

The United Nations Children's Fund



Topic A: The impact of child marriage on the education and personal development of girls

Topic B: Sexually transmitted infections prevention in adolescents

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President: Ernesto Alonso Delgado

Moderator: Orión Rodríguez Butrón

Advisor: Mara Yareli Morales Reynaga

Welcome Letter

It is a pleasure for us, as chair of UNICEF, to count with your participation on AZTECMUN. It is important to remember that UNICEF is a committee that looks, above everything, to protect the rights and help the development of the children. This committee has been a key actor on the resolution and protection of children in many historical events.

Also, we find it important to remember that children all around the whole globe suffer many different kinds of abuse, even when we do not see it around us; is for this reason that finding solutions to these, or looking for new alternatives to eradicate the abuses.

We know that, with our goal, debating the topics proposed by your chair helps to see not only the problems that everyday many children live on corners of the world that we wouldn't have imagined, but also will help to boost and deepen on knowledge that we may already have about the rights of the children and how to protect them.

Finally, we are glad to welcome our delegates to UNICEF, wishing for you the best of the experiences on this model, and the biggest success for all of you.

*«But if you only walk in other people's steps,
you cannot make your own way. You cannot leave a mark»*

—V. E. Schwab, The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue

Kind regards,

President- Ernesto Alonso Delgado

Moderator- Orión Rodríguez Butrón

Advisor- Mara Yareli Morales Reynaga

Committee Introduction

Committee Background

UNICEF stands for United Nations International Children’s Fund. The organization was established in 1946, after the Second Military World Conflict, in a desperate attempt to help the children that lived in the areas that the conflict had reached and destroyed, providing them with food, water and a place to live. After some years of operation, it was finally recognized as one of the permanent United Nations branches in 1954, changing the original name (that included Emergency Fund instead of only Fund), but keeping the original acronym.

It has been more than 75 years since its founding, but it has remained undaunted and firm to protect children and hold to its principles. Nowadays, UNICEF works along with over 190 countries and territories (and inside them); this organization fights to protect the rights of children, giving them lifesaving help, hope and sources to children and their families. One of the faculties of the organization is being non-political and impartial, and they are never in a neutral position when it comes to the safety of children.

Present day, UNICEF is one of the biggest providers of vaccines for children in the world, the organization provides help on the research of a cure or treatment to many diseases, just like HIV. Is important to remember that all of the funds that UNICEF uses are provided by voluntary donations, some partnerships of governments and some help from the private sector. All of the information about the finances of UNICEF is public and can be accessed at any moment. In 2021, most of the funds came from donations from the United States, Germany and the European Union’ donations.

Committee Faculties

1. Support governments to promulgate laws and politics to protect children.
2. Bring support and guide governments for the elaboration of a variety of official documents.
3. Superintend the correct application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
4. Actively collaborate with governments to obtain the best response to different potentially risky situations for children.
5. Making easier access to information that may affect children in different sectors of society.
6. To intervene on a diversity of conflicts, looking the safety of children.

7. Innovation for children and collaboration with other sectors to propose innovative solutions that benefit young people.
8. Being a mediator between politic conflicts, taking a neutral position viewing the most benefit for the population.
9. Give free and safe vaccines in all the world, even if governments have not the faculty of buying them.
10. Humanitarian aid for children and young people displaced by armed conflicts.
11. Made campaigns to promote or raise funds for the benefit of the most affected sectors.
12. Denouncement of child labor, or another type of exploitation, including sexual
13. Protect children from any kind of violence, letting them live with all their human rights and in a good environment.
14. Impulse and promote the safe development of children.

UNICEF international treaties

UNICEF does not have any international treaty that was signed by UNICEF, but the most important treaty for the committee is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It applies for every child under the age of 18 years old and recognizes all the fundamental rights that children must have. This was signed on November 20 of 1989 by the United Nations General Assembly, and it is the most important human rights treaty in history.

The convention recognizes education as a fundamental right for children, and guarantees the bases for equal opportunities in the future, also, encourages international cooperation in matters related to the education of children. Also, guarantees other rights, such as a home and being free of discrimination.

Unfortunately, this convention is not implemented in every country, so many children still suffer overpassing on their rights, and many countries do not fully understands it.

Member States

In the committee there are considered 27 delegations:

1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Argentina
4. Bangladesh
5. Bulgaria
6. Burkina Faso
7. Chad
8. Chad
9. China
10. Czechia
11. Denmark
12. Ethiopia
13. France
14. India
15. Kazakhstan
16. Lebanon
17. Mozambique
18. Nepal
19. Niger
20. Russian Federation
21. Sierra Leone
22. Türkiye
23. Uganda
24. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
25. United States of América
26. Yemen
27. Zambia

Topic A

The impact of child marriage on the education and personal development of girls

Introduction

Child marriage is understood as the formal union of a minor with an adult or another child. This generates an issue because the child marriage does not allow children to live their own childhood fully, adding them many responsibilities such as home care or the risk that they does not have enough mature to deal with this tasks at that age, also this problem affects all over the globe, but mainly affecting girls, who are the population most at risk of being forced to get married at an early age, this because of the perception that girls are less valuable than boys and should obey and serve them. These girls, most of the time, are part of a vulnerable group, such as marginalized sectors of society and, in the majority of cases, families in a state of insufficient resources; for this reason, plenty of times, this is a forced situation for this girl and may affect her development and growing, not allowing them to go to school, privating them of their liberty or even causing irremediable trauma.

Education is a fundamental element when raising a child, it develops several abilities such as critical thinking, team working, capacity to read and write, communication skills or civic training, these skills in addition to improving the future quality of life children, also help them obtain better jobs, but how is this affected when children are forced to marry?

It is understood that, when a person is forced to do something, their human rights are violated, being forced to marry is a great infraction to the freedom of a person, also, it normally displaces them from their home, the combination of these two will end up causing a greatly negative impact on the life of the child because for him it is not normal having a lot of changes in a few time, also affects directly the psychological health of them, confusing them because they does not know what is happening around them.

Historical background

Talking about education, in most of the cases, when a girl is forced to marry someone, she is treated as an object, since she only made the decision to get married leaving aside what she wanted, forcing her to leave all her hopes, dreams, goals and changing her life forever without her being able to anything to change it, in this way she is deprived of her freedom and her voice, turning her into only an “object” destined to fulfill a role on the home, in addition she

possibly will be abused sexually, physically and psychologically. This normally confines the girl to the house of her spouse, making her unable to study.

In this way, a girl who is forced to engage someone is not able to go to school or to receive a quality education, which makes her dependent on her spouse and his money.

It is known that this is a problem that affects girls and women all over the world, and it is estimated that around 650 millions of girls and women that are alive in the present day, were married as children, and, if we do not accelerate our efforts trying to stop it, there will be around 150 million more girls married by 2030, all of this according to girls not brides.

There are many countries that see marriage and education incompatible, most of them are located on the south of Asia and Africa, such as Yemen or Afghanistan; and those nations take the decision to remove a girl from school when she gets married to let her serve to her husband as they say she should or the family is the one to take that decision, coming from the idea that access to a quality education may break the cycle of intergenerational child marriage, since girls from households more healthy and educated are less likely to marry as a kid.

According to UNICEF, 40% of the girls are married before their 18th birthday. It is extremely important that solutions begin to be generated and proposed to accelerate/resolve this type of conflict, since the normalization of this type of practice results in a violation of both the rights of children and also human ethics itself. *“One of the main problems that I have seen in my community is early pregnancy, the language barrier [for indigenous populations] and child marriage. Women are not allowed to study either because they have the idea that they must stay at home. But that idea must change because women and men have the same rights.” (Maria Fernanda Chen, 14, in Guatemala)*

United Nations actions

In 2016, UNICEF started world programs in collaboration with UNFPA, this program intended to address child marriage, starting with 12 countries where this type of practice is most common, the countries are Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

The Executive Director of UNFPA said that both agencies were going to work with the governments of the mentioned countries, because they have a high prevalence of child marriage. This initiative is focus on proven strategies such as increasing the access of girls to education and health care services, educating parents and communities about how dangerous is child

marriage, increasing economic support to families and enforcing laws that establish 18 as the minimum age of marriage.

Current relevance

This work is just the start of something much bigger, but, as it has been mentioned before, we need to bring more and more efficient proposals, looking for worldwide work, because this problem affects girls in every country and every region.

It is essential to solve this problem as soon as possible, granting a better future for all our next generations and to bring justice for every girl who has been abused in any of these ways, and to everyone who will not be able to see it. *“Ending child marriage is now a global priority. Thanks to increased evidence and advocacy, it is well embedded in not only the SDGs but also in the national agendas, policies and commitments of a growing number of countries. This increased attention has been accompanied by accelerating declines in prevalence.”* (Towards ending child marriage, p.68).

Discussion points

- Is it more important to maintain traditions or to let the children complete their growth?
- Is child marriage related to a lack of economic resources?
- Laws on the country that may show the posture of the country in relation to the matter.
- The relation between the teaching level of a country. and the statistics of child marriage.
- The religion of the countries where girls are forced to marry.
- Difference of ages between the girl and her fiancée.
- Reasons why a girl is forced to marry.
- Activities that girls have to do after marrying someone.
- Efforts that international organs have realized before to stop child marriage and the effects of these measures.
- Consequences to short and long time of forced marriage
- Implications for social, political and economic environment in these countries
- Division a threat to innocent families just because of their children
- Impact of the lack of education in developing countries and how to solve it

Guiding questions

- What are some safe proposals to eradicate or reduce child marriage?
- It is correct or incorrect and why not allow married girls to continue their studies?
- How does dropping out of school at an early age affect the development of a country?
- What are the consequences of a child marriage?
- What could countries with better education systems do to support?
- Should we prioritize improving education or ending child marriage?
- What kind of conflicts can be generated by forcing a girl to marry?

Topic B

Sexually transmitted Infections in adolescents from Latin countries

Introduction

Latin America is the term given to the countries of the American continent from Mexico to Argentina covering approximately 20,420,000 Km² of territory. It has 669,185,884 people living there and the average age is 28 years. We understand the Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as many bacterias and viruses that are transmitted by a through sexual contact, also can be transmitted hereditarily during childbirth, it exist 8 patogents, 4 of them are curable (Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia and Trichomoniasis) the other 4 are incurable viral infections (Hepatitis B, Herpes simplex virus, Human immunodeficiency virus and Human papillomavirus).

One of the reasons there are so many cases of STIs is because many of them are asymptomatic, it means that they are contracted without realizing it. In this way, STIs constitute a great problem that is becoming more and more present, affecting mainly young people and adolescents, causing symptoms that range from infertility, to, in the worst case, the desire of the person who has it, in addition to the symptoms physical, social rejection is also generated due to the misinformation that the majority of the population has regarding STIs, specifically in Latin countries, the necessary information on the subject is reduced to only a small sector of the population, or to incomplete official data, it must also be considered that Latin America is one of the regions where most pregnancies occur at a young age, so adolescents generally do not have the necessary knowledge to live their sexuality, and may end up contracting an STI.

How does this affect the children? An STI (Sexually transmitted Infection) is a potentially harmful kind of infection that can evolve and affect negatively on the health, being one of the main causes of low defenses, other STI, cancer or other lethal diseases. So, if it cannot directly terminate someone (most of the times), it still is a great problem that should be treated because it directly threatens the health of people risking his life for a short or long time.

Historical background

Most of countries in Latin America do not have the needed infrastructure to give a decent treatment to these diseases, adding this to the fact that most of them do not have a cure

(an can only be controlled), it is seeing how this can be the cause of mortality in children that did not know about their infection or did not get the needed treatment. *“People should receive the full range of sexually transmitted infection services they need”*. (WHO-RHR-16.09, p.36).

Governments of Latin countries does not give the importance that this deserve, this is the region with the most consultations and confirmed cases of STIs, this is because young people do not have the information or maturity on these issues, there is no established model to teach sexual education in schools, which also leads to adolescent pregnancies. Pharmacies generally prohibit the sale of condoms to those under 18 years of age and are misjudged due to stereotypes and popular beliefs because the predominant religion is Catholic, imposing ideas such as that a woman must arrive a virgin at marriage, these ideals seek in a certain way to control the thoughts of what is right and wrong of those who profess it, being in this case frowned upon to talk about issues related to sexuality.

All these factors make STIs predominant diseases in the majority sector of Latin countries, actions and measures different from those attempted in previous years must be taken, STIs cases are increasing every year and are one of the main causes of deaths not only in Latin America, but also around the world, this reducing the population and leaving irreversible consequences, such as infertility, or making more hard to people to have a family.

United Nations actions

In September 2005, the Regional Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS/STI 2006-2015, was approved by PAHO Member States. The main achievements in the implementation of this strategic plan include a 24% decrease in the estimated annual number of new HIV infections between 2000 and 2014, also, an increase in antiretroviral treatment coverage among people estimated to be living with HIV in Latin America and Caribbean between 2000 and 2014. (PAHO, 2016, pages 2-8).

In July 2016, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Americas, established the Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections 2016-2021. This plan describes the strategic lines of action to be implemented between 2016 and 2021, such as: Strengthened stewardship, governance, strategic planning, and information. Strengthened normative framework for health promotion, HIV/STI prevention, diagnosis, care, and treatment. Expanded and equitable access to comprehensive and quality HIV/STI services. Increased and improved financing of HIV/STI response with equity and efficient use of resources for sustainability.

Current relevance

As it has been pointed out before, children in the Latin America region are being exposed to great risks every day, with the zone being affected by a lot of sexually transmitted infections, and children are one of the most vulnerable populations, due to the mother-to-child transmission and the lack of sexual education on these countries. *“Sexual health and reproductive health are inextricably interlinked. For example, efforts to prevent and control chlamydia have important implications for future fertility”*(Refocusing on sexually transmitted infections. p,1).

It is very important then, to point out that if we do not solve this crisis soon, it will only still grow up bigger and bigger, to the point of becoming a pandemic in the region, putting in a big risk all children and adolescents, who normally begin with their sex life around the age of thirteen.

Discussion points

- Strategies currently taken by the governments of these countries to reduce the spread of STIs
- Influence of stereotypes or ideals on issues that involve sexuality at an early age.
- Consequences of a high contagion of STIs in the entire population.
- Importance of having new models of sexual education for adolescents everywhere.
- Consent to the use of ant contraceptive methods in adolescents.
- Measures that can make medical treatments more viable.
- Possible financing for the improvement of infrastructures in Latin America.
- Is it correct that in some countries men are denied the HPV vaccine?
- Strategies to improve access to contraceptives for adolescents.

Guiding Questions

- Should the issue of sexuality be normalized?
- What should be prioritized, sexual education or STIs treatment?
- Should religion continue to be mixed with sexuality?
- How can the disclosure of information about STIs be improved?
- What are some proposals to reduce STIs cases?

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