

**UNICEF**  
United Nations Children's Fund



**GBSMUN VIII**  
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Chair: Saanya Shah  
Vice-Chair: Aria Jain  
Moderator: Ana Arzoumanidis

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## Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GBSMUN VIII! I'm super excited to be back to an in-person GBSMUN for my last year of Model UN. My name is Saanya Shah, and I'm a senior this year at Glenbrook South. I've been doing Model UN since my freshman year but started really getting involved at the beginning of my sophomore year. GBSMUN will be the last high school Model UN conference I'll attend, so it's a bittersweet experience for sure. Outside of Model UN, I'm on the Varsity Tennis and Track teams and am an active member of Interact Club, Student Council, and Women in Business. I'm also president of South's UNICEF Club, so I'm really looking forward to chairing a UNICEF committee.

In committee, you will be discussing two very interesting topics that will require you to engage your knowledge of global issues as well as your debate skills. The first is education and inclusion for children with disabilities, and the second is XXXXX. Although they are different topics, these two issues share some similarities, so you'll be able to draw in research from either topic no matter which topic we ultimately choose to debate. In committee, I'm looking for a delegate who is able to clearly communicate their position and progress as well as a delegate that is inclusive, diplomatic, and respectful to other delegates. Prewriting is not permitted on any basis and will result in an automatic disqualification from awards.

Aside from this background guide, delegates are expected to do some outside research to help better understand the topics and compile their research, position, and potential solutions in a position paper. Please print a hard copy of your paper formatted in Times New Roman 12pt font and double spaced to be turned in at the start of the committee. **Position papers will only be accepted as HARD COPIES the day of committee.** If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [226307@glenbrook225.org](mailto:226307@glenbrook225.org). See you all in committee!

Thanks,  
Saanya Shah

## **History & Overview of UNICEF**

In December of 1946, the United Nations established the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to provide children with basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, and water in a post-World War II humanitarian crisis. In 1953, UNICEF was officiated as a UN general assembly and from there has extended around the world, helping millions of children in 196 countries. In 1954, the committee established long-term planning and committed to projects for several years at a time, leading to the creation of the many projects UNICEF does today.

UNICEF strives for three main goals: child safety, health, and nutritional needs. For food security, UNICEF takes on "applied nutrition" projects, where the constituents of each country or territory learn about nutrition (via nutrition education) and then produce protective foods through gardens, ponds and more. For health, UNICEF strengthens training in pediatrics and preventive medicine to help prevent diseases from causing sickness and deaths. Rather than throwing money or resources at countries that need aid, UNICEF focuses on helping countries' economic systems by teaching people how to find food, fish and make clothing, on their own. In 1968, UNICEF launched an initiative to train teachers and modernized schools' curriculums as the importance of education was being brought to light. Furthermore, UNICEF added constituents in rural towns and expanded aid to non-formal education in 1973.

With worldwide economic crises worsening in 1976, UNICEF shifted their focus to mobilizing resources at the community—rather than federal—level. This prompted many projects for the organization, like the Child Survival and Development Revolution in 1982, the Vaccine distribution campaign in 1985, and the universal child immunization fund in 1990. UNICEF's work has been nothing short of successful in the past 75 years. To date, UNICEF has spent over \$57 million on 500 million vaccines, causing vaccine distribution to increase 24 percent. At the end of 1993, life expectancy in the developing world increased by about a third; infant and child death rates dropped 50 percent. 75 percent of children now start school, the education initiative worked. Rural families with access to safe drinking water rose 50%. UNICEF has helped the world in unimaginable ways, and will continue to do so for many years to come.

## **Topic A: Education and Inclusion for Children with Disabilities**

### History of the Topic

Children with disabilities face many forms of discrimination, from unsatisfactory accomodation in spheres of public and private life to inadequate access to education. Although several countries have enacted anti-discriminatory policies in education and the workplace, the problem continues to worsen. This problem is largely rooted in historical precedents and a long-lasting stigma towards children and adults with disabilities.

Before the 18th century, people with disabilities were not regarded as functional members of society.<sup>1</sup> In ancient times, mental or physical disability was associated with supernatural punishment or satanic activity. In a society dominated by religion, every unfortunate act was justified by defiance of faith. However, with the Enlightenment came revolutionary thinking and a critique of historical norms, including perspectives on children with disabilities. Philanthropic educator Charles Michel L’Epee’, also known as the “Father of the Deaf”, founded the first public school for children with disabilities in 1760.<sup>2</sup> Educators across Europe followed suit, with the first institution for the deaf established in 1817 and the first school for blind children founded in 1829. Furthermore, with the invention of differential diagnosis in the early 19th century, disabilities were also able to be better treated during this time.

Although institutions for disability education were created in the 1800s, the movement for rights of the disabled skyrocketed in the 20th century. Most of the activism was fueled by the dis abled themselves, creating what is known as a “bottom-up” movement. In the United States,

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<sup>1</sup> [Disability History Timeline | UMN.ORG](#)

<sup>2</sup> [History of Special Education | NeiuIcentro](#)

several local groups came together and formed the NARC, now known as the Arc of the United States, to fight for a disabled child's right to be raised at home rather than in an institution as many physicians were recommending.<sup>3</sup> During the first World War, over 2 million disabled soldiers fought for the United Kingdom, changing both the government and British citizens' perspectives on their capabilities. New forms of physical therapy and prosthetics were introduced to the community, housing was built for disabled ex-servicemen, and employers were urged to take on disabled workers.<sup>4</sup> The first Special Olympics was held in Chicago's Soldier Field in 1968, with a goal of emphasizing the ability of people with intellectual disabilities. However, up to half a million children in the UK had a physical disability or sensory impairment, and were only trained for low-skilled jobs that they never ended up attaining. Their disabilities mainly stemmed from poverty and disease, and there was no special equipment accessible to working class families. Children weren't being adequately included in the growing movement, in both developed and developing countries.



The larger the movement grew, the more attention the United Nations and member government paid to that topic. In 1989, member nations adopted a framework for children's

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<sup>3</sup> [History of the Arc | arc.org](https://www.arc.org/history)

<sup>4</sup> [Disability in the Early 20th Century | Historic England](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/disability-in-the-early-20th-century)

rights at the The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Convention. The convention emphasized equality in education and the full development of a child, Reaffirming the rights that children with disabilities have and creating a wide range of obligations to remove barriers that impede rights of



disabled children. Countries have since strengthened their interpretation of the framework to make for more inclusive and effective implementation.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights has been the largest gathering to date on the topic of disability rights and inclusion, resulting in the Vienna Declaration. Article 22 of the Vienna Declaration read that “Special attention needs to be paid to ensure non-discrimination, and the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by disabled persons, including their active participation in all aspects of society.”<sup>5</sup> Since then, many countries have implemented their own policies and legal framework for the protection and inclusion of people with disabilities. However, the discrimination against the population—especially children—continues to plague our society today.

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<sup>5</sup> [Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action | OHCHR](#)

## Current Status of the Problem:

Solutions for this issue are plausible and in recent decades, the world has made significant headway in improving inclusivity and spreading awareness about the inequalities children with disabilities experience. Children born into poverty are at a far higher risk of being disabled due to the health and injury risks present.<sup>6</sup> In countries experiencing more poverty, a continuous cycle will often be present due to the lack of resources to help those with disabilities get the proper care and treatment they need.

It is important to recognize that there is a wide range of cases that need to be addressed in legislation in order to make significant progress. In order for current systems to be fully inclusive to those with disabilities, it must consider age, gender, and disability specific needs.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, in Belgrade, Serbia, a conference was held between UNICEF and the National Organization of Persons with Disabilities (NOOIS). Here, both foreign and local representatives worked to create comprehensive criteria to help identify what a location or specific case needed to focus on in order to help with the inclusion and awareness of those with disabilities.

This analysis found six sectors of focus: discrimination, poverty and social security, education, social protection and family living, health care, and protection against violence and abuse. With clear guidelines for



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<sup>6</sup> [UN OHCHR, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, 2018.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [UNICEF, Three Disability Goals, 2017](#)

further aid and advocacy formulated, help to those with disabilities in need has started to become a more organized and comprehensive system.

This system, however, requires an identification assessment to determine what sector/s of aid is necessary.<sup>8</sup> In locations that are difficult to reach geographically or do not have access to qualified individuals equipped to administer this assessment, people with disabilities are not able to receive help in the sector/s that they need.

Without the proper assessment for the care persons with disabilities need, processes like institutionalization will occur. Institutionalization emerged in the 19th century as a response to custodial care or segregation of people in jails, almshouses or poor houses, insane or lunatic asylums, and hospitals for long-term sick and people with disabilities. Institutions have played a major role in capturing target populations that were then later subjected to the policies of eugenics; the main institutions included mental hospitals, training schools for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, and mental health guidance clinics<sup>9</sup>

Another major issue facing persons with disabilities falls within the lack of accommodations and inclusion within the education system. One-third of children at primary school age who are not in school are disabled.<sup>10</sup> The conditions and inclusivity for people with disabilities can be significantly improved in order to help increase the number of children with disabilities to attend school. The implementation of supportive and inclusive technology within schools with the resources to input them could significantly improve the quality of education and care children with disabilities receive.

In addition to newer technological systems, spreading awareness and correct information about persons with disabilities is one of the best ways to help solve this issue. Children with

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<sup>8</sup> [UNICEF, Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities, 2007](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Institutionalization | Eugenics Archive](#)

<sup>10</sup> [WHO, Early Childhood Development and Disability, 2012](#)

disabilities are often found to be at a higher risk for both physical and verbal abuse as they can be marginalized and excluded by society, causing them to face the consequences of discriminatory policies and attitudes. <sup>11</sup> Spreading the information that though persons with disabilities have the right to work and earn a living, they experience many barriers in the workplace such as inaccessible areas, discriminatory attitudes of co-workers and consumers, and a lack of services and policies. <sup>12</sup>

The legal system also causes many persons with disabilities to face challenges with the law. Some legal systems also routinely discriminate against children with disabilities. <sup>13</sup> There needs to be far more access to the justice system for children with disabilities which can then help with legal accountability and minimize the risk of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

## Case Studies

### The Netherlands

The Dutch constitution prohibits discrimination against children with special needs, allowing disabled children access to education of the same level and quality as other children. The Netherlands introduced the law on the Expertise Centers in 1998, which states that students are eligible for special education if they meet certain criteria. <sup>14</sup> Students who qualify for special education include learners with visual impairments, hearing impairment and/or communication disorders, physical and/or intellectual disabilities, and mental or behavioral disorders. According

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<sup>11</sup> [UNICEF, Disabilities: Introduction, 2017](#)

<sup>12</sup> [UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006](#)

<sup>13</sup> [UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Inclusive Education in the Netherlands | European Agency](#)

to a Gallup poll, 91% of Dutch citizens agreed that the Netherlands is a good place for people with intellectual disabilities—the highest out of every other country.

## Syria

Persons with disabilities within Syria are among the most discriminated against and excluded within society. With the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the country, nearly 10 million people live below the poverty line and 12 million rely on humanitarian assistance.<sup>15</sup> The ongoing Syrian civil war has resulted in 1.5 million people suffering from a disability with 175,000 people having nowhere to flee if an escalation of military action were to occur. Syria's representative said his country has spared no effort to support its people and that improving humanitarian conditions calls for addressing terrorism and the governments supporting it.

## United States

The United States is one of the few countries with concrete civil rights for persons with disabilities. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed. This civil rights law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.<sup>16</sup> This law works to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. The United States has also worked in more recent years to destigmatize the work disability with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008.

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<sup>15</sup> [Persons with Disabilities Face Exclusion, Psychosocial Challenges in Syria | UN](#)

<sup>16</sup> [What is the American with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)? | Adata](#)

## New Zealand

In New Zealand, schools are required to be inclusive under the Education and Training Act. In 2016, the New Zealand Disability Strategy was created to guide the work of government agencies on disability issues. The plan focuses on improving the lives of disabled people in 8 fields of outcome: education, employment and economic security, health and wellbeing, rights protection and justice, accessibility, attitudes, choice and control, and leadership.<sup>17</sup> Equal suffrage, access to information, and general accessibility in regards to public facilities and services are all current focuses of the New Zealand Disability Rights movement.

## Possible Solutions

Although awareness and inclusion for children with disabilities are still a looming issue, there are ways to improve the situation as demonstrated by the countries outlined in the case studies. The rights and freedoms of children with disabilities will be best realized through inclusion at every level, from the individual to the government. But inclusive education often does not get the budget commitment it needs, and stigma against the disabled community is still prevalent in society. Whether the solutions are internationally based or locally based, education, activism, and information-sharing will allow for strong solutions.

Furthermore, There is a strong connection between disability and poverty. Children in poverty have a greater chance of being disabled, and children with disabilities often fall into poverty. Identifying and addressing similar root causes faced by children with disabilities is crucial to finding a solution.

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<sup>17</sup> [New Zealand Disability Strategy | Office for Disability Issues](#)

## Acceptable Terms to Use in Committee:

| <b>Term no longer in use</b>                   | <b>Term used now</b>                                  |
|--|---|
| mental handicap                                | intellectual disability                               |
| Suffers from (e.g. asthma)                     | has asthma  |
| Wheelchair-bound                               | Person who uses a wheelchair                          |
| The disabled, the handicapped                  | Person with a disability or persons with disabilities |
| Retard, tard, moron, intellectually challenged | Person with an intellectual disability                |

## Questions to Consider:

1. How can countries collaborate to improve the inclusivity and education of persons with disabilities?
2. How does culture impact the inclusion and protection of children with disabilities?
3. What are the national plans of countries that have made progress on the protection and inclusion of children with disabilities?
4. Are there regional groups that have done work focusing on the protection and inclusion of children with disabilities?
5. Would having a unified definition of being disabled help with the protection and inclusion of children with disabilities?
6. Are there opportunities for more inter-agency work regarding children with disabilities?

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## Topic B: Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan

### The Problem

The return of Taliban control in Afghanistan has plunged the nation into the world's worst humanitarian crisis—a culmination of starvation, refugee displacement, Covid-19 infections, and a crippling economy. Tens of thousands of Afghans fled the country following the Taliban's return to power, contributing to the already existing 2.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide.<sup>18</sup> As a result, women have been unable to gain access to basic education, children

have been separated from their families, and the standard of living for Afghan immigrants has considerably worsened. Perhaps even more serious is the ongoing issue of widespread hunger and



destitution—an issue that continues to worsen in tandem with the disintegrating Afghan economy. The UN currently needs \$220 million a month in 2022 to be able to adequately provide resources to the 23 million Afghans in desperate need of food.<sup>19</sup> Natural disasters have also contributed greatly to the malnutrition crisis, most notably with drought and flooding diminishing food supply. The hunger epidemic has caused many citizens to take drastic measures, including selling their children for survival.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the entire world, and Afghanistan is no exception. The virus's severity has been exacerbated by the limited availability of vaccines,

<sup>18</sup> [Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis | Disaster Philanthropy](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Afghanistan: Humanitarian crisis threatens basic human rights](#)

healthcare, and hospital beds. Following the Taliban's return to power, COVID-19 vaccinations dropped by 80%, leaving the country's 2% vaccination rate stagnant. Many of Afghanistan's critical donor governments and banks have cut off their supply of funding, not wishing to engage with the Taliban by any means. With the recent spread of the Omicron variant and the promise for new variants to keep appearing, this issue is likely to get much worse in the coming months.

Finally, the return of the Taliban poses a major threat to the legal system put in place by the previous democratic government of Afghanistan. Justice and basic human rights are being undermined, as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has lost its ability to operate since August, and the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association has lost its independence to the new de facto Taliban government. Therefore, it has been difficult for human rights to be preserved, as many citizens have been unable to have the right of due process.

As the Afghan people struggle with their health, safety, and security, UN member nations are at a crossroads with what to do. As

previously mentioned, many states are reluctant to provide aid to Afghanistan out of fear of unintentionally supporting the Taliban.

International organizations, including UNICEF, have worked to provide aid but are making little progress. The minimal support for

internationally-funded refugee camps, makeshift hospitals, and schools is proving unsatisfactory throughout the nation.



## Bloc Positions

### Middle East

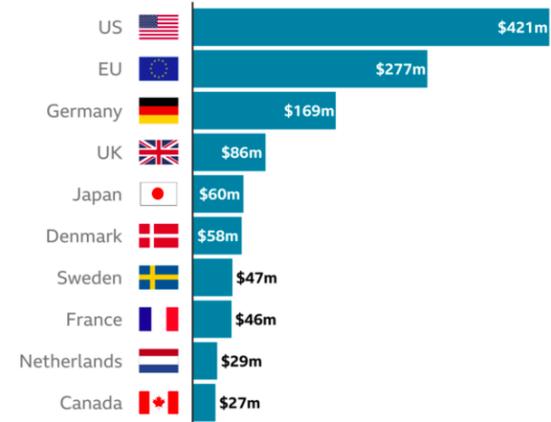
On December 16th, Gulf Arab countries made a promise to mobilize humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. So far, Saudi Arabia has been a key player in relieving Afghanistan's humanitarian and political crisis.<sup>20</sup> The country sent two aircraft carrying humanitarian aid mid-december—its first such initiative since the Taliban took control in August. The aid included 1,647 food baskets, and the state-run King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) is expected to deliver more than 197 tons of aid. Since the fall of Kabul, the UAE has flown more than 250 tons of humanitarian aid into Afghanistan and has opened its airports to more than five thousands Afghan refugees.<sup>21</sup> Although the United States is relying on these nations to conduct counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, they seem to be making their own decisions regarding aid and political ties.

### Western Bloc

The western nations' collective decision to not recognize the Taliban government has led to a difficult challenge of how to provide enough aid while not giving the Taliban legitimacy.<sup>22</sup> In October,

#### Largest donors to Afghanistan

Funding for Afghanistan humanitarian response plan and flash appeal 2021



Source: UNOCHA

BBC

<sup>20</sup> [Saudi Arabia sends humanitarian aid to Afghanistan | Aljazeera.](#)

<sup>21</sup> [What the Arab Gulf is thinking after the Afghanistan withdrawal | Atlantic Council](#)

<sup>22</sup> [As Afghanistan confronts humanitarian crisis, US to send \\$308 million in aid | PBS](#)

the European Union pledged \$1 billion in humanitarian aid. Germany, The United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, France, and the Netherlands are the largest donors to Afghanistan in Europe.

<sup>23</sup> The United States remains the biggest donor of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, having sent over \$500 million so far with a plan of sending over \$300 million more. In addition, the White House pledged that it would send Afghanistan one million additional Covid-19 vaccines. In general, these states have expressed that although they are unwilling to take in refugees themselves, they will assist Central Asian countries that allow refugees into their territories.<sup>24</sup> However, this offer has not been addressed by any Middle Eastern countries thus far.

#### Eastern & Southern Asia

Late last year, the foreign ministers of India, Russia , and China expressed their concern at the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The ministers released a joint statement calling for “immediate and unhindered humanitarian assistance”, placing specific emphasis on combating illicit drug trafficking in the region.<sup>25</sup> Following the Taliban takeover, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said it was willing to continue to develop “friendly and cooperative relations with Afghanistan.” It has since pledged \$31 million in food, medicine, Covid vaccines, and other aid. Furthermore, India sent 2 tons of medicines in December to Kabul. The Taliban was quick to thank India, claiming that diplomatic relations with the Indian government were of the utmost importance to them.

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<sup>23</sup> [Afghanistan: What humanitarian aid is getting in? | BBC News](#)

<sup>24</sup> [No Place for Afghan Refugees in Central Asia | The Diplomat](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Afghan humanitarian crisis, drug trafficking alarm India, Russia, China| Reuters](#)

## Possible Solutions

As Afghanistan faces daily collapses, an exponential increase in displacement, and heightened poverty, addressing and providing solutions to this humanitarian crisis is extremely prevalent. The crisis in 2021 has directly affected foreign aid to Afghanistan as well. However, this year, the United Nations have launched an aid appeal of \$4.4 billion dollars for Afghanistan, which is the largest ever for humanitarian assistance in a single country. The sheer amount of humanitarian aid needs to grow significantly in order to combat the myriad of issues the country and its inhabitants are currently facing. Over 23 million people in Afghanistan are currently food insecure and The World Food Program's survey shows that 98% of the Afghani population lacks the sufficient daily caloric intake<sup>26</sup>. With

millions of Afghans on the verge of famine and the women and children of Afghanistan taking on the brunt of the crisis, their foreign donors need to take immediate action in order to help support the collapsing health services. A plan also needs to be assembled to address the



education systems, banking systems, and other critical needs.<sup>27</sup> It is also important to realize that the cooperation of the Taliban is necessary in order to begin to address these issues. Afghanistan also faces a major economic collapse with inflated food prices and banks not functioning at their normal caliber. To truly address every facet of this humanitarian crisis, multiple solutions and plans must be implemented to help the people of Afghanistan.

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<sup>26</sup> [The Taliban Are Back - What is next for Afghanistan? | BBC](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Afghanistan: Humanitarian Crisis Needs Urgent Response | HRW](#)

## Questions to Consider

1. What fundamental problems are causing the crisis, and how can the UN combat them?
2. What is your country's relationship with Afghanistan? Have they provided any aid so far?
3. How does the Taliban being in power impact a country's willingness to provide aid?  
What are some ways a member state can work around the government?
4. What form of humanitarian aid is Afghanistan in need of the most? How can the UN provide them with that?
5. How should the UN account for Afghan refugees?

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