

The World Health Organization

MADMUN XIV



**World Health
Organization**

Welcome to the World Health Organization! In this committee, you will be taking the role of a country's representative for the World Health Organization. The World Health Organization is the United Nations responsible for helping public and global health. It sets health standards to help provide well-being and health for as many people around the world as possible. Your role is to come together to form solutions and plans that will help with the current issues that global health faces today.

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Topic A: How Pollution and Climate Change Has Impacted Global Health

How does pollution affect global health?

One of the most prevalent topics impacting today's global health is air pollution. In 2019, 99% of the world's population lived in a location that did not meet WHO's air quality standards. As a result of the air pollution, there were 4.2 million premature deaths because of air pollution. Air pollution can impact everyone, because when you spend time outside breathing in the air, the particles enter your bloodstream which contributes to things such as trouble breathing, intensified asthma, COPD, and emphysema. Air pollution also not only impacts the health of humans but of the environment. The emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases are referred to as climate forces. These factors contribute to global warming which causes things such as mass wildfires, increasing risk of illnesses, and more frequent storms and runoff. This impacts human health through smoke inhalation, many effects on the body's nervous and respiratory systems, or liver or kidney damage. The reason why this is such an urgent issue is because air pollution doesn't just impact one area of the world, everyone can be impacted and can put so many people's health at risk.

Water pollution is another contributor to diseases and the worsening of global health. According to a statistic in 2022, nearly 2 billion people live in countries with contaminated water, which has led to diseases that are estimated to cause 505,000 more deaths each year. Keeping our waters clean and free of pollutants is so important because it will not only help the environment but also help the supply of sanitary drinking water for as many people as possible.

The World Health Organization's Previous Actions

The World Health Organization recognizes the issue of pollution and climate change to be a very urgent issue that impacts global health every day. In 2015, to help fight against air pollution, WHO passed resolution A68.8, “Health and the Environment: addressing the health impact of air pollution.” With this, their goal was to spread knowledge and provide support to those who have been affected by this issue.

To help the issue of water pollution, the World Health Organization has taken leadership to help with these water-related diseases. One of the specific actions they took has been the creation of *Guidelines for safe drinking water*, which creates a framework and plans to help lessen the risk of water pollution. They have also worked with governments to help establish plans and regulations regarding this issue.

The World Health Organization has also worked with UNICEF to help with water sanitation and hygiene, and together they created the Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool (WASH FIT) as an approach to help with all negative impacts that water pollution has.

Guiding Questions

- How else has pollution and/or climate change impacted global health?
- What are the effects of pollution in your country specifically, and how can we fix it?
- What are steps your country can take towards helping this issue, and help pollution worldwide?
- Is your country in a position to help other countries, or do you need the help?
- What regulations/plans are currently set up in your country, and how have they helped?
- What effect of climate change has most affected the health of your country?

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Topic B: Extreme Poverty and its Impacts on Health

How does poverty impact global health?

Poverty impacts overall health in many ways, from restricting access to medical procedures like life-saving surgeries to limiting simple measures that would prevent medical issues from occurring, such as using uncontaminated food and water. Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than \$2.15 a day, and it affects around 9.2% of the global population today. The requirements recently increased from \$1.90 to \$2.15 in 2022. People in extreme poverty look very different around the world because things that are seen as necessities in some places could be seen as luxuries in others, such as electricity, plumbing, and medical aid. But virtually all people in extreme poverty can't access medical aid unless they have a government or organization's help to do so.

Some things that impede access are the complicated language in forms, the lack of dependable electricity/electronics, and the lack of knowledge of available resources. Many people are unaware of all the resources available to them, and even if they know about them, often have trouble accessing or understanding the ways the resources could help them. Global health is worse than it could be due to this, as people could be quickly treated for many things that can ruin their health over the course of time, including seemingly simple things like back problems. Extreme poverty makes it almost impossible for people to get the help that is needed for medical problems on their own.

History

Poverty has always been a problem, and many things necessary to live a healthy life are expensive, such as medicine and unpolluted water, so it's nearly impossible for many people to get what they need to live a healthy life, or to prevent a health problem from becoming worse. Rates of poverty have become a lot lower in the 21st century, but although they've decreased greatly overall, there have still been increases in global poverty rates. This happened during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 when the global extreme poverty rate increased from 8.4% to 9.3%. This may not sound like a lot, but it is a significant increase considering that this percentage is out of the global population. The pandemic made problems that were already close to worsening poverty rates and global health far worse. Problems like a decline in income and rising living costs, which the pandemic made worse by keeping people at home, forcing many small businesses to close and putting people out of jobs and into debt, while simultaneously causing higher medical costs, as many people needed to be hospitalized and there were not enough medical workers. It's taken 3 years for global extreme poverty rates to lower 0.1%,

from 9.3 to 9.2%. In the past, extreme poverty rates had declined greatly at a fairly steady rate, though it was slowing a bit. Even with the increase in 2020, there are still about a billion people who are living on less than \$2.15 a day than there was in 1990.

Recent Actions

The WHO has always been dedicated to making sure everyone has access to quality healthcare, as seen in their mission statement, “We champion health and a better future for all.” Some of their more recent actions against extreme poverty include worldwide progress for Universal Health Coverage, and the WHO and Global Citizenship partnership to fight inequity, promote health, and address health-related risks of climate change.

Universal Health Coverage, or UHC, is “that all people have access to the full range of quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship.” In 2019, the UHC service coverage index “increased from 45 in 2000 to 68 in 2019.” This means that the coverage of essential services, which is on a scale from 0 to 100, increased by 23, meaning there is more coverage. COVID-19 set back some of this progress, but people at the WHO are searching for ways to “build back better” concerning UHC goals and how they will achieve those goals.

On June 22, 2023, the WHO and the Global Citizen organization, (an advocacy organization working to end extreme poverty), partnered to fight a few of the worst problems affecting our world today and signed a “memorandum of understanding.” The organizations will mainly “support global efforts to overcome inequities,” and find areas where they should take action to improve people’s health. They’ll attempt to accomplish these goals in the next 3 years of their partnership.

Guiding Questions

- What is the poverty rate in your country?
- How do people in extreme poverty live in your country?
- What are the programs in your country that provide medical aid to people in poverty?
- What challenges could people face when attempting to access these programs?
- Are there ways that the programs could become more accessible?
- What medical issues are prevalent in your country, and how can they be prevented/treated?
- Are there unnecessary barriers when acquiring medical aid?
- How much tax money is used for medical facilities?

- Does your country have financial aid for mental health programs?

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