

Background guide

**United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**

AlexMUN 2023

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## PRESENTATION

On the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund committee (UNICEF) what will be discussed on this committee are two topics that are of the utmost importance, these being the consequences of postcolonialism in children's quality of life in former colonies and the access to basic needs of displaced children. The difficulty level of this committee is junior, meaning that only people between the ages of 12 and 13 (cursing 6th grade) can enroll.

Greetings Delegates, my name is Daniela Posada and I will be acting as your president for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund committee at Alexmun 2023. The members of the chair and I are pleased to be moderating these debate sessions and are excited to reach great resolutions. If you need help or have any questions, feel free to contact me at [danielabeatriz.posada@bab.edu.mx](mailto:danielabeatriz.posada@bab.edu.mx)

Hello Delegates, I am Maria Jose Oliver and I am pleased to inform you that I will be acting as the moderator for the Alexmun 2023 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund committee. We invite you to participate actively and express your country's perspective. If you need anything or have any doubts, please contact me through [mariajose.oliver@bab.edu.mx](mailto:mariajose.oliver@bab.edu.mx)

Dear Delegates, I, Jose Carlos Aburto, will be your conference officer for the 2023 Alexmun United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund committee. It is in my best interest that you feel prepared to take on your role as a delegate and know we will work hard and have a good time. If you are in any need of assistance, please feel free to contact me at [josecarlos.aburto@bab.edu.mx](mailto:josecarlos.aburto@bab.edu.mx)

## INTRODUCTION

*“The welfare of today’s children is inseparably linked with the peace of tomorrow’s world”*

-Henry Richardson Labouisse

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established in 1946, after World War II; it was created with the sole purpose of helping children have their rights taken into account and support them so they can reach their full potential, especially in countries with less development. Its headquarters are located in New York City and it won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1965. The faculties of this committee include adolescent development, social and behavior change, child protection, early childhood development, education, gender equality, health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, social policy, water, sanitation, and hygiene. UNICEF has several members, which include 191 countries, excluding only nine, this being Bahamas, Brunei, Cyprus, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Singapore, and Taiwan.

UNICEF is an organization that gathers vaccines for approximately 40% of children globally, this being three billion doses yearly. It is also the biggest buyer of mosquito nets globally, this is due to the fact that these help protect children from mosquito bites which can transmit a wide variety of illnesses; this is an organization widely concerned for the health and well-being of children from all over the world, providing cures, vaccines, and medicines for a lot of different illnesses that endanger the lives of the little ones, and one from every three kids are helped daily by UNICEF. It funds and builds hospitals and schools so that children can get medical care whenever needed and an education that will open many doors in life. On a more general view of the organization itself, the flag is blue with the globe with the leaves of the UN flag, but on this particular one, there is a mother and a child in the middle.

## **TOPIC A: THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSTCOLONIALISM IN CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE IN FORMER COLONIES**

### **Introduction**

Postcolonialism is known as the historical period representing the aftermath of Western colonialism, and it studies the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies. Postcolonialism marks a possible future of overcoming colonialism and brings with it new ways of domination and global empire. We can say that some of the values that are left behind from postcolonialism are languages, style, and beliefs. A really important negative aspect that emerged from postcolonialism is trauma. A lot of people suffered from trauma and this could have been an accident, rape, verbal abuse, or bullying that could have happened to people of all ages, going from seniors to children.

### **Historical context**

The children's quality of life after postcolonialism has been affected and has caused many impacts. Crucial in colonial policies toward children was the separation of children from their parents, communities, or cultures. This happened in two ways, either temporarily or permanently, and this in many cases occurred through punishment or violence. Child separation could be involved in many ways such as adoption, foster parenting, or even though children ended up being marginalized from their communities or were bought as slaves. For colonial politics, it was essential to control and influence the colonized population. These postcolonial policies were mainly implied in the Netherlands and Belgium. Talking about the forced removal of racially mixed Congolese, Rwandan, and Burundian children from their birth mothers has caused public indignation.

Political instability and conflict have also been significant challenges in postcolonial societies, with children often being the most vulnerable victims of violence and displacement. A country that has seen improvements in the quality of life for children in Rwanda. Despite facing significant challenges after the 1994 genocide, the government has made an effort to improve the lives of children. Countries such as Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen continue to face conflict, instability, and poverty, which have a significant impact on children's lives.

Talking about the impact on the health of the children, we can see a big impact on postcolonial Africa. The high prevalence of infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. These diseases are often presented by poor living conditions, inadequate

healthcare infrastructure, and limited access to healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. Another important factor that has been seen in Africa is the malnutrition of children. This has led to problems with growth and generated other types of diseases that have affected the way of living of the children. This problem keeps happening because of the lack of infrastructure in the countries and the lack of development of medicine. Lastly, another significant issue in the postcolonial era is child abuse, mainly detected in New Zealand, also seeing this impact on Maori culture which had implied high rates of child abuse among the children of Maori.

### **Relevant international action**

Ever since colonialism has come to an end, a lot of countries have tried to take action to develop a better quality of life for everyone, initiatives such as the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program have helped to reduce poverty, while investments in education and healthcare have improved access to essential services. What has been very important is education, as many of the post-colonial countries have heavily invested in this because they consider the education of their children a primary focus. Healthcare and poverty reduction were also on the main spectrum when countries were trying to solve the problems caused by colonialism, as it would mean taking care of their people and helping them have a better quality of life. The last two things that the government started to implement were child protection by establishing institutions that protect children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect, as well as child participation to promote their say in decision-making that at one point or the other affect their lives. Even though a lot of action has been taken, there are still lots of things to think about and act upon so this problem can little by little be eradicated.

### **Countries/organizations directly involved**

- Belgium
- United Kingdom
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- The Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain

- United States of America
- Sudan
- Cameroon
- Kenya
- Belize
- Lebanon
- Brazil
- Argentina
- India
- Mexico
- Nigeria

### **Analysis**

As we have established here, colonialism is when a country reigns and takes over a country and overruling its politics so that the colonizers would have full control of the territory they settled in. This extended throughout the world and has happened multiple times with different countries acting as colonized and many others acting as colonizers. Gaining their independence was hard but it was a battle that needed to be fought, but through this time, a lot of internal problems happened, affecting all the people that were native to the place.

It is important to take into account all points of view and revise how fast and safely can children's quality of life be better and what types of solutions the countries can propose that are viable and nothing surreal.

### **Possible solutions**

After there has been a thorough analysis of the problem that represents children's quality of life after postcolonialism, we reach a point where propositions can be reached, the following are possible solutions for the problem that is being discussed:

1. Nations must seek an equitable approach to help the countries in need. Economic and aid assistance is also necessary for the achievement of the objective of the committee so that the international community can further support the countries in need with a strengthened capacity and humanitarian aid for improving the quality of children's lives. Programs addressing certain consequences of the issue must be made, creating an environment of assistance around the cause. This must be held by different

organizations seeking social welfare for countries to receive better help enduring and enhanced well-being creating prosperity for people.

2. Member nations working together to promote better economic development; the wealthier countries could support and promote businesses and entrepreneurship by investing in the general commerce of the needed country. By addressing the problem on an economic front, sustainable solutions can be made that not only help alleviate the immediate needs of children living in bad life conditions but also provides long-term opportunities for the growth and development of the countries.
3. Member nations must work together to share successful programs for infrastructure, collaborate on research and advocate efforts. By sharing efforts underlying structural factors, the country in need will receive assistance in education, health care, and other basic services such as water supply, housing or shelter, transport, etc.

## **Conclusion**

Post-colonialism had an overall impact on the quality of life of children living in former colonies, facing concerns and issues on health care, hunger, malnutrition, clean water supply, lack of basic education, etc. The legacy of colonialism left children with problems that affected their long-term prospects for development and prosperity. Member nations play a crucial role in addressing these issues in the best way possible to improve children's lives. International cooperation is also important, the share of programs, infrastructure, and good economic funding is key to a successful and sustainable solution for the objective of the committee that will massively improve the lives of vulnerable children living under the effects of post-colonialism.

Children living in former colonies have significant barriers to addressing some basic services, this can lead to a dreadful quality of life led by poverty and social inequality that holds on across generations, limiting the development of children. A positive change chased by nations from all over the world will help the needy countries to a path for working towards a future where all children, regardless of their place of birth and historical background, can have access to basic services and be supported internationally on their need for living a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life.



## TOPIC B: ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS OF DISPLACED CHILDREN

### Introduction

A displaced person is defined as someone unable to return to their country of origin because of belic conflicts of some sort or natural disasters that caused major damage. Nowadays, a lot of children have been forced to move out of their homes. This happens mainly by conflict, poverty or climate change, or simply, looking for a better life. Most of these children suffer during the transition to places and this should not be this way. Every child going through this deserves protection, care, and all the support from services to fulfill their basic needs.

### Historical context

Throughout history, we have faced displaced children in a lot of countries and these children face a lot of challenges through their journey. It has been detected that 36.5 million children were displaced from their homes by the end of 2021 (UNICEF, s.f). Three decades ago, the number of displaced people grew drastically, beginning at 100 million, and ending up being almost tripled to 285 million. This happens maybe because of a conflict that a country is facing or extreme poverty, this is a massive problem that keeps growing. Children are displaced so they need to find some basic needs for living, but in most cases, they face violence, malnutrition, lack of shelter, and access to health and educational services and they are forced to leave schools and stop their education. Children in these communities are often exposed to sexual abuse, forced labor, and other forms of intimidation and exploitation.

Due to a lot of crises in Afghanistan, we can see a lot of displaced children, but also because of climate change we have seen high numbers of displaced children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Yemen. Apart from this, because of bad weather conditions families have been driven from their homes in Africa Horn of Africa and the Sahel, and severe flooding in Bangladesh, India, and South Africa. There were 7.3 million new displacements of children as a consequence of natural disasters in 2021. (UNICEF, n.d). In 2022 we saw a lot of displaced children from Ukraine, more than half of the children in Ukraine were displaced in the first month of the war. This war has caused more than 2 million children to flee the country. It has been recorded that this has been the largest displacement of children after World War II; this is a problem that is still very present in current times and it's of the utmost importance to provide the children with basic needs for their overall survival and well-being.

### **Relevant international action**

Children's displacement has become a problem, so a two-day conference was held in Brussels; over the last twenty years, many low-income countries have started implementing social protection programs that had the purpose of helping people get access to basic goods. This conference was organized by UNICEF and the European Commission complemented by other UN agencies and governments to acknowledge this topic and use the social protection system in this context.

Between 2008 and 2016 humanitarian aid was raised from 5.2 billion US dollars to 13.1 billion, but it's important to mention that only 3% of that money is channeled through the national governments. ACTED has reinforced access to education for both boys and girls in internally displaced person sites (IDP) by implementing Temporary Learning and Child Protection Spaces. These schools offer both formal and non-formal education for more than 1800 children; the non-formal program is designed for children that have been out of school for several years in a row. The schools were provided with the necessary furniture and equipment so that the children's learning will be deeper and of a higher quality. These places also have security so that the people that go there learn to have a place to socialize and feel safe in a supervised environment.

The Global Refugee Compact is an international agreement that helps manage different situations of displaced people; it was adopted back in 2018. It hosts and gives a roadmap so that refugees are more included in the different communities, and the four main objectives are releasing the pressure on host countries, increasing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to resettling or other options the people in question might have, and at last to support the conditions on the countries of origin of the different people, so that they can return safely and with dignity.

### **Countries/organizations directly involved**

- UNICEF
- FAO
- SIDA
- UK aid
- UNHRC
- World Bank

- WFP
- IDAC
- Finland
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Sweden
- Syria
- Venezuela
- Ukraine
- Afghanistan
- Sudan
- Turkey
- Colombia
- Pakistan
- Uganda

### **Analysis**

Someone who is displaced means that they've been forced to flee their place of origin (this could happen for a variety of reasons that include belic conflicts or natural disasters) to a place where that problem is not being faced and the people in question require basic services, this being food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Being displaced can have very serious consequences on children's quality of life because this problem often comes hand in hand with their suffering physically and psychologically; this can have long-term problems in certain aspects as it is with education because a lack of it can affect their future success, a factor that can later on promote poverty.

Governments and different organizations often work together to provide humanitarian aid and services to displaced people and families, but what can sometimes be a challenge is coordinating these two so it can be collaborative work. It is also important to mention that in some cases, the government of a host country can limit resources given to displaced people because it may fear that they, later on, lack those resources for their population, so that is a limiting factor.

### **Possible solutions**

In light of the challenges faced by displaced children, the importance of identifying possible solutions for improving their well-being and long-term development arises as time passes by. Nations must identify possible strategies that could be implemented to address certain issues.

1. Strengthening the social protection system could work as a possible solution for countries with a high number of displaced children. Social protection programs may be the key to providing direct assistance to the children and families involved. Giving them better access to basic needs can have a significant impact on the well-being of displaced children by ensuring they have everything they need to be able to address the specific challenges they face.
2. Providing education to children that currently face displacement may be crucial for their long-term development. Education is the key to a quality future, as it could provide children with the necessary knowledge and skills for the ones who may have missed out on formal education due to their displacement. Education will help children to develop a sense of stability and satisfaction, as well as with skills and knowledge to encounter the challenges they might face in their daily lives.
3. Creating an agreement for the building of more responsible actions to get a stronger and equitable international response to the number of displaced children. The creation of centers for hosting children and the expanding of access to needs will ease the pressure on countries for the issue and will give resettlement, and better living conditions so that children's safety and dignity return.

## **Conclusion**

This is an important theme to discuss because human rights need to be taken into account, this is an issue that requires attention and immediate action. Displaced children form part of one of the most vulnerable groups, and have to often face a lot of problems that can include aspects like food, healthcare, education, and shelter.

Efforts must be made by everyone (countries, organizations, and individual people) to help make children's life quality better, as it would make a great difference for them when they grow up as they would be more prepared for their futures, and what's more important, them living a better and happier life. It has been shown that more children and their families are being displaced each year, but only if a lot of countries come together and collaborate so that this problem that is directly related to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be first lowered, so it can later be fully eradicated.

## **General conclusion**

UNICEF is a very important committee because of the actions it promotes by helping children have healthier, happy, peaceful lives, promoting and supporting their development, and allowing them to grow. This organization is present in 190 countries helping provide different services like health and humanitarian care, education, nutrition, and shelter. Over the years, UNICEF has made a real difference regarding children's rights, but even though we have come a long way, there is still much to do to continue helping.

Protecting children in all aspects and making sure they grow in appropriate conditions is one crucial aspect of life overall because even though some people may consider it a situation that doesn't have any relevance, these are the children that will make the future and the ones that will grow up to be leaders and people that are important and helpful to society. Protecting children and making sure their quality of life is good can have a lot of benefits, as can being growing up in a safe and supportive family and gaining academic success so that later on in life, doors open for everyone and major equality can be reached.

UNICEF relates to the topics that will be discussed on this committee because, regarding postcolonialism, it is something that the organization recognizes as something that has impacted children's quality of life greatly by aspects like social inequalities, economic differences, cultural changes, and its purpose is to make things better by promoting basic needs for every child on the world; UNICEF's principles are centered on children's rights and social equity paired with justice. What can be reached is that this organization's work goes hand in hand with the topics because they are talking about children and how their lives can be upgraded so that they have all their needs met in short, medium, and long term.

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