



Australian Associated Press

Press Corps

Reporters: Charlie Romero and James Rynne

Committee: Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee

Topic 2: Education for Democracy

The youth of today will become our world. Today's adolescents will be the leaders, teachers, journalists, and protestors of tomorrow. Today, in our society, democracy runs farther and farther away from what we are experiencing with our government. It isn't just America, the alleged land of the free, but every place where there is a leader. Democracy is in decline. The global average democracy index score has decreased to its lowest value in 20 years, according to the 2024 report Secretary-General Antonio Guterres presented to the United Nations General Assembly. Less than 8 percent of people live in a "full democracy," while more than one-third of the world's population lives under authoritarian rule. Education must shift the world back toward democracy, back toward peace.

A roar of students' applause erupts in the auditorium as Judith Cunningham, Montessori Model United Nations' founder and chief vision officer, said, "When there's an opportunity in your life, take it. Not for fame, not for money, but for the sake of change." The United Nations has a goal set for the future, a goal set that youth can establish with their creativity and ideas. Democracy is a future that is achievable with the warriors the United Nations set up for success, the youth.

Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) is a program for the empowerment of the youth, the empowerment of a future of democracy, equilibrium, and freedom that can be built by the kids of this day and age. "When people talk about youth engagement from ages 18 to 30, they get it all wrong; that moment is closed, we need to activate and provide experiences and

opportunities for students to exercise social justice during these critical ages of 12 to 16.” said Judith.

MMUN encourages kids to educate themselves on global issues to find solutions. Education is a part of the process, and research is a key aspect of consuming information. Education for Democracy is, hopefully, the future process of educating the youth to know what is right for their society. We need to normalize democracy in the education system, to prepare each child individually to lead.

We are living at a critical time, and adolescents are at a critical age. We have already proven that we can lead thousands of children every year toward a more peaceful planet, but thousands can turn into millions with the encouragement that will spark the youth with a sign of hope, a spark that will light the way to a better future. Democracy is worth protecting, and the only way to build up a strong foundation for it is through education. “We need a lot of second opinions. People are very influenced by their own politics, their own nature; we need that new and raw view on things that people can be influenced by,” said Deanna Morelli Blevins, a rapporteur of the SOCHUM committee sessions.

Judith Cunningham spoke of a young delegate at MMUN who was, before, uneducated about the dangers of society. This child recognized global issues through the MMUN program, which made them care. “Now that I know, I need to do something.”

Alongside conflict, there is hope. It only takes a couple of flames to start a fire; voices are standing out more. With the resources we have today, it is so much easier to spread the word on anything to a vast majority of people, which can be an advantage and a disadvantage, but what matters is that your voice *will* be heard and *will* be recognized. The youth have the advantage; they are the prodigies of this land, and if “Matilda” told us anything, it was to never underestimate the power of a young voice. “MMUN is to help inspire people and help people let their voices out,” said Deanna, “I started this when I was their age, seeing how much the bureau and the mission helped lead me to this, I want to push that message forward.”

Students can learn as well as teach, teach themselves and others the power of knowledge, information that they can use to benefit not only themselves for their own learning, but perhaps the world. Students use the information they have at their fingertips to help build blueprints of a free civilization; they lay out plans for what they have in store for the future, what solutions they want to present to save our people. “People can’t help who they are, and people need care, even if it’s small. I think we should all pay more attention,” said delegate of Chad and member of the WHO committee for resolving issues regarding migrant health, Kylee Renee Copen.

“A way to bring current events into the understanding of young people, not just for awareness, but to make a difference.”

“The more I learn about brain development, the more it becomes clear that this is the time for the development of social justice.”

“This is a moment where your brain is very sensitive to seeing the world through what is right and what is wrong.