



Chair Report

UNICEF

Chair:

The primary role of UNICEF is to help defend children's rights, to ensure children have access to basic necessities, and to expand the opportunities for children to fulfill their greatest potential.

<https://www.unicef.org/>

REPORT: Addressing inequalities among children in a global crisis

Introduction

Inequalities have a profound impact on children's health and development globally. While inequality is greatest in the world's poorest countries, it also exists in the world's richest countries. From birth, a child's growth and development is socially and economically determined, with the most disadvantaged having the highest risk of health problems and less access to quality education. Amidst a global crisis, the most underprivileged children have found themselves with a lack of educational resources, unequal access to public health information, and a greater risk of exploitation and domestic violence due to displacement and fragile family incomes.

While children are not the face of COVID-19, they are one of its biggest victims. However, the damaging effects of this crisis are not distributed equally. They are expected to cause the most harm to children in the poorest societies and those already in vulnerable situations. Addressing this inequality and inequity is not a feat that can be done easily. Many countries have been able to implement policies to reduce child poverty and ensure equal access to healthcare, education and welfare, adequate nutrition, and sanitation. Nevertheless, with children having no control over the socio-economic situation they are born into, understanding global adaptations due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic may be fundamental when discussing this topic.



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General Overview

Child inequality has been a long-standing issue but the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened these disparities. Responses to this universal crisis have disrupted access to vital child health services, threatened child prosperity, and compounded the devastating situation among children in areas with armed conflicts. However, there exists global differences in the impact of this pandemic between countries and within societies.

According to UNICEF data, the pandemic resulted in an additional 150 million children categorized as multidimensionally impoverished, and approximately 463 million children globally were unable to access remote learning options. While many countries have been able to implement remote education programs and establish new reopening protocols, the efficacy of these policies have varied depending on the country's wealth.

Child inequality not only exists between the richest and poorest countries, but there also exists growing disparities between children within a single society. For instance, Denmark ranks as the leading country with relatively narrow inequality gaps between children of the lowest and middle groups. Meanwhile, Turkey and Israel rank as countries with the widest child inequality gaps. However, while inequality in educational services has decreased between children at the lower end of income distribution and those in the middle within these countries, inequalities in health have widened. The global crisis has exacerbated these differences. Children in the poorest households have two times greater risk of death than their better-off peers.

When approaching this topic, it is important to consider the factors of child inequality. These widening social and economic differences have little to do with the effort or talent of families but are driven by factors deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political structures of countries. Far too often, parents' wealth, gender, ethnicity, and culture play a vital role in determining a child's place in society. When formulating resolutions, also consider the feasibility of establishing welfare programs in countries where children have relatively little access to adequate shelter or basic resources.

UNICEF launched a Six-Point Plan to protect children from the detrimental effects of this pandemic. This initiative urgently called on governments to redouble efforts to guarantee access to clean water and healthcare, ensure the continuation of education and inclusive recovery, and protect children living through conflict and abuse. Despite these recommendations, we still have children who are denied the opportunity to receive adequate support and protection during this worldwide crisis. When drafting a solution, make sure to take into account the already established programs by UNICEF and how countries can help further address those issues of global competence.



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When formulating different solutions to resolve this issue, consider the following questions:

- Has your country been involved with UNICEF?
- To what extent has COVID-19 affected your country? How has your country responded to this pandemic and how successful have these responses been?
- What is the degree of child inequality in your country? How has COVID-19 affected different sectors of child inequality?
- Is the resolution you are proposing similar to an already existing program? If so, how can you incorporate it or amend it to address our topic?

Major Parties Involved

INDONESIA

The government of Indonesia has worked with UNICEF to outline an agenda for action. The agenda demonstrates a commitment to supporting families to cover their children's needs. In fact, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture pledged to scale-up remote learning options and encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention. In addition to developing social welfare strategies to reduce the risks of child abuse and neglect, Indonesia has also redirected their funds to address these new public health goals.

UNITED KINGDOM

Established in London, The Save The Children Fund is working to ensure that children are protected during the pandemic. This organization worked with caregivers and children worldwide to provide evidence on how COVID-19 has accelerated the growing inequalities among children in regards to health, education, wellbeing, and protection. Following several in-case studies, Save The Children published in-depth social and violence protections, education and health suggestions, and debt and child participation recommendations. The United Kingdom is also playing an active role in the pandemic situations of Yemen and Syria, and it donated US\$121.8 million to UNICEF's Global Humanitarian Response Plan.



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CANADA

Canada allocated US\$475.5 million to subsidize child care centers during the crisis. In addition, due to lower enrollment numbers, Ontario provided an additional US\$112 million to help providers make up for the widening gap in income. Canada is also a major contributor to the COVID-19 child inequality response in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Strongly involved parties: World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, Central Emergency Response Fund, Global Partnership for Education, United States Agency for International Development, World Bank Group

Timeline of Key Events

March 2020: Establishment of The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund
Signing of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and CARES Act

April 2020: Danish NGO Human Act launches a child rights-driven campaign to support UNICEF

June 2020: Implementation of UNICEF's Response Strategy in the Democratic Republic of Congo

September 2020: Revision of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) to reflect the demands of the pandemic

November 2020: Publication of UNICEF's Six-Point Plan

Past Attempts at Resolving This Issue

UNICEF (December 2019): UNICEF's *Humanitarian Action for Children* released a US\$6.3 billion emergency appeal to provide over 100 million children and families affected by conflict or disaster with services to water, nutrition, health, sanitation, education, and protection. However, UNICEF updated its plans with the July COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The revised Global Humanitarian Response Plan increased the appeal by US\$1.93 million to reach the 64 countries addressed in the joint plan.



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United Nations (June 2020): The United Nations launched a Roadmap for Digital Cooperation in an effort to connect every individual, including children, to the Internet by 2030 in order to promote technology in education and a digital future.

UNICEF (November 2020): UNICEF launched a Six-Point Plan to Respond, Recover and Reimagine a Post-Pandemic World for Every Child

Suggested Websites

- <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/UNICEF-Beyond-Masks-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- https://sites.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2020-AS-UNICEF_COVID-19_Response_update_paper-EN-2020.06.19.pdf
- <https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children/>
- <https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/covid-monitoring>
- <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty/covid-19-socioeconomic-impacts>
- <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8843en/CA8843EN.pdf>
- <https://bmjpaedsopen.bmj.com/content/3/1/e000503>
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1475-5890.12232>
- <https://www.unicef.org/media/62606/file/HAC-2020-overview.pdf>