COMMITTEE UPDATE: UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN’S EMERGENCY FUND (UNICEF)

Introduction:

“Every 5 minutes, somewhere in the world, a child dies as a result of violence.” – UNICEF

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created in 1946 for the children after World War II to provide food, clothing and health. Its main mission is to overcome problems such as poverty, violence, discrimination for all children, including the promotion of rights for every child, creating better lives for children. UNICEF is present in 190 countries around the world, reaching for every child.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) there are 43% homicides in the world that occur between the ages of 10 and 29 worldwide. Low socio-economic conditions could create many problems, including juvenile crime and violence. Many of these causes are unemployment, domestic violence and corruption. It is believed that youth violence is an effect of problems related to poverty and unemployment. According to “The Global Employment Trend for Youth 2010”, young adults between the ages of 15 and 24, 81 million were unemployed at the end of 2009, which triggers the financial insecurity and they often tend to steal, drug dealing, and other problems. Children who experience domestic violence are exposed to an unhealthy environment, and usually tend to express themselves that way, creating crime and violence. Young adults who experience poverty and abuse are likely to be a part of gangs and experience drugs. Bad relationships with family members would also encourage them to be a part of gangs.

There is also the case of child soldiers where juvenile crime and violence is created because children are abducted from their homes and trained to terrorize communities. Corruption
is a side cause for juvenile crime due to the fact that budget is cut off sectors of the government for education and health. With this said, there is more juvenile crime because there isn’t enough budget for education, which leads to unemployment in young adults.

**Youth Unemployment:**

Unemployment has gradually grown to become one of the main driving forces affecting socio-economic situations. The availability of job opportunities, their quality, and their conditions have a striking connection to violence and aggression among the youth, which intern is escalating to tragically reveal increased apprehension charges and juvenile violations. The International Labor Organization declared recently that there are more than seventy-four million young persons currently unemployed, constituting of merely forty percent of the world’s unemployment rate. [1] The targeted youth between fourteen and seventeen years are thus prone to undertaking more charges of burglary, mugging, and rape; and even show less but yet alarming charges for deliberated homicide and critical physical damage. [2] Youth unemployment thereof cannot but be dealt with to facilitate one of the major contributors to juvenile crime, financial instability.

According to a UNICEF study in the Caribbean, unemployment amongst young people weighted up at forty-three percent, the highest amongst seven other causes enlisted for the most serious offences committed by Juveniles. [3] Some of the many reasons and scenarios that lead to the formation of delinquent paths in the matter of unemployment at the adolescent stages include cultural factors, urbanization, families, migration, media, exclusion, peer influence, and offenders. [4] Young people subject to disruptive, depressive, and abusive environments resulting from the aforementioned points have a higher tendency to resort away from professional engagements and look towards crime for a source of income and means of situating a temporary living. Sometimes even the slightest endangerment to a child’s developing environment which may include homes, schools, public spaces, etc., would leave the children at a risk of falling out of these social institutions and into darker societies.
However, one of the focal points that derange the employment rates among youth is the work environment they are exposed to. The difficulty here lies in recreating suitable, safe, and harmonized jobs for young people, majority of whom have yet to receive proper education or professional practice. Here one should take note of the statement published by the Criminology Research Council that states that “There is therefore no cause for surprise if the workers, treated as brutes, actually become such...”. \[5\] Unregulated and unorthodox workspaces in most cases leave the youth discouraged to follow into a carrier oriented future and leaning more towards illegal and unlawful acts as means to an end. It is hence a priority to suit youth into fields that not only match their skills and capabilities but leave them at ease and ready to flourish in their domains.

One of the many UNICEF outreach programs tackling the issue would be the “Building Young Futures” initiative, which intern has created decent job opportunities for more than twenty-thousand young people worldwide. \[6\] This partnership between Barclays and UNICEF aims to providing the necessary support needed for disadvantaged children in developing countries, thus achieving a minimal level of empowerment and skill to secure a better occupation. Building Young Futures have so far reached more than ninety-thousand young people from all over Zambia, Sudan, India, Brazil, and Sudan; all with the assistantship of UNICEF’s endorsed networking, governmental aids, and native expertise. \[7\] Many a such initiatives include Injaz, a Middle East and North African based nonprofit Jordanian organization, aimed at tying together large and powerful corporations and potential youth for the sake of authorizing and investing in young people’s leadership and entrepreneurship in the business market. \[8\] The aforementioned corporation has been featured by the World Economic Forum as a leading enterprise among many others to elevate youth’s spirit towards employment, as it is estimated to reach out to more than a hundred million youth in the region by the year twenty-twenty. \[9\]

Washington D.C. has shown the proportional relation between unemployment rates and crime among youth, the results are amazingly similar to that of almost all nations today. \[10\] One of the challenges ahead for UNICEF in dealing with juvenile crime would be to organize better employment opportunities among nations for a better engagement of the youth in society.

**Domestic Violence:**

Domestic violence is defined by the United States Department of Justice as “a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another partner”. Domestic violence is not only physical harm caused to a person. It also includes sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats that may influence another person, this includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.
Hundreds of millions of children internationally, are exposed to domestic violence at home. This can often have a profound and powerful impact on their lives, whether they are being domestically abused or they watch and/or hear one parent assaulting the other. Violence in the home is seen as one of the biggest human rights challenges of this time. It is something that is not limited by geography, ethnicity, or status. It is seen all over the global community. While the effects of domestic violence are often well documented, the impact on children who witness a parent or guardian being subjected to it are less known.

One of the first studies done to estimate the number of children who are exposed to domestic violence globally was done in 2006. The date was collected from the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children, which reviewed existing studies that measure violence in the home in various countries. Its findings show that children who are exposed to violence in the home are prone to suffering from a range of severe and lasting effects. These children who grow up in homes with domestic violence are more likely to be victims themselves of child abuse and those who are exposed to violence in the home may have difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behavior, or suffer from depression or severe anxiety. The younger a child is the more vulnerable they are to these effects. In addition, studies show that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to be affected by violence as adults, either as victims or perpetrators.

These children exposed to such violence at home are denied the right to a safe and stable home environment. At the same time, collecting reliable data on this issue often poses several challenges. Almost every country has limited data available on domestic violence in general, even less information on children who are exposed to it. Some countries even have no data at all and studies often acknowledge how limited their findings are. Despite this the numbers estimate are shocking. As many as 275 million children worldwide are exposed to violence in the home and millions more children may be affected that fail to go reported.

Corruption:

We all wish to live in a meritocratic world in which every person gets what he or she deserves. However, that is not the case. Corruption can be discussed on a small scale such as family businesses or on a large scale in which corruption within governments is evident. Although there are several ways to define corruption the best way to explain it would be through the definition provided by the World Bank, “the abuse of public power for private benefit”. In recent years, the international community has drawn a vast amount of attention towards
corruption and the fight against corruption. Although, many governments speak of fighting corruption rarely any realize that the battle to combat corruption will not be a cheap one.

As the year 2015 came to an end so did the fight for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A struggle in which the international community failed to overcome. Thus, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established. The SDGs entail a list of 17 specific goals in which the global society should strive to overcome within the next fifteen years. Goal 16, particularly highlights on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing justice for all, along with building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all. The fifth target for goal 16 of the SDGs exclusively targets corruption in which it states, to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

To address corruption on a global scale we must first start by dividing the planet into regions. The first region to tackle will be the America’s in which we will cover North America, Central America, and South America. According to Transparency International, in 2015, two major events occurred in which citizens began organizing mass gatherings to stand up to the corruption occurring within their countries and the exposure of major corruption networks were exposed to the public. However, when we discuss the situation in Europe and Central Asia, the picture displays one of unproductivity. Governments have been known to pass several laws to address and fight against corruption, however, many governments don’t go as far as to impose these laws leading to an increase in corruption in countries like Spain and Turkey. In Asia Pacific, the image of corruptions demands citizens of their countries to demand for change as corruption is a topic that relentlessly dominates the media. Within the Middle East and North African region, addressing corruption has been overshadowed due to the devastating conflicts arising. The Sub-Saharan African region ranks the worst amongst the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 2015 in which their governments are highly influenced by corruption and nothing has been done to fight it.

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is calculated based on a set of surveys and assessments collected from respectable organizations to evaluate the level of corruption throughout the country’s public sector. The country is ranked on a scale from 0-100, 100 being the cleanest and 0 being the most corrupt. When looking at country’s as case studies for corruption we often study the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI) to assess how corruption affects a country’s development and economic growth. The reason why we assess both the GDP and the HDI when discussing corruption is because
corruption creates a domino effect where it hinders the economic growth and development of a country. Taxpayers are trusting politicians in power to spend the money wisely and to invest it into improving their country, however, when politicians waste the money for their own personal benefits. This leads to budget cuts on specific sectors of the government such as the educational and health sector. Another aspect to look at it would be through foreign investment, international companies would not want to invest their money into a country that is highly corrupt because they would not want to risk losing their money.

As stated before, when budget cuts are made to educational and health sectors it affects the public population, however, it affects poor families more than wealthy families. If a poor family has to spend a certain percentage on paying off corrupt public officers, it might risk the parent’s ability to send their children to school or receive proper healthcare. Education is the tool that shapes our society today and helps develop both our economy’s development and personal integrity. When corruption is evident within the educational sector, budget cuts are made which leads to overcrowded classrooms, limited places are available for students which leads to schools selling places for students to be admitted, and students are forced to drop out. However, corruption throughout the health division can be the deciding factor of whether a human being lives or dies. Once again, the poor families are the population mostly affected by the corruption. As corruption presides the health sector, medical staff are never held accountable for bending the laws. Medical staffs are known to demand extra charge to tend to sick patients, charge money for medications that should be free, or let patients skip the queue when bribed. The health sector is known to be the most corrupt region throughout the government. The World Bank conducted a survey concerning corruption within the healthcare sector in which they concluding that if funds are not properly monitored, up to 80 percent of the healthcare budget disappears. As the budget for health disappears this creates obstacles to overcome diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Ebola, especially in continents such as Africa.

Another aspect to view corruption would be through the justice system in which corruption affects children more than it affects adults. Adults can stand up for themselves and fight against corruption but children are still young and vulnerable to the rest of the world, which is why they need to be protected. When corruption prevails throughout the justice system, children are no longer protected, instead they are exposed and become victims of sexual and domestic violence. Corruption allows a crime committed by offenders of sexual and domestic violence to be charged with a misdemeanor instead of a felony. Therefore, allowing criminals to avoid the responsibility of committing such a serious crime.

Following the domino effect, when the justice system fails to hold felons accountable, they allow a gap in the justice system in which criminals take advantage of. Criminals turn to the vulnerable population, in this case they are the children and are often trafficked due to the leniency throughout the justice system and police offers. Police officers often play a role in the trafficking of children because they allow them to cross the borders for a certain price. Which leads us to an irony where the officers who are supposed to uphold the law are instead breaking it for their own personal profit.
References: