



# CVHS MUN XVI



## UN WOMEN

**All position papers should be sent to our committee's email address:**

[cvhsUNwomen2023@gmail.com](mailto:cvhsUNwomen2023@gmail.com)

**Position paper due January 7th by 11:59 p.m. If you have any queries or problems, please contact us via email!**

### **Introduction:**

Hey everyone! My name is Heba Aboulhosn and I am so excited to be your head chair for our 2023 Capo Valley MUN conference. I am currently a junior and I have been in MUN since freshman year. It is so great to be doing another year of in person conferences and continue to be able to see everyone in person. Some things about me are that I play soccer at Capo and I am also in CSF and other clubs including the Game Pigeon club (my personal favorite). In my free time, I love to hang out with my friends and even though I am a terrible surfer, I love going to the beach. I am excited to meet all of you and to be able to head chair again this year!

Hello there! My name is David Song, and I am going to be your co-chair for this year's MUN conference here at Capistrano Valley High School. I'm a sophomore this year and very excited to meet new delegates and assist in running the conference. I've been in MUN since Freshman year, and I find this opportunity as a vice chair very intriguing. Some things you should know about me: I am a part of the basketball team here at Capo, as well as a part of the Mandarin Immersion Program. Additionally, I play piano at home and enjoy hanging out with friends online or in person. I hope that I will be able to learn about and meet new people, as well



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as help you guys gain new experience. This conference will hopefully run smoothly for you guys too, and serve as a landmark in your academic success.

How does Poverty affect Women's access to Education in the Middle East?

## **I. Background**

As poverty continues to affect various countries in the world, access to education becomes an issue of concern for these countries. Specifically in the Middle East, where poverty rose from 3.8% in 2015, to 7.2% in 2018. According to the United Nations, education is a fundamental human right that all countries should strive to accomplish. Some countries in the Middle East have also limited women's education access, and the steady rise in economic grievance continues to add to the hardship many women face in having the ability to go to school and continue their education. Poverty can affect an individual's physical health, decreasing their chance of receiving necessary health care and increasing their chance of homelessness, and having fewer resources to help them with their education. Countries facing poverty also tend to have fewer schools available to children, especially in underdeveloped parts of the country, and tend to have more limited education for women as well. Aside from the less developed Middle Eastern countries not being able to give proper educational access to women, poverty also affects women's ability to attend and pay for schooling. A country that is dealing with poverty can be because of their people's high illiteracy rates, and many people are illiterate due to their inability to afford schooling. Poverty and education both affect each other, and as poverty can affect education, education can also affect poverty rates. Women who have access to education can help reduce various problems countries in the Middle East face. Such issues that could be solved include child mortality rates and women's access to education can also decrease birth rates,



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which can tremendously affect the economy. Statistics from a recent World Bank study show how an inadequacy in providing women with a full 12 years of education and limited education opportunities for women can cost countries an estimated \$15 to \$30 trillion in lost lifetime earning and productivity.

## **II. UN Involvement**

Poverty vastly limits the opportunities women in the Middle East have pertaining to education and the United Nations has been working to combat the pressing issue. As many countries in the Middle East do not have the economic capability to help increase access to education, the United Nations have been working to implement solutions in these countries and have been helping the women, as their own governments are struggling. UNICEF has continuously been promoting gender equality in education and they have been partnering with countries and their governments to remove any barriers women in the Middle East face in education. UN Women have numerous educational programs that work to increase gender equality, train parents and teachers, and positively alter previous biased school policy and curricula. UN Women have numerous goals they are implementing include the SDG 4, which works to specifically ensure quality education and hopes that by 2030, all children will have free access to primary and secondary education. As women's education falls under gender equality, there are numerous funds that the United Nations have developed to help donate to countries and programs in need to help tackle gender discrimination. The Fund for Gender Equality, made in 2009, has already delivered \$65 million in grants to 121 projects in over 80 countries. These projects have positively affected the lives of over 570,000 women and continue to improve the education systems in Middle Eastern countries. There are numerous forms of education that are



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crucial for women in the Middle East to have access too, aside from modern education, including education about sexual and reproductive health to help prevent HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. Aside from poverty interfering with a woman's education, it is important to recognize the other problems that often come in the way of learning. Such problems are early pregnancies, domestic burdens, maternal injuries and death, and forced marriages. The United Nations has worked towards increasing women's access to education in the impoverished areas of the Middle East.

### **III. Possible Solutions**

Action has been made to increase educational opportunities for women to continue their learning. Many of the education systems in the Middle East teach discriminatory gender norms and an important solution is to decrease these stereotypes and break down these gender barriers. An important solution to implement is to make sure that government budgets must prioritize gender equality policies and education systems that are unbiased. It is necessary for learning materials to be unbiased and to remove any gender stereotypes as well as ensuring a safe learning environment for women. The Education Cannot Wait fund at the World Humanitarian Summit was made to overcome the funding gap of \$8.5 billion for children who are living in conflict areas. An important organization, the Malala Fund, strives to work towards granting women accessibility to 12 years of free education and works with activists and educators from the countries of Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, and others. Through the increase of funding, countries who are struggling economically have the ability to use outside resources in building more schools and increasing the number of educators necessary to run effective learning environments. It is also important to bring the necessary educational materials to rural



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communities, as many times they do not have access to nearby schools as well as transportation to get to school. MDGs, Millennium Development Goals, have worked towards establishing targets that all countries should strive to implement, and an important solution is to continue to push the countries in the Middle East to ensure these goals are met in their countries. Such goals include ending gender disparity in education, increasing women's involvement in the workforce, and increasing women's involvement in the government. It is important for women to recognize that their education is a human right, and with their involvement in policy making, they can demand such changes to be made.

#### **IV. Question to Consider**

- 1) How can women gain access to education in war torn countries?
- 2) How does culture affect women's access to education?
- 3) Along with poverty, what other factors decrease a woman's chance of receiving an education?
- 4) How can their education be benefitted to provide women jobs in the workforce?
- 5) Can education systems be changed without changing the traditional systems these countries may have?
- 6) What are the positive impacts of increasing women's access to education and how can this change a country's economy?
- 7) What about reproductive and sexual education? Should this be added to the systems of education in the Middle East?
- 8) As COVID 19 has negatively impacted many Middle Eastern economics, how has this affected women's access to education?



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Preventing of Gender Based Violences in War Zones in the Middle East

### I. Topic Background



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Currently, and in the past century, the Middle East has taken its place as one of the most active war zones. From the Syrian civil war spillover in Lebanon 5 years ago, to the 2021 Taliban offensive, inhabitants of southwest Asia have been in constant warfare. While many men are out fighting on the battlefield, women are faced with increasing cases of gender based violences. In the 2015 Syria refugee crisis, women and girls face a significantly increased risk for unwanted pregnancy, gender-based violence, STIs and maternal mortality. 430,000 Syrian women, including refugees and those still in Syria, are pregnant and in need of maternal care”, according to a study done by the UNFPA. In these conflict areas, women are the most common victims sexual violence and forced marriages. Additionally, culture related discriminations, especially in the middle east, women hold unequal opportunities for jobs and education. These issues add up to make women less independent, unable to flee from conflict areas when war hits. “Conflict affects women, girls, boys and men differently. Women and girls face heightened risks due to displacement and the breakdown of normal protection structures and support. They also face increased care-related tasks such as providing food and water, and caring for the sick”, according to ActionAid International. In times of such perilous conditions, it is mostly other women that help those unfairly affected by war conflicts. Local women’s communities are often the first responders to crises. The straightforward yet crucial task here at hand is to prevent the sexual abuse and violence women face especially in war zones of the Middle East .

## II. UN Involvement

One of the most emphasized policies inflicted by the UN was the Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action policy in November 2017. To understand the effects of this policy, the basics of the IASC must first be introduced. The



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Inter-Agency Standing Committee was formed by the UN in 1991 to deliver humanitarian assistance to affected nations. According to the UN, “the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the longest-standing and highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. It brings together the executive heads of 18 organizations to formulate policy, set strategic priorities and mobilize resources in response to humanitarian crises.” The goal of the policy passed in 2017 was to make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a core principle of the IASC’s humanitarian action. Additionally, the UN has stepped in to intervene with gender based violences through other committees and organizations. Gender based violences has been addressed by OCHA, UNHCR, and UNICEF. These committees followed the same plans as UN WOMEN, as they held conferences and gathered data regarding gbvs. However, the UN has not taken any physical action on implementing bills or policies on countries to support women in the Middle East specifically.

### **III. Possible Solutions**

While most of the UN’s strategies in pushing back gender based violences have been informational programs for women, there are physical actions that can be taken to prevent the violence against women in the warzones of the Middle East. In general, the social structure of the Middle Eastern countries restricts the rights and freedom of women. Women are expected to obey the dominant male of the household, and therefore domestic violence is also very common. Such values and behaviors lead to many cases that influence the attitude men in the warzone have towards women, who see them as weak. One action that can be taken are more refugee camps, open to accepting women and girls in the midst of waging wars. As seen in the Syrian refugee crisis, many victims of gender based violence ended up in refugee camps with STDs,





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injuries, and unwanted pregnancies. Setting up more help centers for victimized women can help treat their hurts, as well as provide a safe shelter for them and whoever feels like they need protection. If needed, the UN WOMEN's committee could even team up with the IRC or UNHCR to set up such shelters. While this solution provides insurance and relief mostly for those who have already experienced gbv, measures also need to be taken to prevent gender based violences before it even happens. Awareness plays a large impact on how women are treated, as men in the war need to understand that women's rights are human's rights. Not particularly targeting one country or government, but the entire Middle Eastern war zones need to be addressed and brought awareness to. Establishing leadership conferences and bringing attention to domestic violence laws in MENA could help shine light on the gbvs that happen. These conferences could be led by women themselves, and advertised through UN organizations and the governments of the middle east. They could show the women who are active in civil society, as well as empower other women to speak out about violence.

#### **IV. Questions to Consider**

1. How does wartime affect the rates of gender based violence?
2. What makes the Middle East so high in rates of gender based violences?
3. How can the empowerment of women be established in a time of chaos and war?
4. Should refugee camps be a major solution to this issue?
5. How can the UN work with Middle Eastern governments, which are not democracies, to generate participation for women in their societies?
6. What are several examples of attempts by the UN in the past to combat gender based violences? Are they effective?



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