

Vancouver Youth Model United Nations 2021



UNICEF

Background Guide



VANCOUVER YOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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Dear delegates,

My name is Ally Yi and it is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to VYMUN UNICEF 2021. As your Director, I hope all delegates will have the opportunity to grow both as an individual and as a Model UN participant over the course of this conference. For this reiteration of UNICEF, we will focus on two main topics: Eliminating Child Labour and Exploitation of Children to Harmful Sources on Social Media.

Our first topic, Eliminating Child Labour, is a pressing issue in various parts of the world, with its root cause being poverty. Many children in impoverished countries are forced out of school in order to work as child labourers. This violates children's rights, as outlined by the UN, and prevents them from reaching their full potential; it is a problem that must be addressed at once by UNICEF. As well, with more and more children unable to receive a full education and being exposed to dangerous situations, the development of these countries is impeded. Therefore, this topic must be addressed immediately – not only for the children trapped in labour forces, but for the overall advancements of many developing nations as well.

Our second topic, Harmful Activities on Social Media, will focus on addressing the ways children are exploited on social media platforms. This pertains to the entirety of the global community, but especially in areas where children have easy access to social media and the Internet. As the Internet expands, the risk of children being exposed to harmful content increases; with the emergence of numerous social media platforms, cybercriminals have found new effective ways to spread their subversive content, and a new form of bullying—cyberbullying—has emerged. Although social media was created for the purpose of aiding people across borders to connect with each other, if misused, the effects can be severely detrimental to children's mental health. Thus, this issue must be tackled at once, as it interferes with UNICEF's central goals.

Before you proceed to read the backgrounder, please remember that the topics we will be discussing are heavy and sensitive issues. Therefore, I ask you to act with caution and be mature during the conference. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Dias team at unicef@vymun.com. I am truly looking forward to meeting you in October.

Best Regards,

Ally Yi

Director of UNICEF | VYMUN 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOPIC A: Eliminating Child Labour

Questions to Consider	4
Overview	#
Timeline	#
Historical Analysis	#
Past Action	#
Current Situation	#
Possible Solutions	#
Bloc Positions	#
Sources Cited	#

TOPIC B: Harmful Activities on Social Media

Questions to Consider	#
Overview	#
Timeline	#
Historical Analysis	#
Past Action	#
Current Situation	#
Possible Solutions	#
Bloc Positions	#
Sources Cited	#

Eliminating Child Labour

Questions to Consider

1. Is child labour one of the central issues in your country? If so, which fields employ the most child labourers?
2. How does child labour hinder the development of your country?
3. What is the legal working age for your country, and how does your country address child labour? Does your country receive the support of any organizations/nations?
4. What role does your country play on the international stage regarding child labour?
5. How can your country play a role in eradicating child labour? How can your country help other impoverished countries reduce their child labour statistics?

Overview

According to World Vision, child labour is “the use of children in industry or business, especially when illegal or considered inhumane.”¹ The practice of child labour is detrimental for children’s health, interferes with their education, and inhibits their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Approximately 4.3 million children working in forced labour are in situations of debt bondage, slavery and commercial sexual exploitation. A child’s age, their type of work, and the number of hours worked are all determining factors when considering if a particular form of work can be classified as child labour. In its most extreme forms, child labour causes children – at very young ages – to be separated from their families, exposed to hazardous environments, and left to fend for themselves or enslaved.

Worldwide, roughly 160 million children were subjected to child labour at the beginning of 2020. Since 2012, Sub-Saharan Africa has seen the largest increase in the number of children involved in child labour—the region has more child labourers than the rest of the world combined. The rising rate of poverty, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is predicted to push an additional nine million children into child labour by the end of 2022. This is nearly 1 in 10 children worldwide, with nearly half involved in hazardous work that directly endangers their health and moral development.

Child labour occurs everywhere in diverse sectors. Some major categories are as follows: agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, and domestic work. In agriculture, children may be exposed to toxic pesticides or fertilizers. They work with dangerous blades and tools and carry heavy loads. In mining, children may use poisonous chemicals, face the risk of mine collapse, and sometimes work with explosives. In construction, children may carry heavy loads, work without safety equipment, and risk injury from dangerous machinery. In manufacturing, children may use toxic solvents, perform repetitive tasks in painful positions, and risk injury from sharp tools. In domestic work, children risk abuse, work long hours, and often live in isolation from their families and friends. Children who work in such harsh fields often do not receive a sufficient education since they are too exhausted and

¹ [https://www.worldvision.org/child-protection-news-stories/child-labor-facts#end-child-labor\[-](https://www.worldvision.org/child-protection-news-stories/child-labor-facts#end-child-labor[-)

therefore unable to attend classes or do their homework due to long, strenuous work days. For parents who are struggling to keep their families afloat, sending kids to school is a luxury they cannot afford.

The lack of education that child labourers receive is alarming since education is the key to the advancement of developing nations. As well, the lack of education perpetuates the cycle of poverty, thus creating further financial obstacles for these already impoverished nations. With such low levels of education and income, children are forced to turn to jobs that do not require education and often commit crimes for remunerative jobs. As some children must resort to joining gangs in desperation, the gang population increases and becomes an even greater threat across the globe. Seeing that child labour is linked to international gangs, which in turn is linked to other serious problems, it is evident that various international conflicts are inextricably connected and that the longer a problem endures, the larger the threat and the more dangerous it will become. Thus, the Dais team highly encourages UNICEF to tackle all topics with maturity and to come up with sustainable resolutions that will benefit most, if not all, countries.

Timeline

1832: The New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and Other Workingmen officially condemns child labour.² The campaign against child labour culminates in two important pieces of legislation – the Factory Act (1833) and the Mines Act (1842). The Factory Act prohibits the employment of children younger than nine years of age and limits the hours that children between nine and thirteen can work. The Mines Act raises the starting age of colliery workers to ten years. In effect, these two Acts forced the industrial districts to comply with the rest of the country and brought an end to the systematic employment of young children.³

1842: In the United States, Massachusetts limits children's working hours. Many states do the same, but are inconsistent with law enforcement.⁴

1845: The Irish Potato Famine begins, and Irish families move to fill lower-level factory jobs. This eventually leads to an increase in child labourers in Europe.

Early 1990s: Child Labour Monitoring (CLM) process comes into action in the manufacturing sector through International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) projects in Bangladesh and Pakistan. From there, it expands into other economic sectors such as fishing (in Indonesia and Philippines) and agriculture (in Central America and Western Africa). Currently CLM initiatives can be found in all areas of IPEC intervention, including the informal and illicit sectors.

1908: In the case of *Muller v. Oregon*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the right of states to limit the number of hours women can work in certain industries.⁵ Louis Brandeis argues the case on behalf of the National Consumers' League, and it sets a legal precedent whereby child labor laws can be instituted.

1912: The United States Children's Bureau is founded. The organization is poised to monitor the situation of children at home and at work.⁶

² <https://stopchildlabor.org/timeline-of-child-labor-developments-in-the-united-states/>

³ <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/child-labour>

⁴ <https://www.history.com/topics/industrial-revolution/child-labor>

⁵ <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/208us412>

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Childrens-Bureau>

1938: In the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Fair Labour Standards Act, which restricts hours and types of jobs for children under age sixteen.⁷

1973: The Minimum Age Convention, ratified by 172 countries, sets the minimum age for employment, but allows some exceptions.⁸

1976: The International Labour Organization's Convention 138 becomes international law. Known as the "Minimum Age Convention," it sets out to abolish child labour among school-aged children.⁹

1985: Child Workers in Asia (CWA) is founded.¹⁰

1989: The U.N. enacts the Convention on the Rights of the Child to guarantee the protection of the rights of children to grow and thrive. Additionally, at the conclusion of a successful congressional forum on child labor, the National Consumers League and the International Labor Rights Fund establish the Child Labor Coalition, a U.S.-based member organization, to improve domestic and international child labor issues.

1992: The International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) is founded to promote the global elimination of child labor and support countries in their efforts to do so.¹¹

1994: In India, Kailash Satyarthi establishes Rugmark, an organization seeking to stop the exploitation of children in the carpet industry by building up the supply and demand for child labor free products.¹² A year later, the first child-labor-free certified carpets are exported from India.

1999: The Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, ratified by 186 countries, requires ending practices such as slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, forced labor in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities.

2000: The Human Rights Watch publishes a report outlining the exploitation of children in US agriculture entitled "Fingers to the Bone: United States Failure to Protect Child Farmworkers."¹³ A follow-up report in 2010 reveals that these conditions continue to exist.

2000: The International Labour Organization's Convention 182, which condemns the worst forms of child labor, becomes an international law.¹⁴

2002: The United States ratifies the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The protocol is enacted by the UN in 2000.

⁷ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>

⁸ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ilo_code:C138

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ <https://asiasociety.org/child-workers-asia>

¹¹ <https://www.ilo.org/ipec/lang--en/index.htm>

¹²

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/onmyplate/kailash-satyarthi-rugmark-and-innovative-activism/>

¹³ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/frmwkr/>

¹⁴ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182

2013: The International Labour Organization releases quadrennial estimates which reveal a drop of 47 million child laborers over the last four years internationally, leaving 168 million youth still in child labor and 85 million trapped in hazardous work.

2021: The U.N. General Assembly declares this to be the Year for the Elimination of Child Labor.¹⁵

2025: All forms of child labor are to end this year under Target 8.7 of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals.

Historical Analysis

Industrial Revolution

Child labour was prevalent in Britain during the early Industrial Revolution. As factories spread across the country, factory owners needed more workers. For the owners, children were ideal employees since they were paid less and were more likely to remain obedient than their adult counterparts. According to the Factory Commission of 1833, children as young as six were forced to work in factories for fourteen to sixteen hour shifts, six days a week.¹⁶ Their supervisors often physically punished them to keep them awake. Children were also forced to work at British coal mines, where working conditions were even worse. An official 1842 report that described the situation eventually forced the British government to pass the first serious laws against child labour. The legislation only banned children under nine from mine work and children under ten from factory work.¹⁷ In addition to Britain, child labour was also common in Canada. In fact, child labour was a hallmark of early 19th century work places in both Britain and Canada. For Britain, the first industrialized nation, child labour continued for many more years despite the legislation against it. Likewise, as the Industrial Revolution spread to the United States, child labour remained popular into the 20th century. It was not until 1938 when the first truly effective U.S. federal law prohibiting child labor was enacted.¹⁸

It was only the establishment of free, compulsory education at the end of the 19th century and the changed attitude that followed which reduced, if not fully eliminated child labour in Britain, Canada, the USA and other industrialized countries.

Unions have led the ongoing struggle against child labour. While the use of child labour has been addressed, if not completely eradicated, in a majority of the developed, industrialized countries of the world, such as Canada, the USA, and Britain, it remains a major problem in many developing nations globally. Too many children across a multitude of countries around the globe are working when they should be in school, at home, or at play. Many of them effectively act as slaves, working long hours for low wages in terrible working conditions.

Asia/Pacific

The association Child Workers in Asia (CWA) was established in 1985 to support Asian child labourers with the help of NGOs. Beginning as a small group of only five organizations, today, the

¹⁵ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_713925/lang--en/index.htm

¹⁶ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/1833-factory-act>

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31501.html>

association brings together over fifty groups and organizations working on child labor in fourteen different countries.¹⁹ It facilitates the sharing of expertise and experiences between NGOs and strengthens their collaboration in jointly responding to the exploitation of working children in the region. For the last fifteen years, CWA has taken the initiative to understand the predicaments of exploited children. The organization has provided resources for laboured children to the best of its abilities and continues to advocate for human rights. In February of 1999, partners of CWA met at the 5th CWA Regional Consultation and reaffirmed the need for Asian NGOs to sustain their role as catalysts for social change, thus setting the child labour issue as an international crisis. Furthermore, collaborators agreed to pursue action in identifying types of child labourers, including youth domestic workers, bonded labourers, trafficked children and other more. Fortunately, since then, Asia has observed an overall decline in child labour statistics, as suggested by the ILO's Global Report on Child Labour.²⁰

It must be noted that the current statistics do not reveal everything. It is estimated that 28 million South Asian children, mostly girls, are reported as 'inactive': neither working nor attending school. Girls are more likely than boys to be inactive and to be involved in domestic chores or work that is not captured by the survey instruments.²¹

Past Action

UNICEF aims to prevent and respond to child labour, particularly through bolstering the social service workforce. Social service workers play a critical role in identifying, preventing and mitigating risks that can lead youth to engage in child labour.²² Through case management and social protection services, such as early identification, registration, interim rehabilitation and referral services, UNICEF works to build and support the workforce in detecting and responding to possible child labour situations. UNICEF also works with national and local governments to promote family and community education campaigns to address the detrimental social norms that sustain child labour, alongside cooperation with the governments to prevent violence, exploitation, and abuse. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF has been recording child labour statistics to make child labour more tangible to decision makers. By doing this, UNICEF can also fortify birth registration systems to ensure that all children have birth certificates that prove they are under the legal work age.

It is crucial that children removed from the labour force are safely reincorporated into education or training systems. UNICEF promotes improved access to high quality education and offers a wide range of social services to keep children safe and with their families. Examples of social services UNICEF provide include early identification, registration and interim rehabilitation and referral services. With UN partners and the European Union, UNICEF develops initiatives that reach thirteen countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America to address child trafficking.

Various organizations have emerged to end child labour. One example of such an organization is the Global March Against Child Labor, also known as Global March, which is a wide network of civil society organizations, trade unions and teachers who work together to eliminate and prevent all forms of child labor and ensure access to free and quality public education for all children.²³ Global March

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/moscow/areas-of-work/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

²¹ Ibid

²² <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-labour>

²³ <https://globalmarch.org/>

mobilizes networks on an international level to promote and protect rights of youth, with a special focus on the right to be free from economic exploitation and “any type of labour that might hinder their mental, physical, spiritual, social and moral development.”²⁴ The network works to increase awareness surrounding child labor and encourages countries to adopt and ratify conventions related to child labor. Similarly, the Stop Child Labor Coalition has been advocating for “good formal education for children and a decent income for adults” in cooperation with local organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America.²⁵

Another well-known organization is the International Initiative on Exploitative Child Labor (IIECL), more commonly known as International Initiative to End Child Labor. This is a US based NGO established in 1998 whose aim is to provide training; technical assistance; research; capacity building; social accountability auditing; resources, program planning and design; and monitoring and evaluation services to the public and private sectors, NGOs, and international research and development institutions that seek to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the US and around the world.²⁶ The group believes that all children's education should be prioritized and raises awareness for the child labour issue globally. The IIECL develops and implements effective strategies and solutions in areas that promote quality education for children and ensures that public and private sector operations and programmes do not create situations that push children to work. It also collaborates with local NGOs to identify child labour in their communities so that assistance and technical support may be provided to help them.

Current Situation

Child Soldiers

Numerous conflicts break out around the world daily. Many know that the number of lives lost and damages brought about by these conflicts are devastating, but only a few realize that many of the lives lost belong to children. According to the Conventions on the Rights of Children, children are defined as people under the age of 18.²⁷ All throughout history, we have seen evidence of children being trained and recruited into military operations, whether they were state armed forces or non-state armed groups. Regardless of when and where a conflict occurs, it is undeniable that a war zone is certainly no place for a child. Therefore, child labour in war zones must be urgently addressed.

Due to the lack of protection rights for children in the past, youth were easily taken advantage of in times of conflict. Notable evidence can be seen in both of the World Wars. These global conflicts brought the world into a time of chaos: many young children, some as young as eight years old, were enlisted illegally whenever there was a conscription crisis and governments struggled to find soldiers. As soldiers were desperately needed, countries found themselves enlisting anyone who was interested and in some cases, even forced individuals to enlist. Throughout this period of time, countless children were expected to serve as adults in armed combat or as spies and messengers. Some children even blindly volunteered in the name of patriotism, failing to understand the hardships they would endure as a soldier.

Worst Forms of Child Labour

Some forms of child labour are considered ‘worse’ than other types of child labour.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ <https://stopchildlabour.org/partners/stop-child-labour-coalition/>

²⁶ <https://endchildlabor.net/>

²⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

The worst forms of child labour can be categorized as follows: slavery and similar issues, such as the trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom, and children in armed conflict; the sexual exploitation of children, including prostitution, pornography and pornographic performances; the involvement of children in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs; and work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.²⁸

More than 1.2 million children are trafficked annually for child labour and sexual exploitation.²⁹ Most child labourers are in the informal economic sector, where they are not protected by laws and regulations.³⁰ The worst forms of child labour are illegal and must be eradicated immediately. While recent research has yielded information on the nature of child trafficking, little is known about its magnitude.

Slavery

Slavery is when a child is unwillingly owned by and made to work for another person. Child slaves are held against their will from the time of their capture, purchase, or birth, and are not allowed to leave or to refuse work. Child trafficking, which is the illegal trading (buying, selling and movement) of children for labour or sexual exploitation, is known to be one of the ways children might become slaves. Child trafficking happens for an abundance of reasons, including forced labour, prostitution and recruitment as child soldiers and beggars. Another form of child slavery is debt bondage, where work is exchanged to pay off loans that individuals cannot pay off with money or goods. For example, a poor family may transfer their child to a creditor to pay off their debt, and that child would have to work for years until the debt is cleared. Lastly, many children in conflict zones are forced into armed forces. Children in armed conflict are made to fight or to work as cooks, porters and messengers. These children are abused and exploited, often being forced to kill or maim other human beings in combat. As well, many girls put into armed forces are often sexually abused.

Sexual Exploitation and Child Sex Trafficking

Many child labourers, often girls, are involved in prostitution or commercial sexual activity, and may also be taken advantage of by adults for sexual performances and pornography. Additionally, the human trafficking industry is unrestricted by borders: children are often kidnapped and then transported across borders to be sold as sex workers in foreign countries. Child labourers exposed to such sexual exploitation are at a high risk of physical abuse, malnutrition and sexually transmitted diseases. It is extremely difficult for children to escape these situations and even more difficult for them to recover from what they have experienced physically and mentally.

Drug Production/Trafficking and Organized Beggary

Some children continue to be involved in the illicit production and trafficking of drugs. Children commit such acts either against their will or with the belief that this will elevate their financial and social status. For instance, there are reports of children as young as seven years old cultivating and harvesting opium poppies in Mexico, especially in impoverished indigenous communities where children help their family with the cultivation. Media reports, NGOs, Government of Mexico reports,

²⁸

<https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Campaignandadvocacy/Youthinaction/C182-Youth-orientated/worstforms/lang--en/index.htm>

²⁹

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575499.pdf

³⁰ Ibid

and the United States Department of State indicate that children are forced to miss school to work in these poppy fields, often working long hours in hazardous environments with sharp tools.³¹ Children who produce or traffic drugs are at great risk of abuse from their employers, and many become addicted to drugs at a very young age. Other children are involved in other crimes, as defined by national laws, such as buying stolen goods, shoplifting, robbery, hijacking cars, theft and burglary. They may be coerced into the crime with threats and violence, or falter under the pressure to find money for their survival and that of their family. Some children become involved in criminal activity through gangs, or because they believe it will help them obtain respect and wealth simultaneously. Another form of labour for street children, runaways or children living in poverty is organized beggary. Children are sometimes even intentionally disfigured to attract more money from passersby, and they are beaten by those who forced them to be in organized beggary if they fail to meet the daily quota. Furthermore, children involved in illicit activities are often exposed to violence, which can severely affect their mental and physical development. In addition, they lack opportunities to develop social skills and are much more likely to suffer from depression, alcohol and drug addictions, identity difficulties and become juvenile delinquents.

Work which could harm children's health or well-being and/or expose them to danger is also considered one of the "worst form[s] of child labour" as categorized by the ILO. This could be work in dangerous environments, such as in mines where children risk death or injury from tunnel collapses, accidental explosions or rock falls. In industry and agriculture, children may be exposed to dangerous chemicals and substances, as well as dangerous adult farm equipment usually ill-suited for children. Such factors lead to burns, serious injuries, and development of chronic health conditions. All of these types of work interfere with a child's education, as most children have neither the time, nor the energy, to attend school. Their families rely on the little wages the children make to survive.

Child Labour in Asia/Pacific Region

From 2000 to 2004, the number of working children under the age of fifteen in Asia and the Pacific fell by 5 million to 122.3 million, according to the latest ILO Global Report on Child Labour.³² Despite this progress, the region continues to confront significant issues. Currently, the number of working children in Asia Pacific is the second highest in the world, accounting for 18.8% of the region's 650 million children aged five to fourteen.³³ Furthermore, in comparison to Latin America and the Caribbean, the Asia and Pacific Region's progress in ending child labour is relatively slow.³⁴ The situation is exacerbated by a high tolerance for underage labour, political instability, and conflict in many nations.

The ILO's Global Report on Child Labour suggests an overall decline child labour numbers in Central Asia. However, substantial problems remain prevalent in certain parts of the region, specifically where large informal economies foster the exploitation of children. In urban areas, many street children fall victim to the worst forms of child labour. In rural areas, children continue to perform hazardous work in agriculture, especially in cotton harvest.³⁵ In addition, over the last fifteen years there has been a steep decline in school attendance and Vocational Education and Training (VET), which, in turn, has led to a rise in the rates of illiteracy in some countries. These alarming trends contribute directly to the child labour problem. Furthermore, children from rural areas are trafficked to

³¹ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods-print>

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

urban centres or wealthier countries for labour. Reliable statistics on the magnitude of trafficking remain unavailable. Data from government agencies mostly relate to prosecutions and, therefore, vastly underestimate the extent of the problem.

Similarly, South Asia has a significant number of child labourers: according to recent national surveys from seven South Asian countries, roughly 30 million children are employed, nearly 17 million are engaged in child labour, and 50 million are illiterate.³⁶ (Please note that the difference between child employment and child labour is that child labour is harmful to children's physical and mental development and often disables them from being enrolled in school) There are 16.7 million (five to seventeen years of age) children working as child labourers in South Asia, according to conservative estimates, and of these 16.7 million, 10.3 million are in the five to fourteen year age range.³⁷ In relative terms, children in Nepal face the highest risk of working in child labour than any other country in South Asia, with over one-quarter of all five to seventeen year old engaged in child labour.³⁸ These findings have limitations, however, including the fact that not all children in employment are regarded to be in child labour; not all forms of child labour are caught by these statistical surveys; and survey techniques and scope vary significantly among nations. Thus, the response differs from one country to the next, as well as between industries within countries. Consequently, the information is not completely comparable. Nevertheless, the findings are indicative of the scale and character of the child labour problem in and across South Asian countries.

Capacity building for social partners and IPEC implementing agencies, advocacy for ILO Convention adherence and implementation, public and target group awareness raising, and targeted direct aid are all slowly but steadily making inroads into the child labour problem. The public's awareness of and support for the comprehensive abolition of child labour is rising. For instance, seven countries in the Asia Pacific region have set time-bound goals to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and national time-bound programs are now being implemented to help them achieve their goals.

IPEC works to mainstream child labour into government policies, strategies, plans and budgets. Child labour issues have been included in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan, and mainstreaming is being pursued in other countries, such as the Philippines and Vietnam. There are efforts to integrate child labour and trafficking concerns into Education for All (EFA) initiatives in Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Child Labour in Africa

Africa's child labour estimates rank highest in both percentages -- 20% of the total child labour population -- and the absolute number of child in child labour—72.1 million.³⁹ It appears that progress against child labour has suspended in Africa. In contrast to other parts of the world that are seeing advancements in child labour statistics, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced a rise in the number of child labourers from 2012 to 2016, despite the African government's efforts to reverse this trend.⁴⁰ However, this is not surprising, considering that the African region is rampant with situations of state fragility, crisis and poverty. The agriculture sector has one of the largest child labour forces in Africa, with 85% of all child labourers working in the field, and services and industry sector following the

³⁶ https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/WCMS_300805/lang--en/index.htm

³⁷ Ibid

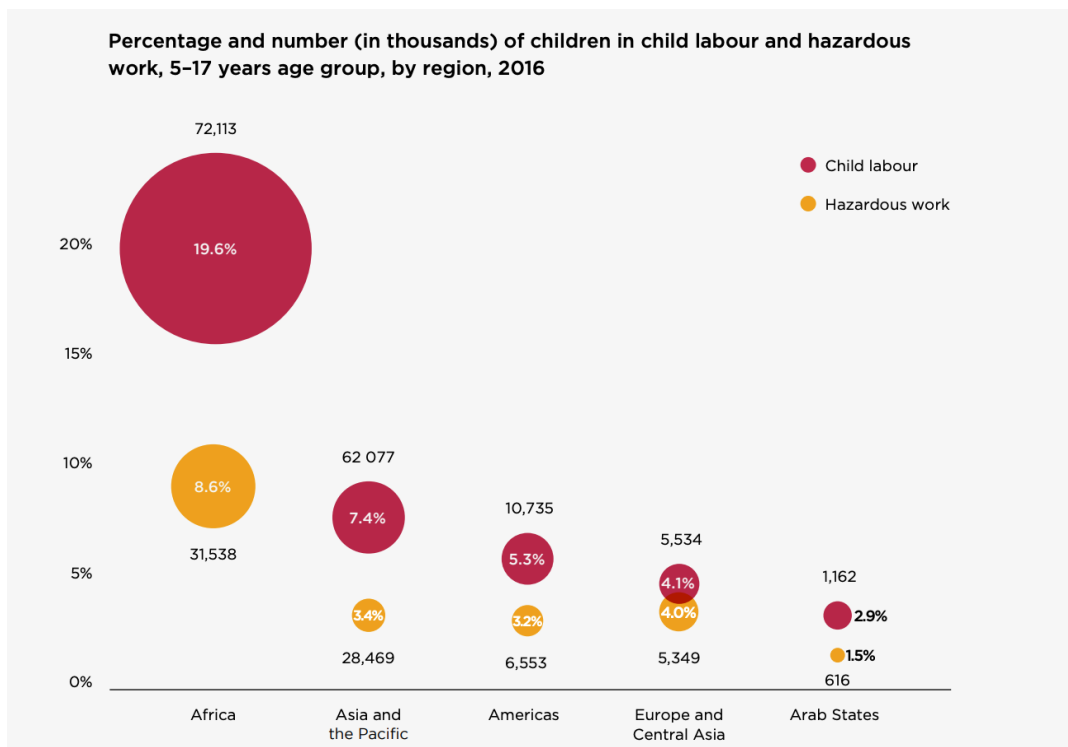
³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ <https://www.ilo.org/africa/areas-of-work/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴⁰ Ibid

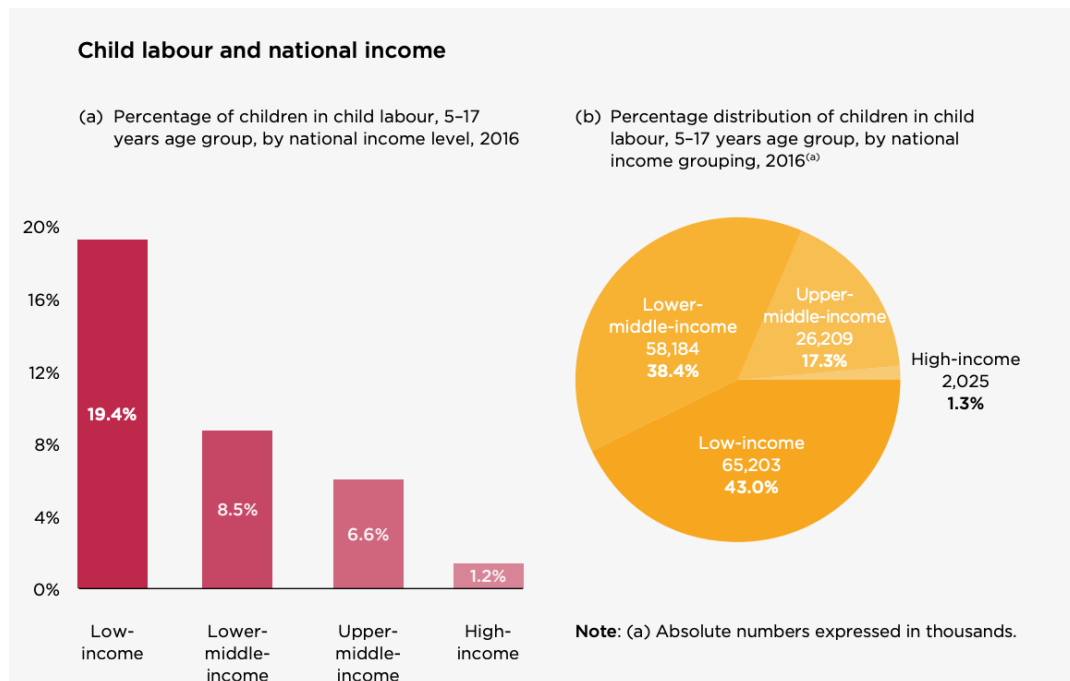
lead. Most child labour is unpaid, and many children in child labour are not in an employment relationship with a third party employer. Rather, these children work on family farms and family enterprises.

Overall Statistics



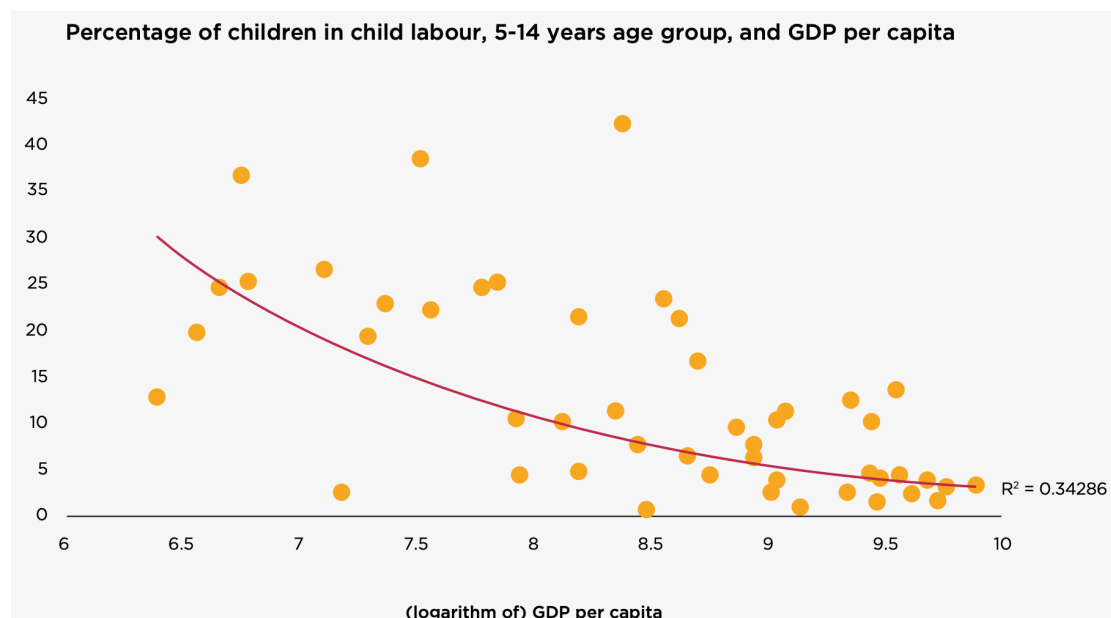
ILO, "Ending Child Labour by 2025: A Review of Policies and Programmes. Figure 4." ILO, 2017, https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_29875/lang--en/index.htm

This figure summarizes the overall child labour statistics by region. As previously stated, Africa and Asian and Pacific regions have the largest child labourer numbers.



ILO, "Ending Child Labour by 2025: A Review of Policies and Programmes. Figure 5." ILO, 2017, https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_29875/lang--en/index.htm

By dividing countries by national income levels, this statistics offer additional insight into where child labour occurs. The bar graph shows that incidents of child labour are the highest in low-income countries, but that it is substantial in countries of other income groups as well. Thus, these statistics highlight that while developing countries will require special attention, the fight against child labour will not be won by focusing on impoverished countries alone.⁴¹ Across low, middle, and high-income countries, the common denominator appears to be family and community poverty.



Source: ILO calculations based on national household survey datasets.

⁴¹ https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_29875/lang--en/index.htm

This graph plots recent child labour levels and per capita GDP for forty-eight countries. Although there is a general negative correlation between income levels and child labour, very different levels of child labour can be observed in countries with a similar level of economic development. This suggests that an array of other factors are at play when determining a country's performance and success in reducing child labour.

Possible Solutions

When child labour rates declined significantly from 2000 to 2004, people believed that child labour could be eradicated by 2016.⁴² However, the significant decline in progress from 2004 to 2008 began to warn of the inefficacy of existing policies, and that the 2016 goal would not be attained. Optimism returned during 2008 to 2012 when graphs presented a 22% reduction in child labour. The optimism died down once again, pushing the ultimate end date for child labour further into the future. Such fluctuations in progress shows that we have been unsuccessful in generating sustained momentum towards ending child labour. The momentum is urgently needed to accelerate the pace of progress toward the elimination of child labour. Implementing effective policies is vital, as shown by some countries with more success in achieving lower child labour levels despite having similar national income levels.

Harsher Punitive Measures

One possible solution for tackling child labour is increasing the severity of punitive measures if a child is found to be illegally exploited. In Niger, a death penalty may be imposed on a person who has been convicted of selling multiple children. Ireland gives permissions to authorities to search premises, and persons found at premises suspected of being sites involved in child exploitation. The consequences for persons caught trafficking are usually severe. Penalties are almost invariably increased when children are the victims of trafficking. In several countries, the death penalty is specifically authorized for anyone intentionally placing, allowing, involving or asking to involve a child in the abuse, production or distribution of narcotics or similar acts.

Giving Incentives for Children to Attend School

Education has the power to open doors. It can show children the world outside of labour and poverty -- where more people have a high-paying, satisfying job and less need to struggle financially. However, children from low-income families often find themselves in situations where the immediate monetary gain from employment seems more worthwhile than further pursuing the education required for high-level jobs. This contributes to the constant cycle of poverty as those children become adults who start families of their own. Since they never received a full education themselves, they remain unaware of the opportunities that are unlocked by schooling. In summary, with the majority of the population unable to receive adequate education, the GDP falls, and with a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Income (GNI), a country's government has very little money to provide support to lower-income families. A study of industrial transformation in Brazil corroborates the claim that expansions in high-skilled job opportunities tend to increase time spent in school, while increases in low-skilled job opportunities tend to lower school attainment.⁴³ Another study bolsters the previous evidence, as it provides evidence for the fact that reduction in the importance of low skill industries contributes to the reduction of child labour in rural areas. Therefore, UNICEF should work towards making education more attractive, accessible, and viable for child workers. One possible mechanism would be to offer financial aid to children enrolled in school, for instance, by paying

⁴² <https://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴³ <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/558bb1d74.pdf>

students in low-income families to attend school. To make this possible, impoverished nations could request financial assistance from wealthier nations as a form of global welfare. This way, there would be more children in school rather than in labour. An important consideration is that children who are unfamiliar with school environments may have difficulty adjusting to the new environment, and may even return to employment as a child labourer. In order to prevent this, UNICEF could establish a global rehabilitation center, which would include easy and flexible access to helpers who would aid children in academic matters.

Strengthen Monitoring Systems

A major issue that UNICEF faces is the non-transparent nature of corporate institutions. Companies or organizations that employ child labourers will conceal their illicit hiring activity in order to avoid punitive measures. Thus, UNICEF must find a way to regularly monitor the places where children may be working. Child labour monitoring (CLM) could ensure that effective observation is put in place and is coordinated in an appropriate manner.⁴⁴ The process's objective is to ensure that children and young, legally employed workers are safe from exploitation and hazards at work. The active scrutiny of child labour at the local level is supported by a referral system, which establishes a link between appropriate services and ex-child labourers. One problem with this process is that it is mainly for *legal* child workers. With that being said, the Dias urges the committee to generate original solutions for child labour surveillance.

Encourage Birth Registration

Without a birth certificate, the government is unable to track down the number and location of children. As a result, governments are not able to stop these children from falling into illicit child labour. Some parents avoid registering their children's birth for various reasons, many of which are linked to financial issues or other bigger, global human rights issues. In most circumstances, it is because the family lives in a poorer household, often in rural areas with limited access to registration services, or in countries where there is a lack of fully functioning civil registration systems.⁴⁵ Poor households may also be deterred by the cost associated with registration, including travel to registration sites or late fees. In other cases, parents are ignorant of the birth registration process and do not understand its importance. Another factor is gender inequality. In many parts of the world, women do not have the same rights, or ability, to register their child's birth as their male counterparts.⁴⁶ For example, a mother may face gender discrimination when she tries to register her child for something as minor as lacking an ID or marriage certificate, or if the father was not present or named on the birth form. As well, women may be unable to register their children if the father is unknown, or if he refuses to acknowledge paternity—such as in cases of survivors of rape or incest. As these challenges stem from issues of gender inequality, birth registration policies must be amended to become accessible to everyone to allow for improvement in the field of child labour. For families who did not register due to financial reasons, governments may forgive late registration fees and establish new birth registration sites in rural areas to erase any travel fees that families may face. Technology is also a promising solution: the governments of Pakistan and Tanzania have introduced smartphone apps for birth registration, which allow registrars to digitally collect and upload birth registration data to a protected, centralized system, in real-time.⁴⁷ For parents who are unaware of birth registration, the government may publish pamphlets explaining its importance and how they can register their children. Finally, to persuade countries to alter their current birth registration methods

⁴⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Action/Childlabourmonitoring/lang--en/index.htm>

⁴⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/stories/what-birth-registration-and-why-does-it-matter>

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/stories/boosting-birth-registration-pakistan-mobile-phones>

and laws, UNICEF must work to shed light on the benefits of birth registration and bring attention to issues of gender inequality.

Some cultures intentionally fail to register girls due to cultural reasons, and the lack of birth registration for girls further reinforces existing gender gaps in education. Worldwide, 132 million girls are out of school, and these girls are more likely than out-of-school boys to never enroll in school. Not having a birth certificate makes it even more difficult for them to do so. In addition, girls without birth certificates cannot prove their legal age and are more susceptible to child marriage, making them even less likely to complete their education. Therefore, to spread education to more children, governments must give incentives to parents to register their newborns. For instance, governments could give monetary benefits for each child born in a single household, depending on the family's income. Finding methods to bring attention to the importance of birth registration is another essential step. One problem with monetary benefits is that for impoverished nations, governments may not have enough resources to provide support. This problem could be solved by asking other UN nations to aid and supply them with necessary funds, resources, and more. Legal identity, including birth registration, is a human right. It is also the key to reduce child labourer numbers. Thus, UNICEF must strive to increase birth registration rates.

Bloc Positions

Asia and Pacific

Fortunately, the latest ILO Global Report on Child Labour states that the number of working children under the age of 15 in Asia and the Pacific fell by 5 million to 122.3 million from 2000 to 2004.⁴⁸

Despite this progress, the region still confronts significant issues. Currently, the number of working children in Asia Pacific is the highest in the world, accounting for 18.8% of the region's 650 million children aged 5 to 14. Furthermore, in comparison to Latin America and the Caribbean, the Asia and Pacific Region's progress in ending child labour is relatively slow. The situation is exacerbated by a high tolerance for underage labour, political instability, and conflict in many nations. Furthermore, many children in disaster-affected countries are at risk of being forced to work. Regarding the issue of child soldiers, India, Thailand, and the Philippines continue to enlist child soldiers to protect their countries. This bloc may especially favour harsher punitive measures, since many countries in the region allow capital punishments: in particular, for adults who coerce children into labour face severe punishment, which varies based on the weight of the crime.

Africa

In Africa, the most vulnerable countries include Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan. Due to the low economic levels in Africa, it has been easier for children to be recruited for financially-driven reasons. Since many of these countries are underdeveloped and poverty-stricken, these areas are conflict-prone and more children are recruited. Some countries, such as Chad, have signed on to a plan that commits to ending the use of child soldiers through methods like increasing punitive measures.

Middle East

The Middle East has the largest concentration of child soldiers and conflicts. According to an analysis conducted by the UN, conflicts across the Middle East doubled in 2017. In addition, according to UNICEF, the number of conflicts that arose in the area has decreased the living standards of families;

⁴⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Regionsandcountries/Asia/lang--en/index.htm>

for instance, they lack economic opportunities, are displaced from their homes, and do not have the basic living necessities. Almost one in five children in the area are now in need of immediate humanitarian aid and families are left with no choice but to either send their children to join non-state armed forces to support their family or marry off their daughters. Especially in Yemen, as in 2015, the number of children recruited into armed conflicts increased by fivefold. Corrupt countries in conflict lack basic facilities to support their citizens. It is currently one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Countries in this region may favour rehabilitation policies.

North America

The United States Department of Labour declared that violators of the child labour provisions are subject to a civil money penalty of up to \$10,000 for each employee who was the subject of a violation.⁴⁹ Employers who willfully or repeatedly violate the minimum wage or overtime pay requirements are subject to a civil money penalty of up to \$1,000 for each violation. Since North America has some of the wealthiest countries such as the United States and Canada, it is likely that these countries in this region will be asked to provide for developing nations such as Africa and Southern Asia. One thing to note, however, is that in many rural areas of North America, it is difficult to set the line for child labour and helping out parents with farming.⁵⁰ The newest changes to the U.S. labour laws state that children younger than 16 will be prevented from using most power-driven equipment and those younger than 18 will be prevented from working in feed lots, grain bins, and stockyards. However there is an exception: children working on farms “wholly owned” by their families. North American countries or nations with similar situation may have to work to clarify the ambiguous child labour standards.

Europe

ILO's 2006 Global Report on child labour indicated a decline in the number of children working in the transition economies of Europe. This progress is ascribed to economic growth and poverty reduction as well as political commitment to combating child labour. Although Europe's rate of ratification of both the ILO Child Labour Conventions seems very encouraging, three of forty-nine countries have yet to ratify the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182. IPEC is currently collaborating with other national partners to elaborate and integrate exit strategies in projects carried out in Central and Eastern Europe. In terms of punishment, Europe has less severe punishments. With the exception of Belarus, the most severe punishment is prison sentences for adults who forced children into labour. Europe also calls for rehabilitation of child workers so that they can successfully be incorporated into school and their communities. One most recent examples of child labour within this region happened in Britain; in 2015, approximately 3000 children were found enslaved in a British cannabis farm.⁵¹ According to British officials, these children were transported from Vietnam, and such child trafficking was conducted by UK-based Vietnamese gangs. This relatively recent finding of child labour proves that that Europe is not safe from child labour and that many child labour is associated with international gangs.

⁴⁹ <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/youthlabor/enforcement>

⁵⁰ <https://www.canadianbusiness.com/blogs-and-comment/child-labour-in-north-america/>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/may/23/vietnam-children-trafficking-nail-bar-cannabis>

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Harmful Activities on Social Media

Questions to Consider

1. Do children in your nation have full access to social media? If so, what is the biggest online problem children in your nation face?
2. How has your country addressed child online exploitation? Are there any established programs to help with the victims' mental health?
3. How has COVID-19 posed concerns to your nation's cyber crime rates? Or, how has COVID-19 affected your nation's Internet usage? Are the children facing difficulties accessing the Internet?
4. Is your country able to help other impoverished countries fight against child online exploitation? If so, how has your country helped others make progress?
5. If your nation needs support from other countries of the UN, what is the exact support your country needs? What technological or economical advancements could possibly aid your country in improving the quality of online resources available to your country?

Overview

Since its birth, the Internet has become an international phenomenon, facilitating global connections between individuals across the world. Its benefits include knowledge and opportunity when used positively, but has many real detriments as well. With the expansion and increased accessibility of the Internet, various social media platforms emerged. Soon after, a new form of crime appeared: cyberbullying, a method of bullying that often takes place on social media, messaging platforms, and gaming platforms.⁵² Victims of cyberbullying often

⁵² <https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>

experience mental health issues that eventually lead to chronic physical health issues such as tiredness, stomach aches, or headaches.⁵³ In extreme cases, it can also lead to self-harm or suicide.

The lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented rise in screen time for children, as they had to move to online platforms for almost everything, including education and communication. As more people used social media, cybercrime statistics also increased. In fact, one study indicates that there has been a 70% increase in cyberbullying.⁵⁴ As the pandemic progressed, the world began to recognize the rapid increase in cyberbullying cases, leading to an increased awareness for Internet safety and mental health.

Cyberbullying is a serious hate crime that anyone could be exposed to. Please approach this topic with caution as it may be a sensitive topic for delegates.

Timeline

1997: Andrew Weinreich succeeds in creating the first known social media site, Six Degrees.⁵⁵

1999: 1999 Columbine school shooting spurs U.S. to pass anti-bullying law. Only a few states include cyberbullying as an offense.⁵⁶

September 26, 2006: Facebook is officially open to the public.

2007: In Missouri, a suicide case due to cyberbullying is documented for the first time. The case spurs Missouri to pass an anti-harassment law that addresses cyberbullying.⁵⁷

June 2013: Two Swedish girls who had published inappropriate content on Instagram face trial. They are found guilty of defamation and are sentenced to juvenile detention and community service. They are also required to pay £1,450 compensation to some of the identified victims. The case is noted as one of Sweden's most infamous online abuse and harassment incidents accompanied by a successful prosecution.⁵⁸

May 19, 2021: Records state that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the average screen time usage as well as in cyberbullying internationally.⁵⁹

⁵³ <https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying#2>

⁵⁴ <https://www.verywellfamily.com/cyberbullying-increasing-during-global-pandemic-4845901>

⁵⁵ <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/05/the-complete-history-of-social-media-infographic.html#:~:text=The%20first%20recognizable%20social%20media,sensation%20that's%20still%20popular%20today.>

⁵⁶ <https://www.history.com/topics/1990s/columbine-high-school-shootings>

⁵⁷ <https://www.bark.us/blog/the-history-of-cyberbullying/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/online-abuse-how-harrasment-revenge-pornograpy-different-countries-deal-with-it>

⁵⁹ <https://www.statista.com/aboutus/our-research-commitment>

May 26th, 2021: South Africa finalizes the Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020. With this act, South Africa's cybersecurity laws become aligned with international standards.⁶⁰

Historical Analysis

As technology evolved, in-school bullying began transitioning to online platforms. Although it is difficult to pinpoint when exactly cyberbullying began, official documents claim that it started in the 1990s as the Internet and personal computers spread internationally. By the mid-2000s, many major social networking systems such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were created. With new platforms that now enabled people to communicate online, cyberbullying began to grow. In fact, although cyberbullying had existed for a long time, it was not until the mid-2000s when a suicide case shed light on the grave consequences of online harassment. In 2007, 13-year-old Megan Meier committed suicide after being harassed by a group of neighbors who created a fake profile to bully the girl. As a result, her hometown, Missouri, passed an anti-harassment law that addresses cyberbullying. Since cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon to our society, it is difficult to find information on its history and whether there were multiple actions that were either successful or unsuccessful in improving the situation. However, it is possible to analyze why some nations take a longer time securing safe online communities and how the process could be accelerated. Therefore, the Dias team highly encourages delegates to analyze and learn from the few case studies that will be discussed below.

Case Study: The Democratic Republic of Congo

In some cases, nations affected by corruption lack the motivation to fight cyber crimes. Subsequently, authorities of said nations frequently coerce victims to provide bribes in order to protect the victim's reputation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a woman reported that police officers often ask victims for bribes before taking up their cases in exchange for not tarnishing their reputation. The fear for their reputation and poor understanding of the issues often keep the victims from reporting abuse to the police or other authorities. In one such case, a girl was unknowingly filmed by her boyfriend during sexual intercourse. The boyfriend posted the video online, and eventually, it forced the girl and her family to flee the country out of "shame". Meanwhile, the boyfriend was never prosecuted, and safely graduated from university.⁶¹ It is vital for online abuse to become recognised as a serious issue that could cause physical and emotional harm, mobility, employment and public participation.

Case Study: South Korea

In 2007, many celebrities who were subjected to harsh online criticism and abuse committed suicide. In response, the South Korean government introduced a real-name identification system for websites with more than 100,000 visitors per day to reduce malicious content posted by anonymous internet trolls. The system required social media companies to verify the identity of users before they could comment. Unfortunately, the new system only managed to decrease the number of comments, without the expected drop in hurtful posts. This law has a

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<https://www.legalwise.co.za/help-yourself/legal-articles/new-legislation-place-fight-cyberbullying-south-africa>

⁶¹ Ibid.

major flaw: it ignores people who are unafraid to use their right to free speech and impersonation. Moreover, the system was completely abandoned in 2012 as the country's Constitutional Court ruled it unconstitutional, since "restriction on freedom of expression can be justified only when it is clear that it benefits public interests."⁶²

Korea's other attempt to fight cyberbullying was the "cyber slander law," which was meant to enforce harsh punitive measures on online predators. When it was first enacted in 2008, awareness of cyberbullying was low. As a result, the new law, at the time, was considered a failure. Then, another tragic event in 2019 spurred the netizens' attention towards online abuse: two major Korean celebrities had committed suicide. Investigative personnel speculated that the reason behind both of their deaths may have been from the extreme criticism on social networking sites and their boyfriends' threats to spread explicit footage. This incident prompted Korea's major information companies to close the comment sections on entertainment news. Unfortunately, the nation was only able to gain awareness of cyberbullying after losing the lives of their beloved celebrities. As one of the biggest IT giants of the world, South Korea is encouraged to urgently address cybercrime to elucidate the difference of legal definition of free speech and hate speech that takes away the right for the victim's right to feel safe and protected. As cyber harassment is a global issue, however, all nations in UNICEF must work together to set up international laws that clearly distinguish the difference between legal and illegal online actions.

Past Action

UNICEF has partnered with governments to advocate for the necessary measures, with companies to promote safety measures on their platform, and with ministries of education to spread digital-literacy and online-safety education for children. Moreover, UNICEF established Global Kids Online and Disrupting Harm projects to gather evidence on children's digital usages and risks to understand how their use of digital technology influences them.^{63 64} UNICEF then puts their findings into action at a global level through the WePROTECT Global Alliance model. Through this model, UNICEF advises governments with investments in preventative programs and awareness campaigns, and collaborates with tech companies to create a safe online environment for children by providing industry guidelines and developing methods to stop the circulation of harmful materials.⁶⁵ UNESCO, alarmed by the most recent report on cyberbullying victims, established the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School including Cyberbullying in 2020. On this new International Day, UNESCO urged all countries, organizations and people "to come together with the common goal of ensuring schools are free from fear and violence and children and adolescents are protected from cyberbullying."⁶⁶ The European Union, in response to the UN's reports, have also released new directives and measures to combat cyberbullying. Their attempts to do so include

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/24/world/asia/south-korean-court-overturms-online-name-verification-law.html>

⁶³ <http://globalkidsonline.net/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/disrupting-harm>

⁶⁵ <https://www.weprotect.org/>

⁶⁶ <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/dayagainstschoolviolenceandbullying>

directing further research on cyberbullying, promoting digital literacy, and informing parents of potential risks.⁶⁷

Current Situation

COVID-19 Impact

During the pandemic, people began to rely heavily on social media to connect with others. As children's screen time increased, so did their risks of being exposed to harmful online content. In response to this, UNICEF partnered with organizations such as Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), WePROTECT Global Alliance, World Health Organization (WHO), and World Childhood Foundation USA (Childhood USA). They are releasing a new technical note together to urge governments, ICT industries, educators, and parents to be vigilant, take immediate action to mitigate any dangers, and ensure that children have a safe and positive online experience during COVID-19.

Since the pandemic, incidents of online hate directed towards the East Asian community skyrocketed. According to a report conducted by L1ght, an AI based internet abuse detection organization, there was a 900% rise in racist abuse that targeted those with Asian backgrounds, on Twitter. They explained that "toxic tweets are using explicit language to accuse Asians of carrying the coronavirus and blaming people of Asian origin as a collective for spreading the virus."⁶⁸ In response to the situation, a coalition of Asian American groups launched a website for people to self-report racist attacks, and some schools incorporated anti-bullying campaigns into the school education curriculum to teach students about racial cyberbullying.

Africa

According to a 2018 Ipsos Global Adviser study, 25% of parents reported that their child had been cyberbullied in South Africa.⁶⁹ Like many other countries, social networking systems have been found to be the main platform for cyberbullies. The same study indicates that the majority of cyberbullying cases were carried out by the victim's classmate. One South African law, the Protection from Harassment Act, is the only enacted policy that addresses digital and physical bullying. This act allows interim protection orders from courts for the victims, meaning that those who pose further threat of harassment could be arrested. However, in 2021, the Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020 was finalized, although not yet enacted and yet to be confirmed of its commencement date.⁷⁰ A person found guilty under this act may be sentenced to a fine and/or maximum three years of imprisonment. South Africa also has the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 to regulate children accused of committing cyber crimes and the consequences they will face. Children between ten and eighteen may be imprisoned, but only as a last resort

⁶⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/egypt/media/2881/file/Cyberbullying-Supplement-EN-Final%20.pdf>

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<https://www.cybersmile.org/news/online-hate-targeting-asian-people-spikes-as-coronavirus-crisis-deepens>

⁶⁹ https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2018-06/cyberbullying_june2018.pdf

⁷⁰ <https://www.mondaq.com/southafrica/privacy-protection/1096806/unpacking-the-cyber-crimes-act-19-of-2020-and-what-that-means-for-you>

and for the shortest possible period.⁷¹ The law also recommends victims of cyberbullying to keep necessary evidence to ensure that the victim can provide evidence of the cyberbullying if a lawsuit is opened against the perpetrator. Although the Cybercrimes Act 19 has not yet come into force, South Africa strongly believes that they are heading towards the right direction in combating cybercrime, which includes cyberbullying.

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo has a staggering rate of sexual violence and online abuse against women, which remains unaddressed. The nation states that women and the LGBTQ+ population are the usual targets of cyber crimes. Unfortunately, the Democratic Republic of Congo does not have any laws or prosecutions that protect people against online harassment. Corruption within the authorities has exacerbated the problem. Given this situation, UNICEF must work harder to raise awareness regarding cyber harassment to make the Internet a safer place for everyone.

Asia

Several Asian countries have begun to support anti-cyberbullying legislations. For example, South Korea instituted a policy requiring people to provide their real names on online platforms after the suicides of many celebrities.⁷²

India, the country with one of the highest cyberbullying statistics, is yet to have legislations that directly tackle cyberbullying. However, one law that somewhat covers online bullying states that the publication or transmission of obscene material via technology could result in five years of imprisonment and/or high sums of fine.⁷³

North America, Europe, and Russia

Sweden's most recent successful cyber crime prosecution involved a sexual Instagram account made by two teenage girls. The girls were eventually found guilty of defamation and were sentenced to juvenile detention and community service as well as a £1,450 compensation to some of the identified victims.⁷⁴

Russia's cyber crime awareness is extremely low. In fact, even the authorities do not believe online abuse is much of a concern. Due to the government's lack of attention on this issue, it is difficult to pinpoint exact cyberbullying statistics for Russia. Russia has no specific laws addressing cyber crime, but theoretically, the crime is covered by standard laws against threats. In countries like Russia, cyberbullying or online sexual harassment greatly tarnishes the reputation of its victims. Victims in Russia are often reluctant to go to the police to report online harassment. It is concerning that the Russian population is quite oblivious towards the dangers of online bullying, since this means that the government allows this issue to continue without taking action.

Possible Solutions

Education and Raising Awareness

Digital literacy must be taught to children. For students, schools could schedule cyberbullying education sessions a few times every school year. These sessions should allow students to have

⁷¹ <https://www.legalwise.co.za/help-yourself/legal-articles/how-treat-bullying-schools>

⁷² https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/tech/2021/07/693_43565.html

⁷³ <https://www.myadvo.in/blog/must-read-what-is-cyber-bullying-or-anti-bullying-laws-in-india/>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

a strong understanding of what cyberbullying is, why it is bad, and how they can protect themselves and others from it. These sessions should also educate children to report cyberbullying even if they are not the victim to reduce bystanders. One way the UN could persuade schools to have a digital literacy education is by raising awareness. To achieve this, the UN could compile cybercrime statistics and distribute it to the general public. This way, many people will easily access the information and recognize that cyberbullying is a serious problem.

Since it is difficult for schools to monitor children's digital usage, parents must be aware of the potential risk of digital technology in order to protect their children at home. Schools could send newsletters to parents warning them of dangers of social media and how they could help their children stay away from the dangers. The UN could promote apps that allow parents to monitor their children's Internet and social media usage. Since some monitoring apps require monthly subscription fees, governments of each nation could partner with the app developers to make the apps accessible to more people.

Rehabilitation and Education

Rehabilitation can help both the bullied and the bully. Through therapy, the victims are able to build back their confidence and overcome any mental health issues. Since victims of cyberbullying are often unwilling to share their trauma with others, they may not ask for help. Therefore, it is crucial to persuade students to reach out to a rehabilitation center for help. In addition, these centers must be more accessible. These centers should also be more accessible. Since some people may find it difficult to physically go to a center, nations can consider forming hotlines so that the victims and the counselors could talk on the phone.

Encouraging Social Networking Platform Companies to Develop Reporting Systems

According to the respondents of a 2017 study conducted by a UK anti-bullying organization, social media platforms do little to prevent cyberbullying from occurring on their platforms.⁷⁵ Since social media is the main stage of cyberbullying, it may be beneficial to encourage social networking platforms to develop their reporting systems so that users can use the platform more safely. Cyberbullying is much harder to detect if no one reports it since cyberbullies gain technological prowess from being anonymous. Therefore, it is essential for social media platforms to facilitate their reporting procedures to create a safer, trustworthy platform.

Implementing Internet Real-Name System

Some countries, such as China and Korea, have proposed the use of real names on social media platforms to reduce the number of cyberbullies. Although Korea has not seen a significant reduction in the number of harmful online comments, it has become easier to track and punish the writers of harmful comments posted online. Currently, major social media companies do not have such systems, meaning that this solution will only be possible for non-major platforms that only allow people to use their real names. This method may be particularly effective in China since the country blocks all major social media other than Chinese social media platforms.

Bloc Positions

⁷⁵ <https://www.comparitech.com/internet-providers/cyberbullying-statistics/>

Asian Countries that Do Not Allow Online Anonymity

Statistics indicate that Asia has the highest concentration of global mobile phone users. In fact, China and India alone account for 30 percent of mobile phone users in the world.⁷⁶ Mobile phone and social media usage increased, and naturally, it led to an increase in cyberbullying. In wake of these incidents, Asian countries began to implement new policies and regulations to protect their population. For instance, China began to require people to register for their social media accounts under their own name. Similarly, South Korea, proposed the Internet real-name system, a system that requires people to use their real names online. One issue with implementing cyber laws, however, is that some Asian countries believe online harassment laws violate their freedom of speech. China holds a unique position in this sense, since their government already uses censorship for any content.

Countries With the Highest Cyberbullying Cases

As previously mentioned, South Africa has a high number of cyberbullying cases, and the numbers are projected to grow with the number of Internet users. Realizing the severity of the issue, the South African government established the Cybercrimes Act 19 to impose punishment on cyberbullying. Like other regions, Africa favours promoting digital literacy education for growing children. However, there is one issue: unequal access to technology and digital literacy education, especially between rural and urban regions.

In the U.S, all states differ in their ways of addressing cyberbullying. For instance, some states implemented explicit criminal laws against it, while others merely require school or district policies to mitigate its effects. Majority of the states have laws that include criminal sanction for electronic harassment, but only the laws of 17 states address off-campus cyberbullying.⁷⁷

Countries With the Least Cyberbullying Cases

Japan, and Chile have the least number of reported cases of cyberbullying, and countries may consider adopting some of their actions. Japan enacted a law that simplifies court proceedings for cybercrime.⁷⁸ In Chile, the Chilean President Sebastián Piñera, announced he initiative, “Ley Ciber Acoso” to punish all forms of harassment through electronic means. Through this initiative, he hopes to “detect and severely punish those who abuse women by disseminating confidential information or photographs that are private.”⁷⁹ What UNICEF can take away from countries in this bloc is the countries’ response to cyberbullying. It is encouraged that nations in this bloc speak out about the policies that helped reduce online harassment in their countries.

⁷⁶<https://mobiforge.com/research-analysis/global-mobile-statistics-2014-part-a-mobile-subscribers-handset-market-share-mobile-operators>

⁷⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/291082/us-states-with-state-cyber-bullying-laws-policy/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/04/21/national/cyberbullying-law-enacted/>

⁷⁹

<https://santiagotimes.cl/2019/03/08/international-womens-day-pinera-announces-bill-to-punish-cyberbullying-in-chile/>

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