

Background Guide



WAMUNC XXVI

ECOSOC



Letter from the Chair

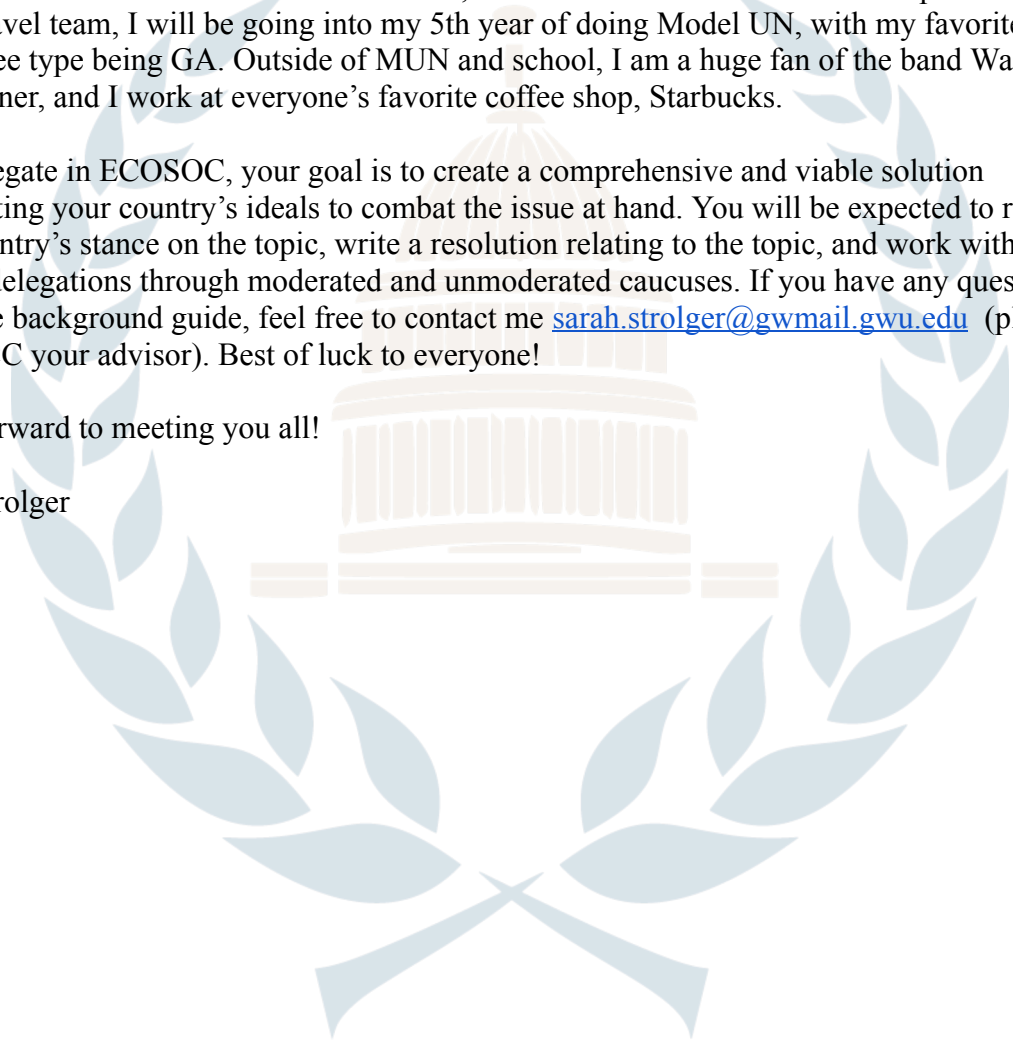
Hi Delegates!

My name is Sarah Strolger and I will be the Chair of this committee! I am super excited to meet all of you and debate out a solution to a still ongoing issue, news and media censorship and youth education curricula. A little bit about me, I am a Freshman here at The George Washington University majoring in International Affairs with a double concentration in Gender in International Affairs and Conflict Resolution, and a minor in Data Science. As a part of the GW MUN travel team, I will be going into my 5th year of doing Model UN, with my favorite committee type being GA. Outside of MUN and school, I am a huge fan of the band Wallows, I am a runner, and I work at everyone's favorite coffee shop, Starbucks.

As a delegate in ECOSOC, your goal is to create a comprehensive and viable solution representing your country's ideals to combat the issue at hand. You will be expected to research your country's stance on the topic, write a resolution relating to the topic, and work with other present delegations through moderated and unmoderated caucuses. If you have any questions about the background guide, feel free to contact me sarah.strolger@gwmail.gwu.edu (please be sure to CC your advisor). Best of luck to everyone!

I look forward to meeting you all!

Sarah Strolger



Introduction to Committee

Welcome to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Committee for WAMUNC XXVI. As a part of the ECOSOC committee you will discuss international economic and social issues, and you, along with many other nations, will formulate a resolution to help solve the issue at hand. This year, we will delve into the profound effects of news and media censorship. Along with this, you will look at the similarities and differences in youth education across the globe and discuss whether or not there should be a standard curriculum and what that would consist of. While participating in this committee, please remember, WAMUNC will not tolerate any forms of hate speech, discrimination, or bullying of any kind! Both of these topics affect a wide range of people in many different ways! And as you go into this weekend, excited to help find solutions for these issues in compliance with your country's position, **just remember to be considerate of the ideas you present and how you present them.**

As a part of a General Assembly (GA) committee, we will follow basic parliamentary procedures. You are not required to write a position paper, however, if you would like to, please go to [WAMUNC's Website](#) to see how it should be done and turned in! We will start the committee with a general speakers list, and then vote on which topic the committee would like to focus on for the weekend. Then, through a series of moderated and unmoderated caucuses, you will collaborate with different nations to create a bloc and then compose a working paper. Following this, you will then begin to merge with other blocs to create a resolution paper. There will be more debate following this as represented in moderated caucus and/or in 2-for, 2-against. We will then vote on all of the papers (Remember, more than one paper is allowed to pass. This also means no papers could pass, just depends on how the committee will go)! Any changes to parliamentary procedure will be up to the chair's discretion. As for how many working papers and resolution papers will be accepted will be determined the day of! If you have any questions about parliamentary procedure, feel free to reach out to me! Another good resource is [the All-American Model UN website!](#)

Historical Background

Following the end of WWII, the Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC, was established as one of the six main organs of the United Nations. ECOSOC oversees economic and social progress all over the world. Due to the branch's coordination with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ECOSOC maintains a vital link between the UN and civil society. ECOSOC encompasses a wide range of issues, including economic development, social development, and environmental sustainability. Over the years, ECOSOC has played a crucial role in shaping international development policies and programs, allowing for cooperation among nations. Throughout its history, ECOSOC has evolved to meet the changing needs of the international community, some being more recent, and some being an issue for the past few decades.

The United Nations has actively played a huge role in promoting freedom of expression, press, and access to information. The UN has helped organize events like World Press Freedom Day

(celebrated May 3), advocates for the safety of journalists, and helps create an open and free media environment. The UN's efforts in raising awareness about the safety of journalists and combating crimes against them have helped many around the world achieve full human rights across the globe. However, there is still much work to be done as in some countries censorship can just take place over social media, while in others, there is a tightly controlled media environment, limiting the information people can share and learn.

As for Youth Education Curricula, the UN has worked to develop international frameworks, guidelines, and initiatives for youth education. However, the UN has no power in implementing these policies, as they occur at the national level. The UN's work in youth education includes promoting sustainable development principles, advocating for global citizenship education, and supporting technical and vocational education. It's important to note that the structure and content of youth education curricula vary significantly across the world because of cultural and political differences.

Topic 1: News and Media Censorship

In this topic, you will dive into the world of global diplomacy in the ECOSOC committee. You'll explore the profound effect of news and media censorship around the world. The history of media censorship is super complex and is shaped by shifts in political, cultural, and technological mediums. One of the first cases of media censorship can be seen throughout ancient civilizations where rulers and authorities had control over the dissemination of information to help maintain political stability and social order. For example, in ancient Rome, the emperors held the power to suppress and manipulate information to help influence public opinion.

The creation of the printing press in the 15th century helped mark a huge moment in the history of news dissemination, changing the traditional censorship mechanisms. However this did not stop governments from finding ways to control the printing press, some implementing licensing systems and restrictions with the content the press could put out. In the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a huge emergence in advocating for press freedom. Philosophers like John Milton and John Locke advocated for the importance of an uncensored press in maintaining democratic societies. In the 20th century, there was an expansion of global press freedoms and a rise of authoritarian regimes implementing extensive censorship, the most notable instances of suppression came during wartime. With the digital revolution, there were new challenges and opportunities for governments to learn how to censor information on online platforms.

Currently, there is a large discrepancy in press freedom throughout the world. Reporters Without Borders conducts a study annually to assess levels of censorship and press freedom throughout the world. In 2023, they found that nearly all of the most free countries were in northern Europe and Scandinavia, while the least free were authoritarian regimes like China, Turkmenistan, and Iran. In countries with limited freedom of the press, journalists who dare to make their voice heard can often face persecution, and in extreme cases death. Al Jazeera estimates that since 2000, 1,795 journalists have been killed in various manners for simply doing their jobs.

The United Nations has dealt with issues related to communication and information to help limit the censorship taking place all over the globe. The UN helps advocate for the safety of journalists, supports media development, and works to ensure that people have access to a free

media environment. One of the many steps the UN has taken is World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3 each year. This day celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom, assesses the state of press freedom worldwide, and pays tribute to journalists who have lost their lives on the job. Along with this, the UN actively works to improve the safety of journalists. The UN raises awareness, develops international standards, and provides training to journalists in conflict zones. And finally, the UN advocates for the right to information as a fundamental human right. However, addressing news and media censorship requires a multifaceted and collaborative approach. This is an issue that requires collaboration from all different kinds of nations. There needs to be international advocacy, promotion of digital security, creation of media literacy programs, advancing technology, monitoring and reporting, and so many more.

Topic 2: Youth Education Curricula

In ancient civilizations, education was exclusively tailored to the elite classes, focusing on skills essential for maintaining a high societal role. However, in ancient Greece, there was a shift towards a more holistic approach to education, focusing more on the mind and character, emphasizing critical thinking and civil virtues. In ancient China, there were more moral and ethical fundamentals for personal and societal well-being. During the Middle Ages, education was largely centered around religious institutions, serving as primary centers for learning. With the Renaissance rolling around, there was a turning point as there was an interest in classical education and a broader focus on the humanities and sciences. In the 15th century, the printing press helped make educational material more widely accessible. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution brought significant change, leading to the establishment of obligatory education in many countries. In the 20th century, there were further educational reforms. This includes the expansion of access to education, the development of a standard curriculum, and the integration of technology into the learning environment.

The UN has helped in promoting education, including the development of inclusive and quality education for all. The UN created the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) which advocates for integrating sustainable development principles into education curriculum which includes promoting environmental awareness, social responsibility, and economic sustainability in educational programs. Along with this, the UN created the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which supports the development of a curriculum for technical and vocational education. This program helps aim to provide practical skills and knowledge for employment. And finally, the UN has created the Global Citizenship Education (GCED). This program supports the development of a curriculum that fosters global citizenship, aiming to train students with the knowledge, skills, and values to engage in a globally interconnected world. However, significant changes should be made. The global literacy rate for all males is 90% and for all females is 82.7%. Along with this, there is a huge disparity between education received between males and females which is due to political, cultural, and societal norms. And there is no current standard curriculum of education worldwide.

Bloc Positions

Geographically – Countries with the most similar ideals can often be seen among the countries that share a border. For example, a nation like Russia would have more in common with a

country like China than it would with a country like Mexico. When in doubt, try turning to your neighbor, geographically of course.

Nations who prefer or already have some form of media censorship – With this topic, not all nations will agree on how to approach this. So, some nations that prefer or have some form of media censorship would ideally work better together to help come up with some form of solution for this issue.

Nations who prefer or have no form of media censorship – On the other side of the spectrum, nations who advocate for very little or no censorship in the media or news would have many different ideals and form many different solutions.

Nations who would prefer a strict standard in education curriculum – Some nations in this committee have much lower literacy rates than others and would think that a standard curriculum implemented in every nation would allow for improvement in youth education.

Nations who would prefer a bit more freedom in creating a youth education curriculum – Some nations would like to create their own “standard” for their youth as a strict standard may not fit every child in their own nation.

Guiding Questions

Topic 1:

- How does media censorship affect the functioning of a democratic society?
- How does media censorship affect the public’s access to information?
- Are there alternative sources of information available for citizens in censored environments?
- To what extent should there be limitations on freedom of speech to prevent harm or maintain social order?
- Can social media be a tool for spreading information in censored environments, or does it contribute to censorship?

Topic 2:

- How are teachers trained and supported to implement the curriculum effectively?
- To what extent does the curriculum address environmental issues and promote global awareness?
- How does it prepare students with practical skills for their future careers and personal lives?
- How does the curriculum align with broader educational and societal objectives?
- To what extent does the curriculum address the needs and challenges of the modern world, including technological advancements, globalization, and changing workforce demands?

Works Cited

- “Home | Economic and Social Council.” United Nations. Accessed November 19, 2023. <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/home>.
- Bery, Soven. “Introduction to Model UN Procedure.” All. Accessed November 19, 2023. <https://www.allamericanmun.com/introduction-to-model-un-procedure/>.
- “History of Censorship.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/censorship/History-of-censorship>.
- “Censorship of School Curricula in the United States.” Wikipedia, September 27, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Censorship_of_school_curricula_in_the_United_States#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20first%20evidence,removed%20material%20critical%20of%20slavery.
- “World Press Freedom Day - En.” United Nations. Accessed November 27, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/press-freedom-day>.
- Youth and the work of the United Nations - static.un.org. Accessed November 26, 2023. https://static.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/growing_together.pdf.
- Jennifer L. Kerpelman a, a, b, Abstract Romantic relationships matter for adolescents. Experiences in romantic relationships facilitate key areas of personal and interpersonal development, L.P. Richardson, F. Adler-Baeder, B. Barber, et al. “Evaluation of a Statewide Youth-Focused Relationships Education Curriculum.” Journal of Adolescence, June 4, 2009. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0140197109000530>.
- Unesco. “Education for Sustainable Development.” UNESCO.org, January 1, 1970. <https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sustainable-development>.
- “Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).” UNESCO.org. Accessed November 27, 2023. <https://www.unesco.org/en/fieldoffice/beirut/tvet>.