

BACKGROUND GUIDE OF SOCHUM

SAIMUN 2024



“Education must continue even in times of crisis whether it may be a calamity, disaster, emergency, quarantine, or even war.”

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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates, it gives us great honor and immense pleasure to welcome you all to the United Nations General Assembly- Social, Humanitarian & Cultural (Third Committee) [UNGA SOCHUM] at Sai MUN 2024. As representatives of member nations of the SOCHUM, you are tasked with debating, deliberating, and reaching a consensus on the agendas at hand.

This background guide has been designed to help you get started on your research. However, this document should not be your only source of research. Building upon the outlook presented by this guide, you are expected to conduct your own research through authentic sources and make sure to engage in comprehensive and pragmatic debate throughout the sessions. The Executive Board will not interfere in the flow of debate unless absolutely required. Therefore, the onus to ensure that the committee does not stagnate lies with the delegates. We strongly believe that with good research, the delegates will be able to steer the committee in the right direction.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Board at any time before or during the conference if you have any queries about the agenda or the rules of procedure. Further, we have added one addendum to this letter that talks about the nature of evidence entailed in this simulation.

We request the delegates not to view this conference as a zero-sum game. Model UN conferences are collaborative rather than competitive and we would like to keep this spirit alive during our committee. Our goal is not to solve the world's problems in three days, but rather to educate ourselves about them, thereby ensuring that we go on to become a generation of sensitized leaders, equipped with the skills and will to make our world a better place. With that being said, we wish you all good luck and eagerly look forward to the conference.

With Warm Regards,

Executive Board

Rishabh ManojKumar Kumbhat - Chairperson

Mukund Nand Dwivedi - Vice Chairperson

FAQs

What is the purpose of the background guide?

Though the extent of your preparation and expertise on the subject cannot be limited by the EB, the BG ensures that all of you attending the simulation have a basic idea of the agenda and the committee. This BG hopes to acclimatize the prospective delegates with the minimum requirements.

And the idea is to give delegates their creative space. To ensure that the EB has refrained from providing individual opinions. And most of the content presented here is derived from credible sources.

But, at the same time though the BG gives standard facts and opinions, the delegates are free to research further and even contradict the content presented here. But it is advisable to research extensively before taking any such steps.

How to prepare for the role of a delegate?

The answer to this question is very subjective and changes from person to person. But the basic idea is to recognize your strengths and weaknesses. And strategies to reap the full benefits of your preparation. And preparation should be regarding the agenda as well as your foreign policy (the policies and actions of your respective governments about the agenda, it includes certain aspects of domestic policy which have impact on the international arena). Also ensure to study your relationship and role with respect to various intergovernmental and international organizations.

If we were to give you a guideline, you should first research the foreign policy of your country in detail, what is their general modus operandi when it comes to foreign policy and diplomacy, if they engage in multilateral cooperation, and to what extent, if they have a positive or negative view of the current power dynamic in those multilateral organizations, you can then move on to their past and present actions when it comes to the agenda and the committee we are discussing that agenda in, their voting stances on official documents and such.

Then you do substantive research on the agenda at hand, what are the actions required by individual countries, a regional group of countries, and the world community in general. We would even go as far as to say learning of terms and definitions regarding the agenda should come after the foreign policy research because the definition itself might differ based on your countries stance on the agenda, which is the situation in the realm of geopolitics.

You can then move on to know more about other countries' stance on the agenda, their individual and multilateral actions.

So, please start with knowing everything about your country's polity and foreign policy before you continue with the rest of the background guide.

Your orientation as a delegate is completely left to your discretion and it is expected that you will try to strike a balance between your foreign policy and conduct in the committee.

You can extend your sources to official UN sources, Government statements and reports, and even credible Non-Governmental Organizations. There are multiple Audio- Visual sources which can function as a starting point. (e.g., UN Library, or alternative news media)

How to prepare for the role of a delegate?

To ensure smooth functioning of the simulation a set of rules are followed, which are referred to as ROP. There are various acceptable ROPs, and they differ from one conference to another. In this simulation we will be following the UN4MUN rules of procedure. There would be certain deviations from the established procedures as the rules allow for that from the EB's end. None the less, we will be explaining the ROPs in the initial sessions of the conference. If you would like to gain a pre-conference perspective, you are free to go through the long form of the UN4MUN ROP.

Are there any restrictions for delegates during the conference?

Apart from the general restrictions that the Organizing Committee provides for, there are a few aspects we would like you to keep in mind during the conference.

- Internet usage is prohibited during committee sessions, and disqualification from awards may result from proven cases of violation.
- Delegates should prepare all necessary documents beforehand and have evidence ready to refute potential statements made by other delegates.
- Plagiarism is frowned upon, and documents with plagiarism will be negatively marked.
- Delegates are expected to extend courteous behavior to all conference attendees, including staff members.
- Delegates should refrain from simply stating what their country has stated at the time of the formation of the Declaration or why the Declaration needs to exist. Instead, the focus should be on analyzing the universal periodic review section of the Declaration.
- Emphasis should be placed on analysis of what has been implemented and what needs to be accomplished furthermore. Avoid lengthy case studies as far as possible.

Substantive questions about the committee

Q: What is the historical relevance and current relevance and significance of the United Nations?

A: The United Nations (UN) has a rich historical backdrop that traces its roots to the end of World War II. Created in 1945, its primary objective was to prevent the recurrence of devastating global conflicts and to establish a framework for international cooperation. Over the years, the UN's role has evolved to address a wide range of challenges, from peacekeeping and humanitarian aid to global health crises and climate change. In contemporary times, the significance of the UN is multifaceted. It serves as a forum where nations can collaborate on shared challenges, be it cybersecurity, the ongoing climate crisis, or pandemic response. Understanding the UN's historical relevance and its current significance is key for anyone engaging in discussions around international affairs, be it at a Model UN conference or beyond.

Q: What are the United Nations General Assembly and what are its specific committees? In specific, what is the role of SOCHUM? And how does it differ from other multilateral committees, like the United Nations Human Rights Council or ECOSOC?

A: The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six main organs of the UN and serves as a forum where all 193 member states can gather to discuss and coordinate on international issues. It adopts resolutions, oversees UN programs and budgets, and plays a pivotal role in norm-setting and the development of international law. SOCHUM focuses on social, humanitarian affairs, and human rights issues that affect people all over the world. It differs from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which is specifically responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which coordinates the economic, social, and related work of UN agencies. SOCHUM covers an array of topics that intersect between social issues and human rights, making it unique.

Q: How is discussion in a general assembly different from other organs in the United Nations?

A: Discussions in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) differ from those in other UN organs primarily in terms of their scope, representation, and decision-making processes. UNGA discussions cover a broad range of topics and include all 193 member states, making it the most inclusive body. Most resolutions are passed by a two-thirds majority, serving as recommendations rather than being legally binding. In contrast, specialized organs like the Security Council or ECOSOC focus more narrowly on specific issues and have different membership and voting dynamics. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for grasping how each organ functions within the UN ecosystem and for navigating the intricacies of discussions during a Model UN conference.

Human Rights

It is said that a right is not what someone gives you; it is what no one can take from you. Human Rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behavior and are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal(domestic) and international law. They are commonly understood as fundamental rights “to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being,” and which are “inherent in all human beings” regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin, or any other status. Though initially it was perceived that only states can violate human rights, with increasing share of private organizations and non-state actors in the amount of authority exercised, even non state actors come under certain obligations. But it is a general established practice that the state, in addition to ensuring protection from human rights violations, also has the responsibility to regulate the non state actors to safeguard human rights.

Steps taken by the international community.

Though there were individual and collective steps taken by respective governments preceding World War II, all pales in comparison to the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It brought the international community to collectively work towards safeguarding human rights. There are around nine core human rights treaties which can be investigated if you would like to get an all-round perspective. Each of these instruments has established a committee of experts to monitor the implementation of the treaty provisions by its state’s parties. The United Nations(UN) has also taken certain steps to promote and protect human rights, including but not limited to, Discussions in its various committees of the General Assembly(especially SOCHUM), ECOSOC covering certain aspects of economic and social rights, Establishing the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Establishing the Human Rights Commission, and replacing it with the UNHRC. Apart from these most of the regional arrangements of states have a provision of Commissions in their bodies that work towards safeguarding human rights in the member states. E.g., The European Union, African Union etc.

Introduction to the Agenda

In times of crisis, such as war, pandemics, world hunger, and societal breakdown, ensuring access to education becomes a critical challenge for the international community. The fundamental right to education, enshrined in various international treaties and declarations, remains a beacon of hope and resilience, even in the face of adversity. This agenda aims to explore the importance of education as a stabilizing force, a tool for empowerment, and a pathway to rebuilding societies during times of crisis.

The world is facing unprecedented challenges that require a greater plan, an expanded objective, and a larger scheme to ensure access to education for all. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the education of millions of children and youth, exacerbating existing inequalities and creating new barriers to learning. Armed conflicts and wars continue to destroy educational infrastructure and displace populations, depriving them of their right to education. Natural disasters and climate-related events, such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts, have also severely impacted education systems, leaving many children without access to learning opportunities.

In the face of these challenges, it is crucial to prioritize education as a key component of crisis response and recovery efforts. By developing an amplified goal, an augmented purpose, and a bigger plan, we can ensure that education remains accessible and inclusive, even in the face of adversity. This agenda serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to work together to safeguard the fundamental human right to education, promote social cohesion and resilience, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Making Education a Priority During Crisis.

A vital part of a child's development, education is a fundamental human right that is denied to millions of children worldwide because of war, natural disasters, and public health crises. Education is frequently given less priority during emergencies, with funds going to disaster response operations instead of schools. But preserving children's access to education is crucial to ensuring their future security, resilience, and well-being. Even in times of emergency, governments and international organizations should prioritize education.

Adapting Education Systems to Crises

Education systems need to be modified to become more emergency-responsive and robust to guarantee access to education in times of emergencies. This entails training educators on how to offer psychosocial assistance to traumatized pupils and making investments in digital learning infrastructure to facilitate remote education if traditional classroom instruction is disrupted. It is recommended that curricula be modified to emphasize life skills and resilience building to assist youngsters in managing the difficulties they encounter. Forming alliances with the business community and civil society is essential to mobilizing funds and knowledge to improve educational institutions.

Protecting Schools and Students

The safety of children to study and develop in schools must be maintained even in the face of disputes and emergencies. Attacks on educational institutions constitute a serious violation of children's rights, with dire implications for their welfare and educational opportunities. International laws and standards that forbid attacks on schools and guarantee that schools are not used for military reasons must be upheld by governments and armed organizations. Additionally, schools ought to serve as central locations for providing kids with necessities like food, medical treatment, and psychological support. By safeguarding both students and schools, we can guarantee that education persists even in the most difficult circumstances.

The Effects of Crises on Access to Education

Access to education is severely harmed by war, starvation, pandemics, and medical errors:

Conflicts: Children's rights are gravely violated by attacks on schools. Over 2,000 attacks against schools were reported in 2020.

Hunger: Before COVID-19, starvation caused stunted growth in 21.3% of children worldwide. In the US, food insecurity has risen due to the epidemic and is now at an all-time high.

Pandemics: Around 1.6 billion students worldwide had their schooling interrupted by COVID-19 school closures. Impoverished children disproportionately felt the impact.

Breakdowns in healthcare: Health systems are too overwhelmed to offer basic treatments like vaccines on a regular basis. Children's education and health are at stake because of this.

Education during Wartime, Pandemic:

Millions of children worldwide are denied the opportunity to receive an education because of war, natural disasters, and public health problems. Education is a fundamental human right and is essential to a child's growth. Education is frequently given less priority during times of crisis, with funds being taken out of schools. But preserving children's access to education is crucial to ensuring their future security, resilience, and well-being.

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused significant disruptions to the education of more than 1.6 billion children globally, resulting in school closures. The effects of this have been uneven, with kids from underprivileged backgrounds being disproportionately impacted. The world was already experiencing a "learning crisis" before the pandemic struck, with more than 50% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income nations being unable to read and comprehend a simple paragraph. Due to the epidemic, many students experienced significant instructional time losses and difficulty accessing remote learning, which has worsened these learning gaps.

Wars and conflicts also negatively affect people's ability to receive education. Over 2,000 attacks on schools were reported in 2020 alone, a serious violation of children's rights. The substantial declines in educational achievement observed following World War II and the Spanish flu pandemic show that the disruption of education during conflicts can have long-lasting effects. Hunger and malnutrition make matters worse by forcing families to pull their children out of school, which hinders their capacity to learn. Food insecurity has risen in the US due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching a level not seen in decades. In low-income nations, the situation is significantly worse.

Children's education is also at danger due to healthcare systems that are overburdened and find it difficult to deliver basic services like routine vaccines. The use of schools as makeshift shelters or medical facilities interferes with education even more. Governments and international organizations need to act quickly to ensure that access to education is maintained amid certain crises:

When traditional classroom instruction is disrupted, make investments in digital learning infrastructure and teacher preparation to support remote learning. To assist kids in overcoming trauma and adversity, curricula should be modified to emphasize resilience-building and life skills. Respect the rules that forbid attacks on educational institutions and make sure that, even in areas of turmoil, schools are kept safe for instruction.

To alleviate hunger and meet healthcare needs, schools should offer take-home rations, school meals, and other necessary services. To mobilize resources and skills to help education systems, fortify

connections with the private sector and civic society. We can guarantee that no child is left behind, even in the face of pandemics, hunger, war crimes, and medical disasters, by putting and emphasis on education, adjusting systems, and safeguarding schools and students. To prioritize education during every crisis, there must be coordinated worldwide effort.

Education During Wartime

Secure Instructional Settings:

Temporary Learning Spaces: Establish makeshift classrooms in safe havens such underground shelters, community centers, or refugee camps.

Mobile Schools: Provide education to kids who are unable to commute to school by using buses or other mobile units.

Distance Education: Create and make use of home-accessible online learning platforms. For those without internet access, provide them with offline learning resources including worksheets, textbooks, and classes that have already been recorded.

Psychosocial Assistance: Educate educators on how to deal with trauma and offer pupils psychological help. Provide mental health and counseling services in schools or via community initiatives.

Adaptable Curriculum: Develop curricula that are modular in nature so that students can learn at their own pace and can be modified in accordance with the resources that are accessible. To equip students for a range of situations, incorporate life skills and vocational training into the curriculum.

Parental and Community Involvement: Give parents tools and training to help their kids learn at home and involve them in the educational process. Work together with neighborhood groups to guarantee community participation and support educational programs.

Education During a Pandemic

Digital Education: To continue education during school closures, make use of well-known e-learning platforms and online classrooms. Teach educators and learners how to use digital resources for learning in an efficient manner.

Solution Types: Low-Tech and No-Tech

For pupils without internet access, broadcast instructional content on radio and television. To guarantee learning continuity, distribute printed instructional materials and resources.

Procedures for Health and Safety:

To teach children about illness prevention, including health and hygiene education in the curriculum. Create and put into effect safety procedures, such as mask wearing, social separation, and hygienic precautions, before reopening schools.

Assistance for Teachers:

Provide opportunities for professional development so that educators can adjust to new instructional strategies and technological advancements. Offer tools and support for educators who are struggling with the stress of teaching during a pandemic.

Fairness and Inclusion:

Ascertain that pupils have the internet connectivity and laptops or tablets they require. To accommodate children with special education needs, modify instructional strategies and materials.

Observation and Assessment:

Monitor student development and pinpoint areas of learning deficiency by conducting regular evaluations. To continuously enhance the educational process, set up mechanisms for receiving input from instructors, parents, and students.

Past Events

The impact of the Syrian Civil War (2011-present) on education Widespread devastation of infrastructure, including schools. Millions of children are being uprooted, both domestically and as refugees in other nations. Disruptions to the children's usual education schedule and severe psychological damage.

Techniques Used:

Temporary Learning Spaces: UNICEF and Save the Children have set up temporary schools in community centers and refugee camps.

Remote and Digital Learning: Using digital resources and online learning environments to reach students who have been displaced. Psychosocial support refers to the provision of mental health services and trauma-informed teaching methods to enhance students' emotional wellbeing.

The impact of the 2014–2016 West African Ebola outbreak extended school closures in afflicted nations including as Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia to stop the virus's spread. Massive disruption to millions of children's schooling, escalating already-existing disparities in education.

Techniques Used:

Radio and TV Education: Students can receive instructional content at home through radio and television broadcasts.

Community Engagement: Organizing volunteers from the local community to provide resources for at-home learning and to distribute educational materials.

Health and cleanliness Education: Including lessons on health and cleanliness in the curriculum helps teach kids how to prevent illness.

The COVID-19 pandemic

Billions of pupils are impacted by the global shutdown of schools. Go to remote learning and draw attention to the differences in people's access to internet and technology.

Techniques Used: E-learning systems: To support virtual classrooms, online learning systems like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Classroom can be quickly deployed.

Low-Tech Solutions: Reach kids without internet access by using printed materials, radio, and television.

Mental Health Support: Providing instructors and students with mental health resources and assistance to help them deal with the stress and isolation brought on by the pandemic.

1918's Spanish Flu Pandemic: The early 20th century Spanish flu epidemic severely disrupted education, killing an estimated 20–forty million people globally. For extended periods of time, a lot of colleges and institutions were closed to stop the spread of illness. Early distance learning programs were introduced in some areas, such as Los Angeles, through mail-in assignment modules. Children's educational attainment in primary schools decreased because of the pandemic.

World War II: The war significantly reduced the educational achievement of elementary school students, which had a detrimental effect on access to education as well. The wartime disruption of education has far-reaching effects.

Conclusion

A multifaceted approach is necessary to ensure that education is provided during times of widespread war crimes, hunger, pandemics, and healthcare breakdowns. Education is a fundamental human right that is frequently threatened during crises, but it is also crucial for children's development, well-being, and future opportunities. Conflicts, pandemics, and other crises have a significant impact on education access, with disruptions resulting in learning gaps, lower educational attainment, and long-term consequences for individuals and societies.

Over 1.6 billion children around the world had their schooling interrupted by the COVID-19 epidemic, which made already-existing disparities and learning gaps worse by forcing schools to close. This crisis made it clear how crucial it is to make education systems more resilient, to invest in digital infrastructure, and to enable distant learning to guarantee continuous access to education. Conflicts and war crimes have also resulted in attacks on schools, compromising student and teacher safety and security and upsetting educational settings. The Spanish flu pandemic and World War II are two historical instances of how crises can affect educational access and achievement, highlighting the necessity of safeguards and encouragement for learning in trying circumstances.

Governments, international organizations, and communities must place a high priority on education, modify systems to increase resilience, and safeguard schools as secure learning environments to solve these issues. To facilitate remote learning and promote students' well-being in times of need, investments in digital learning infrastructure, teacher preparation, and curriculum adaptation are crucial. To protect access to education during emergencies, it is imperative that rules against attacks on schools be upheld. Other important measures include offering basic services like school lunches and healthcare and developing relationships with the corporate and civil society sectors.

Questions that the committee shall answer.

- In what ways may local communities be more involved in the planning and execution of educational initiatives in times of crisis?
- What tactics may be used to guarantee that educational resources are inclusive of kids with special needs and appropriate for their culture?
- What measures may be taken by governments to safeguard infrastructure and budgets for education during emergencies?
- In the event of a global emergency, how can international entities effectively collaborate to guarantee prompt action and ongoing support for education?

- How can we continue to create and provide scalable, affordable digital learning solutions for students in disaster and war areas?
- What are the best ways to guarantee privacy and data security in remote learning settings in times of emergency?
- How can we keep developing and offering students in disaster and conflict areas scalable, priced digital learning solutions?
- In an emergency, what are the best approaches to ensure data security and privacy in remote learning environments?