United We Stand

General Assembly

World Summit for Children (Novice)

Akshaya Ramasamy and Ritvika Palani
Co-Chairs

World Summit for Children

Letter from the Chairs

GSMUN XXVI
United We Stand

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Dear Delegates and Sponsors,

Welcome to GSMUN XXVI's World Summit for Children Committee! Your chairs, Ritvika Palani and Akshaya Ramasamy, are thrilled to meet all of you. As delegates in the World Summit for Children Committee, you will all meet to alleviate the education crisis during the 90s and effects of the Rwandan Genocide on African children. The committee focuses on not only the children of America and Africa but also the prosperity of the youth in other foreign nations. It's the duty of the delegates in this committee to think creatively and come up with solutions to help restore the wellbeing of children around the world.

Ritvika Palani is a junior at Maggie Walker. This is her second year participating in GSMUN, previously acting as a vice chair for UNEP. Besides Model UN, Ritvika is active in the Forensics Club, where she is part of the leadership, and in Bhangra and Jabberwock Clubs. Outside of school, she enjoys playing tennis. Ritvika is looking forward to meeting all the delegates and is really excited for GSMUN XXVI!

Akshaya Ramasamy, a junior at Maggie Walker, is very excited to be a co-chair for the World Summit for Children! This is her fourth year doing Model UN. Outside of Model UN, Akshaya enjoys participating in Jabberwock and Fringe, as part of the executive team. She loves to travel, dance, and hang out with friends and family. She is looking forward to a fantastic committee and is very excited about GSMUN XXVI!

As delegates of this committee, you are expected to come prepared to debate the possible solutions to issues faced by children during the 1990s as well as possible solutions to alleviate the danger and burdens on these children. You should know the causes of these crises as well as the background details of the several events mentioned in your background guide. The background guide is simply a guide to start your research, and delegates will be expected to complete a position paper, formatted in Chicago Manual Style (CMS) and pertaining to your position on the committee. At GSMUN, all position papers are expected to follow the Maggie Walker honor code; any and all plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Finally, a large part of GSMUN is our commitment to making a difference through charity. There will be merchandise, baked goods, and many other things on sale during the conference, with all of the proceeds going to charity - so don't forget to bring money! If you have any questions or concerns, or would like feedback on your position papers, feel free to contact your chairs at gsmunxxvi.children@gmail.com. We are looking forward to meeting everyone in committee! See you at GSMUN XXVI and good luck!

Your Chairs,

Ritvika Palani
gsmunxxvi.children@gmail.com

Akshaya Ramasamy

World Summit for Children
Committee Overview

<u>**Background**</u>

The World Summit for Children was created in 1990 to safeguard the children of the world and aid them whenever possible. At these meetings, suggestions for children's well-being, protection, and development regarding nutrition, education, children deficiencies, and financial well-being are made. For example, some goals included protection of people from genocide, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing. Years later, following this meeting, it was deemed that substantial progress had been made regarding these goals and to help protect children. Their main priority was to improve the children's environment in which they developed to help provide all necessities and further aid to help improve their quality of life in all aspects.[1]

The main focus of the summit was to improve children's well-being, in an age where international and foreign politics such as wars and genocide were considerably changing the environment for children. Additionally, another crucial goal was to reduce mortality rates and improve children's immunity to diseases. The summit focused on ensuring that children have a safe and productive education, well balanced nutrition, adequate water, and most importantly safety. They also focused on the alleviation of poverty and restimulating the economy in hopes to provide children with the best environment possible. There was a following iteration for this summit in 2002 where they continued to work on issues including child poverty, access to education, and access to healthcare.[2]

<u>**Topic I: Poverty and War in Africa**</u>
History of the Issue

In the 1990s, Africa was quite divided by numerous wars and genocide including the Mozamican Civil War, the Rwandan genocide, and the Congo Wars. During this time period, children were often the targets of violence from both wars and genocide and this made this time in certain African countries difficult. These countries include Rwanda, Mozambique, Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and more.[3]

The Rwandan genocide was a 100 day genocide involving two ethnic groups, the Hutus and the Tutsis. The ethnic group conflict led to deaths of many and many significant impacts to children in Rwanda including child soldier deaths, poverty, malnourishment, and a poor quality of life. The Congo Wars were as a result of the Rwandan genocide, and caused significant steps back for children including the spread of diseases and inability to combat these diseases.[4] The Mozambican Civil War was between the United States and Mozambique who were being backed up by the Soviet Union. The Mozambique war really highlighted the atrocities being committed by the introduction of many child soldiers into war.[5]

In the 1990s, seventy million Africans were poor. As a result, many children whose families had less financial capabilities also had very low mortality rates, due to a lack of ability to purchase basic necessities.[6] One hardship included less access to healthcare, which is even more detrimental when they are faced with diseases, as they were unable to combat the diseases.

Current Status of the Issue

The Rwandan genocide, in specific, had thirty percent of their children as victims in Western Rwanda. Many minors in Africa were arrested for crimes without a fair trial following the genocide. The estimated number of children detained without a fair trial is 5,000 children, making their ability to have a good future extremely difficult.[7]

The Rwandan genocide caused poverty in Rwanda. Poverty has worsened the lives of many children as it reduces their access to many necessities and facilities. It also can be very traumatic, specifically for children who have watched a relative die from genocide.[8]

War and genocide increased the spread of many diseases to Rwandan children including AIDS and HIV. Additionally, healthcare systems in Rwanda were weak and were unable to combat the huge spread of diseases.[9] The mortality rate was increased as a result due to the increased spread of diseases in addition to the increased number of child soldiers. Another consequence of wars was the spread of famine and malnourishment among African children, specifically in Mozambique, Congo, and Rwanda. This was also due to the large amount of poverty present in Rwanda and other African countries during the 1990s.[10] Many Rwandan children were often deprived of an adequate food supply which significantly affected and deteriorated their health and well-being, which also increased the mortality rate.[11]

Two out of three children in Southern Africa were deprived of at least one of the following: health, protection from HIV and AIDS, nutrition, education, hygiene, and water due to lack of access and poverty.[12] Poverty extends from a lack of money to causing deprivations of many basic needs for children. As a result, this tends to play a huge role in the child's upbringing, overall wellness, and ability to succeed. A solution to this is needed urgently and needs to encompass all aspects of poverty and its effect on children and their overall well-being.[13]

Similar to Rwanda, child soldiers were also common in Mozambique and resulted in the loss of many minors' lives during combat. These children were coerced into becoming soldiers and many of them did not survive the wars.[14]

There has been a spread of deliberate warfare and acts of violence, that tend to be brought upon the children. Additionally, estimates are made that the majority of deaths from wars are between two groups: women and children. Not only were these children victims of violence but in some cases were forced into committing acts of violence against others in war. Additionally, many women and children were left susceptible to sexual assault, exploitation, hunger, and disease.[15] Countries who experienced loss in a war were also left in huge amounts of debts as a result of war which caused its people to also be left with economic issues and struggles as the country attempted to fix their financial situation.

As a result of war, many diseases spreaded fast among children and a lack of access to healthcare furthered their struggles causing a higher number of children to die. Measles was another very common disease among children which took the lives of many African children as they didn't take vaccines, due to their lack of access and financial abilities.[16]

Analysis and Solutions

These issues are spread greatly on a spectrum ranging from poverty to child soldiers. As a result, plausible solutions need to encompass multiple aspects of these issues and take into consideration funding, enforcement, and implications. A United Nations package to provide more funding for research for vaccines specifically for children to help immunize them from specific diseases would be beneficial. Money would be beneficial as this can help with the development of more effective vaccines and provide more free vaccines for those unable to afford them.

Additionally, employing powerful troops from nations with the resources would be crucial to ensure the safety of children during times of civil unrest. The addition of troops would help push for peace within a state that is under immense amounts of violence. Furthermore, a recommendation to create a binding enforcement in countries experiencing unrest to prevent minors from

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being allowed to be in the military. Moreover, the enforcement of this is crucial and solutions should be created to bind this enforcement and ensure that it is followed through with.

Either funding or packaged by the United Nations aimed to help provide food, water, and other basic necessities to impoverished children in Africa. There should also be more funding by other nations to help increase the access of healthcare for all people who are in need of it.

Questions to Consider
1. How should the UN aim to limit child soldiers in wars to help decrease the number of child deaths? How should the UN aim to decrease the number of child victims in war?
2. Is there a solution to help decrease poverty and its associated deprivations for children? How would it be implemented?
3. How would healthcare be more accessible to children? Specifically, children in low-income households who are more likely to catch diseases?
4. Should more vaccines be available in Africa at lower prices or for free so that they are more accessible to everyone? How would that be ensured?
5. What are the possible pros and cons to make healthcare more accessible and cheaper? Would it be beneficial to everyone or not? Why?
6. Would it be possible to provide more food, water, and basic necessities to all children, specifically those in lower income countries? Would this be a positive for all of Africa or not? And, where would the funding come from?

Further Research
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%20very%20margin%20of%20survival: This source gives more information on war impacts on African children, the spread of diseases, and the casualties of child soldiers.
2. https://www.hrw.org/report/2003/04/03/lasting-wounds/consequences-genocide-and-war-rwandas-children: This provides more information on child causalities on war and how they were used as tools in wars.
3. https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/30/3/447/736903: This provides further information on war, malnourishment, and child mortality in Africa specifically in times of poverty and war.
4. https://www.worldvision.org.uk/about/blogs/child-poverty-africa/: This talks about the downside effects of poverty in Africa and the negative effects it has on African children and their development.
5. https://www.unicef.org/esa/ending-child-poverty: This source provides alternate solutions to ending child poverty and carefully assesses the causes and effects of child poverty.

Topic II: Education Crisis
History of the Issue

In many developing countries, school attendance, especially for girls, is far from universal, and many children drop out of school before completing their primary education. Even children that do complete their primary school are not sufficiently educated due to poorly trained, underpaid teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of basic teaching tools such as textbooks, blackboards, and pens and paper.[17] The problem in many developing countries is that governments lack either the financial resources or the political willingness to meet their citizens' educational needs. In an ideal world, primary education would be universal and publicly financed, and all children would

be able to attend school regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to pay.[18]

The bulk of the world's poor live in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. School enrollment in these regions mirrors their economic performance. Countries, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and the Pacific Islands, have found it difficult to improve general learning quality due to a lack of financial resources and political commitment to education.[19] Many children in poor countries drop out of school before graduating. In 1996, the percentage of children of graduating age who actually completed primary school that year was 73 percent in developing countries as a group, but this still represents an improvement as rates were lower in 1990.[20]

Another point of disparity in educational attainment is between different groups within countries. In most low-income countries, children from poor families are much less likely to be in school than children from more affluent families, except in countries like Uzbekistan that have strong universal education. In Pakistan, in the early 1990s, 86 percent of rich children aged 6 through 14 were in school, compared to 37 percent of poor children, making for a large rich-poor gap. The disparity between sexes is even more dramatic. Girls' lack of educational attainment is a primary leading factor for the low education attendance rates in low-income countries. The bias against girls in education is especially seen in South Asia and Africa, specifically due to the instilled inequality between the genders in these continents.[21]

Current Status of the Issue

Many nations, primarily in Sub-saharan Africa, the Pacific, South Asia, and East Asia, have had trouble increasing education access and literacy rates. One of these regions include the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Ever since the alarming Pacific Island Literacy Level results in 1996, there has been an obvious necessity to improve student performance in this region.

Many countries here are still requiring school fees for basic education, which makes education less accessible for the abundance of lower-income families. Not only access to education, but quality of learning is also a primary issue in the PICs. Many students that are receiving an education here, are being forced to be in the system for a high cost with a handful of tangible benefits. This is due to a lack of proper planning from policy makers in the PICs, which leads to the idea that the governments itself are currently incapable of financially and efficiently supporting a sufficient education for all children in the region.[22]

Although PICs seem to easily adapt to emergency situations, such as frequent natural disasters and upgrading financial systems, which only occurs when there is enough urgency and visibility attached to the issue. The lack of an efficient education system in the PICs is not widely recognized within these governments.[23]

On the other hand, in Afghanistan, the primary issue is the gender divide present within an educational aspect as eighty percent of girls do not attend school in this nation. Due to the Taliban rule, girls are banned from pursuing secondary school and university since it "does not match with Islamic representation." However, this is not an Islamic religious cause, but rather an idea formed by religious extremists.[24] Although primary school is not banned for girls in Afghanistan, seventeen percent are married under the age of fifteen and transportation, which is necessary for travel to school, can be unsafe for girls due to the dangerous environment. Furthermore, there is a lack of funding for all-girl schools, which explains why thirty percent of young girls have not gone to primary school.[25]

Increased rates of child marriage and child labor are consequences of a lack of education for girls, since they have become accustomed to the idea of women not being literate. Additionally, girls are unable to get efficient jobs and live independently within

Afghanistan. This unemployment and salary deficiency is a leading cause for malnutrition and a lack of awareness for hygiene and other health related necessities.[26]

In Bangladesh, which gained its independence twenty years back, citizens are required to receive five years of education, but this exempts rural girls. This is a clear factor for the disparities in education. Another issue in Bangladesh is the lack of available resources, such as teachers, in primary schools, as there is a ratio of fifty four to one. Furthermore, not only is making education accessible an issue, but also assuring that they stay in the learning environment, as there is a dropout rate of fifty percent for girls by the fifth grade.[27]

The government has been attempting to make reforms, but due to insufficient finances and infrastructure, the implementation has not been as effective as many would like. Furthermore, even with these reforms, school is still economically inaccessible to many families. It is to the extent that families must decide whether to pay for food or education, but sometimes the children are too hungry to attend school.[28]

Analysis and Solutions

These issues range from a lack of funding to inequality in developing nations. Due to the urgency of these issues, efficient reforms must be enforced and must solve all aspects of this education crisis. Specifically, improving the gender disparity in education accessibility and ensuring that girls are able to receive a similar education to boys. Furthermore, the lack of a quality of education and keeping children in school is also important to note. Increasing the awareness of the issue will also assist in solving this crisis, as many developing countries' governments fail to address this dilemma since they view it as of less priority.

Decreasing the cost of education within these nations will allow low income families to be able to receive an education, but it is important to ensure that these governments' economies do not fail due to these newfound funding. Additionally, giving more resources to the education sector is crucial as it will improve the quality of learning.[29]

Although improvement of equality can never be entirely achieved, it is important to ensure that girls have access to the same opportunities and levels of education as boys are. This is primarily seen in developing countries and in nations where women are not equal by law. Therefore, it can only be achieved through strong political movements to improve equality in all aspects, but especially in education. Lastly, increasing awareness in nations will provide governments with the will to increase the ultimate quality of education.

Questions to Consider
1. How can developing nations' governments increase funding for education while still ensuring the success of their economy?
2. Why are girls not given an equal education in many nations? How can we ensure that girls have similar levels of literacy as boys? Will this make a difference for the wellbeing of the nation as well?
3. What are possible solutions to increase awareness and priority for this crisis within governments? How will this make a difference for this issue?
4. How can the quality of education be improved? What are necessary measures and resources that will increase academic results?
5. What will decrease the rate of dropout students in these countries? Is this just a developing nation issue or a global problem?

Further Research

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2. https://www.borgenmagazine.com/education-in-developing-countries/: Delving into the multiple ways to improve education in developing countries, this source provides possible general solutions.
3. https://academic.oup.com/book/35237/chapter/299774411: This gives more information on the multiple issues regarding a lack of quality education in underdeveloped countries.
4. https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues33/: This provides further information on the importance of educating children and why developing countries fail to provide their citizens with a sufficient education.
5. https://study.com/academy/lesson/education-in-third-world-countries.html: This source is a general guide to the status of education in developing countries and delves into the various issues in the topic.

Endnotes

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2. "General Assembly 27th special session," United Nations, accessed December 7, 2023, https://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/children.shtml.

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