



Australian Associated Press

Press Corps

Reporters: James Rynne and Charlie Romero

Committee: World Health Organization

Topic 2: Refugee and Migrant Healthcare

We create these imaginary boundaries that divide us. Moving from one place to another, either for better education, work, or healthcare systems, you are called a “migrant.” Escaping war, conflicts, or poverty, you are called a “refugee.” But when the sun sets, we are all humans. We all live under the same sky, breathe the same air, and feel the same rain.

To escape war or conflict in your country, you are forced to leave your home. Leaving all your struggles behind, you are also leaving every comfort you ever had. When you come to a new country, you hope for a fresh start. You hope for freedom, safety, and to be treated with dignity. The World Health Organization (WHO) says refugees and migrants have a human right to health, but the healthcare that many are receiving is little to none. Migrants are excluded from society and not given access to healthcare when they are at their most vulnerable, as they face poor living conditions, poor working conditions, and discrimination.

Flags from all over the globe pass through the auditorium of the Marriott Marquis, where the Montessori Model United Nations is being held. The Montessori Model United Nations, also known as MMUN, is a discussion of the future where thousands of Montessori students all over

the globe, ages 9-16, meet in New York City. Each of those students represents a country, where they will discuss problems and solutions with other delegates, making them experienced as future leaders of the world. But they will not just be leaders, but teachers. MMUN is teaching the youth how to share their information and solutions in the future, making the solutions stronger and more effective.

Walking to the podium in front of thousands of delegates, Judith Cunningham, Founder & Chief Vision Officer of Montessori Model United Nations, speaks into the microphone in front of her: “MMUN is more than a simulation, it is a training ground for peace.” Just those few words inspired the delegates for their hard work and dedication—creating the start of MMUN we needed.

“We need your ideas, we need your enthusiasm, your idealism, your belief, your vision, so that you can see that a better world can exist,” said Judith Cunningham. “You’re the people in the spotlight. It’s not about me, it’s about you,” Judith said. MMUN has been here for 20 years now. Every time the delegates have gathered together, more decisions are made, making another mark in history. Judith Cunningham only started as an elementary school teacher, but now, she’s creating a legacy while benefiting the future. Helping the future isn’t just about adults, but also about the children. Empowering children with democracy and solutions for problems will help future generations to come.

Jesus Alejandro

Whenever someone says, ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover,’ it means to never judge someone by their looks. But it has become all too common that when your skin color is different from the majority racial group in a country, people will think that you originate from somewhere else, which can hurt deeply. But we all come from somewhere else; your “home” country isn’t where

your family has stayed since the beginning of mankind. The ancestors sailed the seas to new areas, finding new land to settle on, making us all migrants.

Migrants have traveled across vast seas and land to get where they are today, and will continue to do so. Migrants can be exposed to hypothermia or burns while traveling through challenging mountain ranges or frigid rivers. Migrants travel for many reasons, some being war conflicts in their countries or economic crises that could affect them and their families. The act of migration alone can expose people to new diseases, along with environmental challenges. Migrants have a right to healthcare, as they continue searching for a new place to call “home,” and treating them like they don’t need healthcare is inhumane.

Today, 1 in 8 people are migrants, which adds up to more than a billion migrants globally, and includes more than 26 million refugees and 4 million asylum seekers, according to the WHO. “Good health is vital for refugees and migrants to resettle and rebuild their lives through social, economic, and cultural opportunities,” Vanessa D’Souza, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare spokeswoman, said in a media release.

“To get a job, they need money, and to get money, they need a job, and it’s an endless cycle. They cannot escape poverty,” said Fern Maeroff, the Delegate of Haiti, who is researching her topic on refugee and migrant healthcare. Haiti is the fifth country in the World that is food insecure, while also being dependent on other countries for its food. “The food insecurity is only increasing because they are not receiving any help from the UN,” said Fern.

With the number of migrants expected to rise, due to conflict, poverty, and climate, members of the United Nations must search for ways to ensure that all migrants have access to the quality healthcare they need.

Physical injuries are evident, meaning they can be seen by the human eye, but if they don't have any physical injuries, it doesn't mean they are fine. Migrants may also be struggling with mental health issues. "They arrive across borders traumatised, often after experiencing torture or persecution, and they need specialised support—including mental health care," said Elizabeth Tan, Director of International Protection at UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency).

Jin Dawod, a refugee who fled from Syria to Turkey to escape the war, has a personal understanding of the need for mental healthcare. Jin suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which led her to create an online platform that has connected thousands of trauma survivors with therapists to provide free mental health support. "Our vision is to create a world where mental health is seen not as a privilege, but as a universal right," Jin Dawod said.

Physical, mental, and social factors all contribute to migrant health. Migrants are known to work in fields, putting food on other people's plates, but when they sit down for dinner, what will they eat? They also work night shifts in hospitals, tending to the health of others, while their own health may be at risk. Migrants must not be excluded, but included in health programs.

"Migrants and refugees don't have proper healthcare, like cancer, childbirth, heart diseases, and any emergency injuries," said Kylee Copen, the Delegate of Chad. "They're just normal people, and they can't help that, they can't help who they are," Kylee stated. She later said that Chad's solution should be to get a loan from the UN and pay them back over time.

Migrants and refugees have been here since the first sunrise and will be here for the last sunset. Most migrants today are giving us nourishment, the least we can do is give them what they need—healthcare. We are all migrants; the world is our home.

To be a journalist is to be a watchdog. That is the purpose they will live and stand by, every day of their life. They will show the truth, with a beam of light in every story. The Australian

Associated Press serves to show the world the truth. The AAP is the backbone of Australia's public journalism. AAP journalists give a voice to those who cannot share their voice with the world. The article, "No water in immigration detention centre cell: watchdog," illustrates the mission of the AAP. By showing that migrants are not treated with respect or given running water, it shows that we must all help those who are overlooked and too often ignored.