, notably by "putting in place a regulatory framework for education providers guided by international human rights obligations".

Back in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of Child explicitly outline State's obligation to provide free compulsory primary education and prohibits discrimination in school. Later, a further step was then taken and the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference, making it the first legally binding UN treaty on higher education. The Global Convention will create a framework for transparent, fair, and non-discriminatory recognition of higher education qualifications.

Prompted by the UN's actions towards education, many NGOs around the world are working in various areas to expand access to education (CE International), protect children's

rights (Plan International, Save the Children), decrease the education gap (The Education Trust), and make technological education accessible to marginalized communities (Center for Digital Inclusion).

At the peak of the global lockdowns imposed to counter the spread of COVID-19, 1.6 billion children were out of school. A UN "Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond" encourages countries to suppress transmission of the virus and prepare for reopenings, protect education funding, build resilient education for equitable developments, and reimagine education and accelerate change in teaching and learning methods.

In all, the UN recognizes not only the human basic right to education, but also the time, resources, and commitment needed to solve the issues that are hindering children from gaining access to education. The UN will have to adopt further policies and strategies to encourage countries around the world to cooperate with one another to come up with solutions in order to solve the ongoing crisis of education and technology inadequacy.

BLOC POSITIONS

African Bloc

The African bloc is often characterized as a "learning crisis". It's educational facilities have been rated as the lowest of all other regions for several decades. Countries within the African bloc have the highest rates of education exclusion. Its educational systems suffer from gender and economic inequality. Where education is favored towards male's and often restricted for females and due to the immense levels of poverty plaguing African countires only the small percentage of well-to-do families can afford to have their children receive an education. Moreover, the African bloc also has the biggest gap between schools with access to technology, such as computers and the internet, and those without. This divide has widened ever since the Covid-19 pandemic took hold of the global community. Over the last decade, efforts have been made by foreign NGOs and local governments to address the growing divide. For example, the government of South Africa has made some advances in getting children online, but only 10% of south Africa's children have access to the internet and just 20% have a computer at home.

Asia Pacific Bloc

The Asian pacific bloc hosts some of the most advanced countries in integrating technology within their educational systems. But with that, they do have some poorly underdeveloped countries who struggle with their education and technology currently. Places like China have a very rigorous curriculum and high quality education. For example, the -Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) currently have around 8 million graduates annually, more graduates than the U.S. and India produce combined. Although countries like China, Singapore, and Japan are more ahead in technology with education, there are countries like Cambodia in the asian pacific bloc who are far behind in their education let alone technology. When Covid hit in March 2020, the government of Cambodia made the difficult decision to close schools and with this,most families don't own computers, and many

parents are limited in their technological skills. With the pandemic, many higher education institutions in East Asia have transitioned to online learning. However, it has been difficult for students without access to the internet and these digital inequalities are all across countries. Only Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia have over 80% internet penetration. In Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia, less than 60% of the population has access to the internet.

Eastern European Bloc

After the 1990s, post-Soviet countries sought to initiate major institution reform, in particular, to their governmental and educational sectors. These countries reformed education to the opposite of previous USSR standards; for example, many of these member states' education systems align with the Western format of a three-tiered schooling program as exists in Western Europe, North America, and Australia. Along with this program, the Eastern European bloc has implemented a strict separation of church and state in its education system, directly opposing former tenets of the USSR. Although major progress has been made, an important challenge for these countries is to build curricula on the harmful histories of their pasts while moving toward a brighter future and developing a humanist perspective within students. Devising an efficient education system is not the only challenge this bloc faces; the limitations of state-subsidized educational resources are preventing teachers from effectively doing their jobs. While it will take some time to remove the Soviet influences that are still prevalent, there has been progress on the technological front, with many Eastern European schools incorporating the daily use of computers into their education systems. The overall main issue for this bloc is appropriate funding; financial problems have led to limited access to information and technology on teachers' end, which translates into weak communication between teachers and students.

Western Bloc

The Western Bloc values the importance of education and are actively seeking to expand access to education for children. By making sure that students below the age of 16 or 18

receive compulsory education and contributing funds to operate public schools, the governments in the Western Bloc are undertaking measures to widen children's access to education. However, despite having the short-term solution of providing students with devices to allow them to continue learning online, the education systems in the Western Bloc were not built to deal with extended shutdowns like those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A great percentage of households do not have access to the internet, prompting the governments to accommodate these drastic changes from in-person learning to virtual through measures such as distributing laptops and free internet hotspot to students, as well as using radio and television programs to reach students with no internet access.

Latin American and Carribean Bloc

Although there is still a lot of progress to be made Latin America's access to education has grown dramatically over the past 30 years. Almost all of Latin America's children attend primary school and even have access to a secondary education. Because of academic reputation and affordability more and more kids have been enrolling in school. Latin America is now the fourth largest tech market in the world thanks to various technology companies that are contributing to these underdeveloped countries. Many of the countries in this bloc are in favor of technological usage as they have undertaken programs that have enhanced education to a valuable degree. Argentina and El Salvador have had technology interwoven into their education systems and Colombia aids in covering tuition for students focused on technology courses. Thus, with the effective methods it has used to incorporate technology, this bloc should seek how to apply what they've been able to do on a more global basis.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How will your country make sure education is equitable?
2. How will your country fund educational programs? Government, NGOs, etc.
3. For developed countries: What made internet and technology access widespread (private companies, public funding, etc.)?
4. What might your country need from the UN/other countries in order to make technology more readily available to their population?
5. What programs are already in place in your country to support distance learning?
6. What NGOs that work to better education could your country possibly partner with?
7. How will prejudices (Or lack thereof) in your country's culture and governing bodies affect the progression of education?

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