



*Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference XIII*

*Saturday, February 1 to Sunday, February 2, 2025*

*Boston University Academy*

*Boston, MA*

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

**(WHO)**

*Background Guide*

## ***Introduction from the chair and vice-chair:***

Hello, Delegates!

My name is Geneva Kelleher, I am a Sophomore at Boston University Academy, and I will be your Chair for BUAMUN. Shaun Ng '27 will be my vice-chair. This committee will be modeled on the World Health Organization Committee (WHO), which is responsible for international public health, and has played a leading role in several public health achievements, most notably the eradication of smallpox, the near-eradication of polio, and the development of an Ebola vaccine.<sup>1</sup>

I participated in Congress, Public Forum, and Parliamentary debate in middle school and high school thus far. In my freshman year at BUA, I co-chaired the WHO committee. I loved vice-chairing for BUAMUN so much that I'm back this year chairing my own committee. Make sure to do your research, come prepared for anything, and be open to all ideas. You may go into the conference with a very set idea of what you want to accomplish but come out of it with a whole new perspective. I hope that any delegate, whether they are experienced or not, comes out of this conference having learned something, and enjoyed themselves. Don't forget, MUN isn't just about ideas and resolutions. It's about establishing connections with people and coming to a consensus as a group.

We look forward to seeing all of your brilliant ideas in the debate and welcome delegates, to BUAMUN'S WHO!

Sincerely,

Geneva Kelleher

Boston University Academy '27

[genevark@bu.edu](mailto:genevark@bu.edu)

Shaun Ng

Boston University Academy '27

[sng2027@bu.edu](mailto:sng2027@bu.edu)

---

<sup>1</sup> "World Health Organization." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_Health\\_Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization)

## ***Equity and Inclusion Policy:***

BUAMUN has a strict policy against discriminatory or hateful speech of any kind. If a delegate, advisor, or staff member is found to have violated this rule, they will be asked to leave the conference without a refund and shall not be allowed to attend any other events during the weekend of BUAMUN. As part of this rule, BUAMUN prohibits discrimination in all of its communications and events on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, genetic information, or political beliefs. To report a concern, please contact a member of the Secretariat. For a complete list of rules, please see the [BUAMUN website](#).

BUAMUN awards will be given on the basis of the quality of a delegate's participation. The chairs will not choose awards based on how often a delegate speaks or how loudly they argue. It is important for all delegates to understand that the purpose of the Model UN is to work together with their peers to find solutions to the world's issues, not to win awards for themselves.

## ***Committee Information:***

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to international public health. Established in 1948, the WHO operates as a global authority on health matters and plays a crucial role in coordinating and guiding international efforts to address health challenges. Comprising member states and a diverse range of experts, the organization works to set health standards, provide technical assistance, and facilitate cooperation among nations to improve health outcomes worldwide. The WHO focuses on a broad spectrum of health issues, including communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, emergency response, health systems strengthening, and the promotion of equitable access to healthcare. As a committee, delegates will grapple with pressing global health issues, engage in collaborative problem-solving, and contribute to the formulation of comprehensive strategies aimed at advancing the well-being of populations across the globe.

In recent times, the World Health Organization (WHO) committee has been actively engaged in addressing pressing global health issues, with a particular focus on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The committee has played a pivotal role in coordinating international responses, disseminating crucial information, and facilitating cooperation among member states to combat the spread of the virus. Additionally, the WHO has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments, advocating for a fair and inclusive approach to global health. Beyond the pandemic, the committee continues to tackle a spectrum of challenges, including emerging infectious diseases, the rise of non-communicable diseases, and the strengthening of health systems to enhance overall public health resilience. Delegates in the WHO committee will delve into these multifaceted issues, navigating the complexities of global health governance and collaboratively shaping strategies to safeguard the well-being of populations worldwide.

### ***Position Paper Guidelines:***

**This committee requires two position papers to be considered for awards.** The absence of at least one position paper will disqualify you (the delegate) from receiving an award. The quality, depth, and clarity of your position paper(s) will influence award decisions. Each position paper should be 1-3 pages and double-spaced. This includes citations which are preferably in the format of footnotes. To insert a footnote, simply click *Insert > Footnote*. Note: a footnote goes after the period. Position papers should follow a general outline with three paragraphs. This is only a suggestion, as long as the paper fits the aforementioned specifications, the number of paragraphs will not be taken into consideration.

#### **Possible position paper outline:**

- 1) Introduction to your delegation and the topic as a whole.
- 2) The position of your delegation.
- 3) Your delegations proposed solutions.

Furthermore, the position paper must be titled in the following format:

**Delegation:** Geneva, Switzerland (Insert your delegation instead)

**School:** Boston University Academy (Insert your school instead)

**Committee:** WHO

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Topic 1: The Global Youth Mental Health Crisis***

*In the aftermath of COVID-19-induced social isolation and social media, one in seven 10-19-year-olds experience a mental disorder, accounting for 15% of the disease among this age group. Delegates are tasked with finding innovative solutions to address mental health issues faced by young people across the world. Position papers should delve into prevention and treatment care across socioeconomic backgrounds. Delegates are invited to address stigma around mental health issues and evaluate the real long-term consequences these issues propose for youth. Furthermore, amidst the difficulties that these mental issues create for physical health as well. Delegates are encouraged to close the gap between low-income and high-income countries. Specifically, position papers should address education, prevention, pharmaceutical, and therapeutic treatment of mental health disorders.*

#### **Overview:**

Global disparities in access to mental health care pose multiple challenges for the World Health Community. Mental health, as defined by the WHO, is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being. People who are exposed to adverse circumstances – including poverty, violence, disability and inequality – are at higher risk of developing a mental health condition. mental health conditions can be effectively treated at relatively low cost, yet health systems remain significantly under-resourced and treatment gaps are wide all over the world. Particularly, youth without strong family figures are more prone to mental health conditions. Mental health care is

often poor in quality when delivered. People with mental health conditions often also experience stigma, discrimination and human rights violations.

### **History:**

The WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030, adopted by all 193 Member States, provides a framework to improve global mental health. Initially launched in 2013 and extended in 2019, the plan was updated in 2021 with enhanced implementation strategies and indicators. The plan uses effective leadership and governance for mental health, community-based mental health and social care services, and focuses on implementation of promotion and prevention strategies for mental well-being. Strengthened information systems, evidence, and research. Additionally, education in schools and awareness have played an important role for preventative care.

### **Questions To Consider:**

1. What are the primary causes of mental health issues and are these universal?
  2. How can children in poverty and war continue to be treated for mental health?
  3. What historic policies have been beneficial for youth?
  4. How can the WHO leverage partnerships with local health organizations to treat mental health?
- **United Kingdom:** The UK supports youth mental health through increased funding and global collaborations like UNICEF's coalition. However, the lack of UK youth delegates limits their voice on international mental health platforms.
  - **India:** Adolescent mental health is a significant issue in the Republic of India. India's national mental health survey suggests that 7.3% of adolescents are affected by mental health issues. Stigma around the topic is still widespread and the youth suicide rate is rather high. It is more widespread in urban adolescent populations. Causes: Academic pressure,

- **United States:** The United States Leads Days of Action on Global Food Security at the United Nations. The United States is committed to ending hunger and malnutrition and building more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems around the world.
- **Pakistan:** Pakistan acknowledges the growing mental health crisis but faces challenges with limited resources, stigma, and inconsistent policy enforcement. While efforts are underway to improve awareness and integrate mental health services into primary care, access remains a major barrier.
- **France:** France emphasizes mental health as a health priority and highlights its significance during conflicts and emergencies, especially for youth. It supports global initiatives to reduce stigma and improve access to mental health care while addressing challenges exacerbated by events like the pandemic.
- **Tuvalu:** Tuvalu focuses on youth mental health as part of broader climate change-related health initiatives. It acknowledges the mental stress caused by climate displacement and advocates for integrating mental health services into disaster resilience plans.
- **Argentina:** Argentina champions accessible mental health services for youth, emphasizing community-based care. It has promoted regional collaboration on mental health policies within Latin America (e.g. Region of the Americas Mental Health Action Plan). Argentina also joined the WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health in 2022.
- **Israel:** Israel highlights mental health innovations, leveraging digital tools to support youth in stress-prone situations. It emphasizes de-stigmatization and early intervention for young populations in conflict zones.
- **Albania:** Albania advocates for mental health integration into educational settings to address youth challenges. It focuses on enhancing regional networks to improve care access for young people.
- **Nigeria:** Nigeria underscores the need to tackle youth mental health issues stemming from insecurity and poverty. It calls for increased global funding and local capacity-building for mental health services.
- **Egypt:** Egypt stresses the importance of addressing youth mental health in educational reforms and social programs. It also supports public awareness campaigns to combat stigma.

- **Russia:** Russia emphasizes state-led mental health initiatives for youth, with a focus on integrating mental health into primary healthcare. It highlights the role of educational institutions in supporting young people's mental well-being.
- **United Arab Emirates:** The UAE prioritizes mental health within its youth-centric policies, promoting digital mental health platforms. It also supports partnerships to enhance awareness and access to care.
- **Australia:** Australia champions a youth-focused approach to mental health, advocating for early intervention and suicide prevention programs. It emphasizes collaboration with Indigenous communities to address unique challenges.
- **Iran:** Iran highlights cultural and family-based approaches to youth mental health while addressing resource gaps. It supports global cooperation to improve access to services in underdeveloped regions.
- **El Salvador:** El Salvador focuses on youth mental health in the context of violence and economic hardship. It advocates for region-specific interventions and international support for mental health initiatives.
- **Japan:** Japan emphasizes resilience-building and mental health education for youth in disaster-prone areas. It also advocates for global cooperation to address the rising youth mental health crisis.
- **Rwanda:** Rwanda addresses youth mental health with a focus on post-genocide trauma healing and community resilience. It integrates mental health services into broader youth development programs.
- **Syria:** Syria highlights the critical need for youth mental health care amid ongoing conflict. It calls for increased international aid to support mental health services for displaced and war-affected youth.
- **Yemen:** Yemen underscores the devastating impact of war on youth mental health, advocating for urgent global intervention. It stresses the need for trauma-informed care and resources for young populations.
- **South Africa:** South Africa prioritizes youth mental health through school-based programs and community interventions. It addresses the intersection of poverty, inequality, and mental well-being.



- **Sweden:** emphasizes preventive measures and youth empowerment to improve mental health outcomes. It supports international collaborations on best practices and youth-focused innovations. For youth, mental health care is free.
- **Colombia:** Colombia focuses on the mental health of youth affected by conflict, advocating for reintegration and community support programs. It seeks to expand care access in underserved areas.
- **Indonesia:** Indonesia promotes mental health education and awareness for youth while addressing resource challenges in rural areas. It supports digital initiatives to bridge gaps in access to care.

## ***Topic 2: Addressing Food Shortages and Youth Malnutrition***

*Due to an increase in global poverty and displacement, many children no longer have access to proper nutrition, leaving them with a plethora of health conditions from long-term malnourishment. Additionally, three billion worldwide cannot afford a healthy diet. Delegates are tasked with finding innovative solutions to address [...] Position papers should delve into a country's relationship with malnutrition and food insecurity, as well as the programs it has taken or plans to take to alleviate it both at home and abroad. Specifically, position papers should address a country's agricultural production, exportation, and importation, as well as other factors relating to a country's relationship with food. Delegates are encouraged to examine the role of humanitarian aid, the United Nations Food Programme, and the broader role of the United Nations in supporting nutritionally under-resourced populations worldwide, especially in war-zones.*

### **Overview:**

The inequality in access to proper nutrition for all, particularly youth, has had alarming effects on the wellbeing of nations. According to The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), hunger is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy that becomes chronic when regular. A person can fall into the food insecure category with a regular lack of access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. Unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food makes this possible. The UN also explains, “Malnutrition can be

either undernutrition, or the other extreme – overweight and obesity. Both are worrying trends that coexist in the world today. In children undernutrition can cause stunting and wasting. Stunting is insufficient height for a child’s age, while wasting is insufficient weight for the child’s height.”

### **History:**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that one-third of all food fit for consumption is either lost during the production or shipping process or wasted. Access to healthy food is another issue altogether, with, particularly, many cities facing an increase in the number of urban areas known as “food deserts”, areas with limited access to affordable, nutritious food. According to the 2024 edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, between 713 and 757 million people faced hunger in 2023– one out of 11 people in the world, and one out of every five in Africa. There tends to be a large gap between these urban and rural areas for their nutrition.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. How can the world community better understand the urban-rural gap?
  2. What could make current solutions more effective?
  3. How can children in poverty and war be ensured nutrition?
- **The United States:** The US plays a significant role in addressing hunger and malnutrition globally through humanitarian aid, providing billions of dollars in food assistance to countries facing crises, often via organizations like USAID and the World Food Programme. Domestically, the U.S. supports anti-hunger initiatives through federal programs like SNAP, school meal programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), aimed at alleviating food insecurity in underserved communities. The U.S. also collaborates with the United Nations and other international bodies to address food deserts and promote sustainable agricultural development to combat hunger worldwide. It is also a relatively food secure country.
  - **United Kingdom:** The UK provides substantial international aid to combat hunger, funding initiatives like the Department for International Development (DFID) and supporting the World Food Programme in addressing global food crises. Domestically, the UK has food assistance programs, such as food banks and the Healthy Start program,

to combat food insecurity, though food poverty remains a challenge in some communities.

- **India:** India faces significant challenges with hunger and malnutrition, but the government has implemented programs like the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Midday Meal Scheme to improve food access and nutrition. India also contributes to global efforts, partnering with the UN to tackle food security issues in South Asia and beyond.
- **Pakistan:** Pakistan has a long-standing issue with food insecurity, exacerbated by poverty and natural disasters, but it has introduced initiatives like the Benazir Income Support Program to help vulnerable populations. Internationally, Pakistan cooperates with UN agencies to provide food aid to refugees and disaster-stricken areas in the region.
- **France:** France addresses global hunger through its foreign aid programs, supporting the World Food Programme and contributing to sustainable agriculture projects in developing countries. Domestically, France has food assistance programs like the Restos du Cœur, which help low-income families access food and alleviate food insecurity.
- **Tuvalu:** As a small island nation, Tuvalu faces the dual challenges of food insecurity and climate change, leading to dependence on international aid. The country collaborates with organizations like the Pacific Islands Forum to address food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture in the region.
- **Argentina:** Argentina, as one of the world's largest food producers, struggles with internal hunger and malnutrition, particularly affecting children, and has food assistance programs like the National Food Assistance Program. Globally, Argentina supports regional initiatives in Latin America to fight hunger and has a growing role in international food security efforts.
- **Israel:** Israel faces food insecurity challenges, particularly among marginalized communities, but has robust social safety nets like the National Insurance Institute's food assistance programs. Internationally, Israel is active in addressing hunger through its agricultural technology innovations and partnerships with UN agencies to support food security in developing countries.
- **Albania:** Albania, though a small economy, has made strides in addressing food insecurity with programs targeting low-income and rural populations, such as food banks and welfare initiatives. Albania also participates in regional Balkan efforts to combat hunger through cooperation with EU-backed programs and NGOs.
- **Nigeria:** Nigeria, home to one of the highest rates of hunger in Africa, faces challenges in food distribution, conflict, and climate change, but it has national initiatives like the National Social Safety Nets Project to address food insecurity. Nigeria also works with the UN and international organizations to provide food aid and agricultural development programs to tackle widespread malnutrition.

- **Sudan's** ongoing civil conflict has exacerbated food insecurity, disrupting agriculture and displacing millions, contributing to widespread hunger and malnutrition. Humanitarian aid is vital, with international organizations providing food assistance, but access is often hindered by conflict and logistical challenges. Additionally, food deserts persist in both urban and rural areas, where poverty and instability limit access to nutritious food, further entrenching the crisis.
- **Egypt:** Egypt has made progress in reducing hunger through food subsidy programs and national initiatives like the Takaful and Karama social protection program, which helps vulnerable populations. Egypt is an active participant in the UN's efforts to promote food security in the Middle East and North Africa region.
- **Russia:** Russia has faced food insecurity issues in certain regions, particularly in rural areas, and has implemented national food assistance programs such as targeted subsidies for low-income families. Internationally, Russia contributes to global food aid through organizations like the World Food Programme and collaborates on agricultural development projects.
- **United Arab Emirates:** The UAE is a major donor in the field of global food security, funding food assistance and emergency relief operations through initiatives like the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives. Domestically, the UAE has programs to ensure food security, especially for low-income groups and expatriate workers in the country.
- **Australia:** Australia is a significant donor in addressing global hunger, contributing to food aid through the Australian Aid program and supporting sustainable agriculture in developing nations. Domestically, Australia tackles food insecurity through programs like food banks, meal services, and social welfare programs targeting disadvantaged communities.
- **Iran:** Iran faces food insecurity challenges due to economic sanctions and internal displacement, but it has national programs like the Targeted Subsidy Plan that help provide food and economic support to low-income households. Iran also participates in regional initiatives to combat hunger, particularly in neighboring countries affected by conflict.
- **El Salvador:** El Salvador struggles with food insecurity, particularly among rural and low-income communities, and the government has established programs like the Red Solidaria to assist vulnerable populations. The country collaborates with the UN and NGOs to address malnutrition and poverty in Central America.
- **Japan:** Japan addresses food security both domestically, with programs like the Food Assistance Program for low-income households, and internationally, by providing substantial aid through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Japan also supports food security initiatives in developing countries, focusing on agricultural technology and disaster relief efforts.

- **Rwanda:** Rwanda has made significant progress in reducing hunger through policies like the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program, which focuses on poverty alleviation and food assistance. The country also works with international partners, including the UN and NGOs, to address malnutrition and promote agricultural sustainability in the region.
- **Syria:** Syria has faced devastating impacts on food security due to ongoing conflicts. International humanitarian aid, including efforts by the UN and organizations like the World Food Programme, is crucial in addressing the acute hunger and malnutrition affecting millions of people in these countries.
- **South Africa:** South Africa tackles food insecurity through social grants, food banks, and programs like the Integrated Nutrition Program, which provides nutritional support to vulnerable populations. The country also partners with international agencies to combat hunger and malnutrition in Southern Africa.
- **Sweden:** Sweden is a major advocate for global food security, providing humanitarian aid and supporting development programs through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Domestically, Sweden has social programs to ensure food access for marginalized groups, though food insecurity remains a growing concern among certain populations.
- **Colombia:** Colombia faces food insecurity challenges, particularly in rural areas affected by conflict and poverty, but has national initiatives like the “Red de Seguridad Alimentaria” (Food Security Network) to address these issues. Colombia also works with international organizations to provide food assistance to neighboring countries and improve food security in the region.
- **Indonesia:** Indonesia has made strides in reducing hunger through programs like the Rice for the Poor and the Family Hope Program, which provide food assistance and economic support to low-income families. The country also engages in regional partnerships and works with the UN to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition across Southeast Asia.