



EL MUNITY

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How Well Do Delegates Know the SDGs?

In a study conducted this year at THIMUN The Hague, MUNITY asked 50 delegates how many of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they could list. 16 of those delegates answered zero and only six could list more than half. The overall average was 3.48 SDGs.

The United Nations remarks that the SDGs create a blueprint for a sustainable and better future. They were established to cover all aspects of sustainable development. Yet the majority of the delegates at THIMUN are not familiar with the goals, which raises several concerns. If delegates are not familiar with the SDGs, should they be implemented more into each conference? Do the SDGs need to be changed, or even eliminated?

An ambassador who wishes not to be named remarked, "They're good, but they aren't going to make change." The ambassador added that the SDGs are too vague to make an impact.

Ismail Sufi, (Delegate of Uruguay, Sustainable Development Commission Sub-commission 1) shares a similar opinion with the ambassador. Sufi had not heard of the SDGs beforehand but said, "I don't think it really works if you just say: 'These are the goals and you tell people, this is what we want to achieve.' The issue has to arrive at people directly for them to appreciate the fact that they need to change their behavior." Sufi concluded, resting his hand on the back of his chair, "I don't think the SDGs do much."

Sufi and Imaan Lalji (Delegate of UN-WTO, SDC1) further stated that the SDGs lack clear instructions for action. While they describe goals that the world wants to achieve, they do not specifically explain how people can accomplish those goals. Can the youth work towards a better future with three or four words as guidelines?

Emma Petite, the ambassador of Egypt, shares a similar point of view. She stated, "The fundamental flaw with the SDGs is how broad they are. A body that can't enforce much of its decisions is going to have a hard time drastically changing the world."

Most of the SDGs overlap with each other and can be applied to many programs, from local school outreaches to fundraisers for countries in need. However, some MUN Directors, like Shannon Koropchak from John Burroughs School, see a disconnect between programs. Koropchak remarked that the programs often do not correlate with each other; students may not be educated on the problem the programs are trying to tackle.

When asked what the fundamental issue was concerning the SDGs, Koropchak

said, "Efficiency is the main thing. How can we make programs that are working on the same thing and how can we connect them to one another so that they are being as effective as possible?"

At the same time, delegates believe that the SDGs are still beneficial — they should not be eradicated entirely because they describe the goals that the world is hoping to accomplish.

Zhuldyz Valikhakzy (Delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Economic and Social Council) believes the SDGs should be implemented into MUN conferences. She said, "It helps us focus on those urgent issues that we have to solve right now." Valikhakzy nodded and continued, "I think that the conference should be bound to SDGs because this way, students and delegates will see that their actions and debates are focused on something of current issues which are real right now."

Furthermore, SDGs can give the world hope because they allow people to envision a better future. They provide a pathway

and instruct the youth what they should be working towards.

Koropchak said, "We are defining for ourselves what are the most pressing issues of our era and saying here are the goals, here's what we have to achieve, here's what a better world looks like." She chuckled. "I think you always have to have an idealized version of the world in your mind so you can figure out, what do you do next?"

However, delegates do not see a clearly lit path. Even though the SDGs should not be eliminated, the participants of the conference want to change them. They aim to add more subclauses to clarify how to accomplish the SDGs, to collaborate with each other to create a more efficient environment and to take more direct action that creates substantial change to make the idealized, SDG-fulfilled world a reality.

For more information about the SDGs, go to Sustainable Development Goals on the UN website.

by Carrie Zhang



Layout and Artwork by Charlotte Widmaier

UN Peacekeepers: Harbingers of Vice or Virtue?

by Amalia Anhalt

It feels pretty clear what the United Nations (UN) peacekeepers are supposed to do: keep the peace. Their mission goes beyond such simplicity, of course, and according to the UN peacekeeping website, factors such as “principles of consent, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate” are necessary for success. The reputation of peacekeepers has not remained perfectly clean, however, according to the Associated Press, almost 2,000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers have been reported to the UN. While it is not disputed that peacekeepers have celebrated tremendous successes, some feel that peacekeepers are falling into disrepute.

A recent example of such controversy was the peacekeeping mission in Haiti, an impoverished country, which

drawn to a close in late 2017. The mission in Haiti has been characterized by much virtue, but has also tarnished by many vices. Al Jazeera reported that while the peacekeepers are credited with stabilizing the region, a cholera outbreak and sexual assault have also been attributed to their presence.

After Haiti was devastated by an earthquake on January 12, 2010, cholera, which had not existed in Haiti for 100 years, broke out in the vicinity of a UN base of Nepali peacekeepers. This outbreak exacerbated the pain and struggles of Haitians. According to UN figures, it infected 770,000 people and killed

almost 10,000. In 2016, the UN apologized for its involvement in the outbreak and created a \$400 million voluntary trust fund to support Haiti in the fight against cholera. The controversy, however, was not over. In 2017, the New York Times reported that the fund was almost empty and had only consisted of a few million dollars.

In addition to the cholera outbreak, cases of sexual assault and abuse have tainted the peacekeepers’ legacy in Haiti. Rape, the sexual exploitation of children and transactional sex are among the transgressions.

Many Haitians were not impressed by the conduct of the peacekeepers in their country and felt abandoned and lied to by the UN. While it is unwise to completely discredit an organization that stands for values that are admirable and has contributed to successes such as disarming and reintegrating some 70,000 combatants in Côte d’Ivoire, it is also unwise to disregard its faults in favor of them. The UN continues to be generally accepted as a force of good, to the extent that thousands of students have traveled here to model it. Despite this, it is important to consider reform and the role that we, so humbly referred to as “future leaders,” want to play in a better future, and in an improved version of the United Nations.

Layout by Melody Tai

Artwork by Dariia Panasenka



Special Visit Challenges Expectations

by Gabe Fleisher & Yunrong Chen

THIMUN received a visit on Tuesday by a group of special education students from the American School of the Hague (ASH), who were able to tour the World Forum and catch a glimpse at their classmates working as diplomats.

“We had an invitation as a special education program to come and take a tour and see what THIMUN is all about and see some of our peers in action,” Stefanie Donnelly, a special education teacher at the high school, said in an interview. “The special education program is really interested in what’s happening around the school and being included in all events, so this is a really great way for us to be included in something and come in and see what’s going on.”

The ASH visitors included nine students with intellectual disabilities, hailing from Argentina, Brunei, Canada, Congo, Ita-

ly, Jordan, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. Their peers at the conference are serving as delegates from Germany; ASH also counts one of the 2020 conference’s Deputy Secretaries General as a pupil.

In addition to visiting forums and watching delegates lobby and merge their resolutions, the special education students also toured the MUNITY press room. “The students had a wonderful visit to the press room because they could relate to the work we were doing,” said MUNITY adviser Andrew Newman. “Several students talked about their experience at the yearbook at ASH and knew how to use InDesign and PhotoShop programs that we use at MUNITY. The students were engaged with the layout team and the artists who were working both

with pencils, pens, and on their tablets to draw their artwork.” One of the students even tried their hand at creating a MUNITY drawing of their own.

Donnelly walked away with nothing but praise for the conference she was able to witness. “I’m really impressed to see the [THIMUN] students working, being professional, doing something academic but something beyond the classroom,” the educator concluded.



Photographs by Serkan Emre Erçakır



Layout by Melody Tai



Spot The Polyglot

by Léa Henaux

Marathi. I spoke Gujarati with my grandparents as that is where my family is from. Hindi I learned in school because it is India's most spoken language. English is technically my first language so we learned that in school as well. Then Spanish I started in the eighth grade as a second language and now I speak it fluently."

The second delegate, Aaron Felix Gustaf Holmberg (Delegate of Azerbaijan, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1) is a Finnish student who lives in the Netherlands and attends the Murmellius Gymnasium Alkmaar. Like Kadakia, Holmberg also attributed his linguistic skills to his international background growing up. "At home, I speak Finnish with my mother and Swedish with my father. Now, I live in the Netherlands so I can speak Dutch and finally, I learned English through my international school." Holmberg also speaks Esperanto, which is a constructed international auxiliary language that around two million people speak.

Naturally, knowing multiple languages comes with an advantage. When participating in large international conferences like THIMUN, it offers easy connections to other delegates who speak the same language. "I was able to speak to other people in my committee in Spanish and make friends with them," said Kadakia. He also added, "sometimes it is like a secret call. If I am traveling and want to tell someone something secretly, I can speak in Hindi so no one else understands us. Out of India, it offers more discretion than English."

Holmberg believed the biggest advantage of growing up with multiple languages was that it made it much easier for him to study similar languages, "I can learn languages much quicker now. In school, I have also been learning German, French and Latin, and my fluency in Dutch and Swedish has helped me with that a lot."

The majority of THIMUN participants are bilingual, many are trilingual and very few are true polyglots. Nevertheless, two delegates stood out due to their impressive mastery of five languages.

Adit Aar Kadakia (Delegate of Chad, General Assembly 3), an Indian student from Dhirubhai Ambani International School in Mumbai, explained how he came to learn five languages. "The first four languages I learned when I was growing up. Living in Maharashtra, you have to learn to speak

Despite these advantages, both delegates agreed that it can get very confusing to try and remember all of their languages. Kadiak stressed, "It gets confusing because all of the languages have different grammar rules." Holmberg agreed: "Writing is the most difficult because the grammar and word order often get confused. It's hard to keep them separated in my head," he said.

Although Kadiak doubts he will be learning any new languages, Holmberg said he hopes to study Linguistics at university in the UK and to learn one or two more languages in the future.

Photos by Tamar Kreitman



Approval Panel Opens

by Natasha Faruqui

At THIMUN, delegates spend the entire week discussing and drafting resolutions with proposed solutions to their respective problems. "[Resolutions] are merged, sort of organically created during the lobbying," said Jochen Vermeulen (Approval Panel member). "So, what you get when you take these documents and put them up into debate is a mismatch of styles and formatting."

This morning, the Approval Panel opened its doors to a long queue of delegates waiting to discuss their resolutions. So far, 173 resolutions have been registered, meaning that chairs have uploaded 173 candidate documents for debate and for approval.

Members of the approval panel meet one-on-one with delegates who have crafted the resolutions. Together, they perfect these resolutions, working on grammar, punctuation, formatting and indentation. They also proofread for any inconsistencies or duplications that may have arisen during the merging process. "We make sure these documents look professional and become debatable," said Ver-

meulen.

Once a resolution is approved, it is returned to the chairs to be debated on. There are three possible outcomes following the approval: the resolution may be debated and passed, the resolution may be voted down in debate or the resolution may not be debated all due to time constraints or a shift in the focus of debate.

"I have seen lots of resolutions come my way over the years," shared Vermeulen. "Some of them are enormous, long and very detailed... some are short and sweet."

Vermeulen advised delegates to bring forth concise resolutions that present all the important points with no extraneous details. That way submitters will be prepared to work with the advisory panel members and tackle the main errors of their resolutions.

"I look forward to seeing good debates about issues that matter and resolutions that support that," said Vermeulen. "If my colleagues and I here in the Approval Panel can help with that process, that's great."



Photos by Emre Serkan Erçakır

Layout by Yuzine Yi

Views on the Opening Ceremony: **REVIEWED** by David Wolfe Bender



Photographs by Emre Serkan Erçakır

While hundreds of students packed into the World Forum Theater on January 28, 2020 to watch the opening ceremony, there were also hundreds of students who were seated in Atlantic, in which the opening ceremony was displayed on a large TV screen. Some students complained that the room's seating was not an environment suitable for watching the ceremony.

"When you watch it on TV, you feel a lot more disconnected," Adam Katz (Delegate of Poland, Sustainable Development Commission Sub-Commission 2) said.

"Kids weren't paying attention. There was just a lot of chatter."

Katz, who was sitting in the front, did mention that the ceremony's audio was not a problem, with the exception of one part of the ceremony.

"The only time that it was hard to hear was during the choir's [performance]," he said. "It was interesting because we were all talking about it after the ceremony.

The kids [who] were in the auditorium felt that it was a really great rendition. Those in Atlantic? They didn't like it."

One element that bothered Katz was that he saw empty seats in the theater while watching the performance. Katz said there could be a way to get more people in to view the ceremony.

The area that Katz was referring to is the center section of the lower level seating, which is reserved for VIP guests, invited dignitaries, and some conference staff. Some VIP guests may have not been able to attend, which can leave the area with many empty seats.

Another delegate echoed Katz's concerns, adding that she was seated near the back of the Atlantic Room and had a difficult time seeing the screen.

AnnMarie O'Shea (Delegate of Costa Rica, Sustainable Development Commission Sub-Commission 2) paralleled Katz's view that it was tough

to understand what was going on, due to the lack of attention many delegates gave to the ceremony.

Some delegates, however, enjoyed the opening ceremony. Erkin Diker (Delegate of Vietnam, Human Rights Commission Sub-Commission 2) explained how he really enjoyed how the speeches connected to the conference's theme: "Securing and Advancing Democracy."

"I think they really touched on democracy, and the whole opening ceremony really seemed to focus on that," Diker said. "I really liked how the Deputy Mayor of the Hague addressed all the students and also touched on the overall theme of why democracy is so important."

With democracy being the cornerstone of the opening ceremony, the fact that not all delegates were able to adequately participate is an issue students may want THIMUN to discuss in the future.

Land or Resources?:

ICJ Dispute

by Christina Brusco

ICJ members began the day with a heated discussion involving the Guatemalan and Belizean ambassadors over the territorial dispute between the two nations.

The Guatemalan ambassador Nour Legmi showed a comprehensive understanding of all treaties, articles, and evidence brought to the table. Although the Guatemalan advocates, Salma Shabana and Jana Hayaly, held their ground, they could not stop the Belizean advocates, Olivia Mokko and Aapo Karvonen, from finding weaknesses in Guatemala's arguments. The advocates of Belize used hypotheticals to their advantage, stating that if there was oil in Belizean territory, Guatemala would claim that territory to extract natural resources.

Considering that Guatemala recognized Belize as an independent

nation in 1991 but "reclaimed" Belizean territory eight years later, would Guatemala's need for natural resources be the drive to reclamation? The Guatemalan ambassador remained respectful and polite, even if she was unable to refute Belize's claims.

After the Belizean ambassador Heikki Helppi swore to speak the truth, he stated that Guatemala showed a "clear lack of good faith" and that the Central American nation has been "extremely aggressive towards Belize." The advocates of Belize raised a similar point in their reclamation argument, referring to Belize's natural resources as one of the primary reasons for Guatemala's claims over foreign territory.

The Guatemalan advocates regained control, pointing out that the dispute dates back long before there was any interest in natural resources. In the last moment, the advocates of Guatemala attempted to question Belize's internal affairs as being related to the ambassador of Belize's statements. Mr. Helppi mentioned worrying about military activity along the border. However, the ambassador did not see how his nation's internal affairs were relevant to the territorial dispute.

The president Gabrielle Nicholls and the deputy president Jason Liu both stated that the discussion went quickly, but well. All advocates, judges, and witnesses represented themselves in a respectful manner, making such a controversial topic run smoothly.



Photograph by Selina Demaré

A Glimpse into ECOSOC

by Nicolas Ghandour

The day for the Economic and Social Council started with the opening speeches from every participating country, each displaying their expectations to the room. Cooperation and growth were the delegates' goal: "We hope to represent the interests of not only our own people, but everyone's facing the same economic and social problems as us," said Sahil Rane (Delegate of Chad, ECOSOC). The will to change the world could also be felt through the Delegate of India's speech, when he did not stop his passionate words even after the chairs requested him to.

The agenda focused on the socio-economic development fields of Less Economically Developed Countries such as healthcare, employment and immigration. As these issues now concern the majority of countries, delegates eagerly worked together to find solutions. "MUN is about compromise and diplomacy, and things often don't go the way you want. But that's where the constructive debate comes in," said Rane.

In ECOSOC, the presence of Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) was essential. The European Union's role as representing the interests of a group of countries remained a complex task. "I try to be as unbiased as possible in representing the interests of the European Union.



Photograph by Julie Andersen

Working towards unity is, therefore, my main goal," said Miguel Anton Gomez (Delegate of EU, ECOSOC). IGOs provided a neutral point of view on topics that lets them evaluate all aspects of the problems. The EU proposed a resolution on sustainable tourism which was to be debated later in the day.

In the end, all of the countries made an effort to work toward a consensus. Lou Andral (Delegate of Russia, ECOSOC) stated: "The Russian Federation is looking for strong cooperation between countries and hearing the different points of view while widening our state of mind."

As ECOSOC finished its daily discourse, a glimpse into its workings clearly demonstrated that diversity and unity are crucial to its success.

Layout by Selma Choden

Playing Dictator's Advocate

by Gabe Fleisher

Anna Veen is one of the approximately 3,500 delegates attending THIMUN this year, but she is among a select few facing a unique challenge. She will be spending the bulk of the next week in her assigned room: the Special Conference on Securing and Advancing Democracy, which shares its lofty title with the 2020 conference's pro-democratic focus at-large. The only problem? She is here representing Iraq, which has been named by experts as one of the least democratic nations in the world.

What is that like? "It sucks," she said bluntly.

A number of delegates in attendance at THIMUN are grappling with representing totalitarian countries in a conference that is dedicated to democracy's promotion. "I'm scared," Rohan Kumaran (Delegate of Egypt) admitted. "I'm going to get cross-examined a bunch and not know how to defend myself... Even if I am not a head-submitter or if everyone here hates me, it'll mean that I did my job as an Egyptian delegate and made the most of the conference."

Some delegates questioned the wisdom of having a conference focused on expanding democracy when there are delegates representing other forms of government in attendance. "I think it's unfair to countries like China to have a conference that is promoting democracy when there's also other types of governments that do work," said Gargi Sahasrabudhahe (Delegate of China).

"Democracy can be very flawed, because it's giving people the incentive to vote when maybe they don't even have the knowledge to be able to vote they don't have the education, so maybe it's not for the best of the country for everyone to be able to vote," Sahasrabudhahe continued, adding that she found it unlikely that China would attend such a pro-democratic conference in real life.

Many students shared that they find it difficult to be representing authoritarian countries when they do not align with those views themselves. "It's kind of awkward," Marta Schenk (Delegate of Azerbaijan) said. "Because sometimes I say things [and then] I think, 'Oh my god! That's so rude and not true!'"

However, other delegates in this awkward position are leaning into the roles, having fun playing devil's (or dictator's) advocate. "The government needs to control everything. That's what we believe," Omar Kammourieh (Delegate of North Korea) said, grinning, "Our great leader knows best and he knows better than regular people."

His classmate, Mariam Al-Ozairi (Delegate of North Korea), chimed in: "He knows what's best for his people, and it's not fair for the people to decide when they don't have the same experience as our Supreme Leader," referring to North Korea's 36-year-old dictator Kim Jong Un.

"What's the point of having a government if they're not gonna run the show?" Kammourieh asked simply.

While there are challenges involved in the role, Susan Simanek (Delegate of United Arab Emirates) said it could make THIMUN an easier experience at times, because she can generally fall back on the same answer in debate after debate: No. "It is a little bit hard on the one side, but on the other side, you can always say that you are against something, and you do know how the country would respond to certain topics, so in some ways it's also easy to represent the country," she said. ("Although I'm a woman and they have a lack of female



Photos by Selina Demaré

rights," she added after a pause.)

The quandary of representing a less democratic nation at a conference focused on advancing democracy is even more magnified among natives of those countries.

"It's liberating, I guess," said MUN director Munevver Cavusoglu of the Hisar School in Istanbul, Turkey. "At least we can represent what we feel in a place like this. We feel free to talk about any issue in a way that we think is correct," as opposed to in her home country, where she said she can sometimes feel "trapped."

Cavusoglu maintained that Turkey has democratic elements, although it was rated as the 57th least democratic country in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit earlier this month, and denied that the issues concerning democracy being discussed at THIMUN this year lie only with autocratic nations like her own. "Within the whole world there is a problem with democracy. That's what we're facing right now," she said "In the U.S., in Europe, in the United Kingdom, everywhere."

Her colleague Okan Uzelli agreed. "If the MUN board chose this topic, then it's a problem. Not for Turkey... it's a problem for the world."

Can ART Spark Political Change?

by Fatima Djalalova

Roman poet Horace believed that art should entertain and instruct, but does modern art achieve this? Despite the centuries that have passed, THIMUN delegates emulate the timelessness of Horace's words. Zoi Mathiopolou (Delegate of Mexico, Environmental Commission 1) highlighted the role of visual art in politics, noting that "cartoons can make fun of [politicians] in a very indirect way — it's like protesting but not protesting." Similarly, Nourallah Al-Halwani (Delegate of Sao Tome and Principe, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1) added that "art influences how people make decisions. It presents the dichotomy between good and bad, illuminating independent thinking."

Art is born in response to its time period and usually engages with the issues of its society. Drama is one of the most remarkable examples because it can be read, but also staged in theatres and adapted into films. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* indirectly criticizes the Red Scare of the 1950s by drawing an analogy between it and the Salem witch trials. Despite the decades that passed since McCarthyism (the period of intense anti-Communist suspicion), the issue of fear of the unknown leading to blindness to truth persists, but does that mean that *The Crucible* was incapable of changing society? Ramid Kadirov (Delegate of Latvia, General Assembly 1) answers this question by stating that "art has the power to connect the public to the political issues that are taking place in the world. Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, George Orwell's 1984 and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* are some of the famous works that succeeded in connecting the audience to the political context of the texts."

The story of witch hunts continues to be used to shift our perception of different issues, as can be seen in the song, *Burn the Witch*, released by Radiohead in 2016 to criticize blaming refugees for problems in the European economy. Therefore, art invites us to reposition ourselves in relation to global events through the lenses of history.

The aforementioned example of Radiohead is not the sole instance of musical artists participating in political matters. In 2003, Radiohead released another song, *2+2=5*, which alludes to George Orwell's 1984 to elevate

the issue of the power of authority to impose the "truth" advantageous to people in power. When asked about the examples of musical pieces that influenced politics, Josh Gerl (Delegate of Japan, General Assembly 6) and Jakob Jürgens (Delegate of Japan, General Assembly 5) accentuated the power of the song *Dear Mr. President* that was released by Pink in 2006. The heart-wrenching lines "How do you sleep while the rest of us cry? How do you dream when a mother has no chance to say goodbye?" confirm the words of Theodora Brafa (Delegate of Mexico, Human Rights Commission 2) that the power of art lies in the fact that "no one can restrict you from doing it — you are free [to] express your personal opinions."

Considering visual art, it is important to note the popularity of political cartoons and graffiti. It is no coincidence that history textbooks devote special attention to cartoons. David Low's witty responses to the Reichstag Fire in 1933 and the Munich Agreement in 1938 via cartoons highlight the power of visuals in telling stories and initiating a deeper discussion on the issues. Current artists continue to actively engage with political issues. One of the notable examples is Banksy, whose *Stop and Search* and *Bomb Hugger* shook the standard perceptions of what visual art incorporates, proving that using walls as canvases yields more success with reaching the public and appealing to younger audiences.

Apart from influencing the political situation with its message, the production of art itself can create a bridge of unity and understanding between people of different backgrounds. Zohrab Tahir (Delegate of Finland, Historical Security Council) shared that "coming from Pakistan, I have always seen high tensions with our neighbors, however, time to time actors and musicians from both countries have worked together in the film industries of both countries. This has been a pathway to expand love between the two nations and also show that art has no borders." This example vividly illustrates how collaboration of artists can lead to exchange of ideas and establishment of mutual respect between the different sides.

All art reveals something about the social and political circumstances of a time period. The beauty of expressing ideas through art is that it does not only allow for more freedom of expression and a close emotional tie with its recipients, but it also acts as a mirror that illuminates our shortcomings, therefore underscoring the importance of change and motivating us to stand for it.



Artwork by Paree Rohera
Layout by Doris Huang

Internationality Does Not Always Increase Diversity

by Emma Nathenson

“Today’s youth, the leaders of tomorrow,” is becoming an increasingly popular sentiment amidst the current global tumult. At a conference built on the foundation of analytical, vocal young adults seeking solutions to the world’s most pressing debates, this idea seems quite realistic. But who has the opportunity to start addressing these issues in the first place?

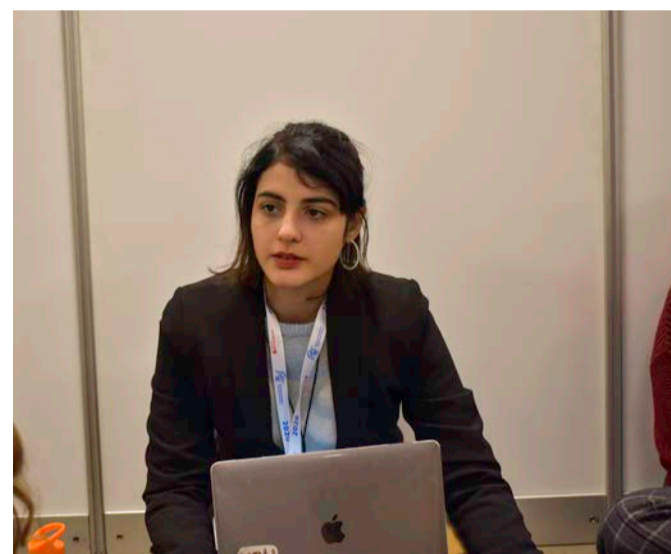
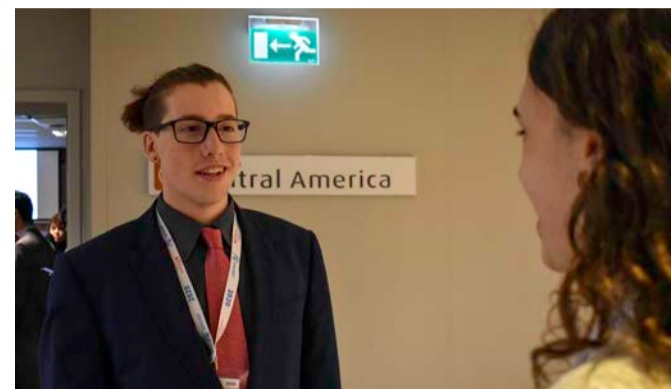
International and bilingual schools constitute a vast majority of schools attending the conference. These specific systems bring together students from various backgrounds, emphasize English fluency and typically offer rigorous academics like the acclaimed International Baccalaureate. While international schools

serve as a meeting and mixing point for different heritages and ethnicities, they tend to be relatively homogenous in terms of economic class. Many THIMUN-goers attend international schools, being accustomed to global perspective and often having the means to afford such an experience.

“I go to St. Johns International School in Brussels,” said Joana Gonçalves (Delegate of Belize, Sustainable Development Commission Sub-commission 2). Although this is her first THIMUN, she feels comfortable and enjoys speaking up. “We’re quite small, and we relied a lot on juniors and seniors who’ve had previous experience, and we met every week, so I feel they’ve prepared us very well.” Such conferences tend to attract a similar type of student – one eager to participate and lend critical insight – but adequate preparation can be vital to one’s success in this unique environment. Beyond academic experience and practice in debate, the cultural diversity students are accustomed to plays

the IBIS Hotel for the duration of the conference. “The conference is pretty expensive for international students, so where I’m from it’s extremely expensive to come all the way to the Netherlands,” said Malik. “But I don’t think that’s under the control of the conference,” he added. Indeed, what role should the conference play in encouraging students from various economic backgrounds to attend? Schools are able to book their accommodations through THIMUN’s local travel agent, ITO PCO, which re-

quires a €500 booking deposit. The agency offers a list of hotels on the THIMUN website, with single rooms starting at €95



ent countries. At a conference deeply international in both those attending and the conflicts it tackles, a perspective that has already been influenced by diversity is nearly a prerequisite.

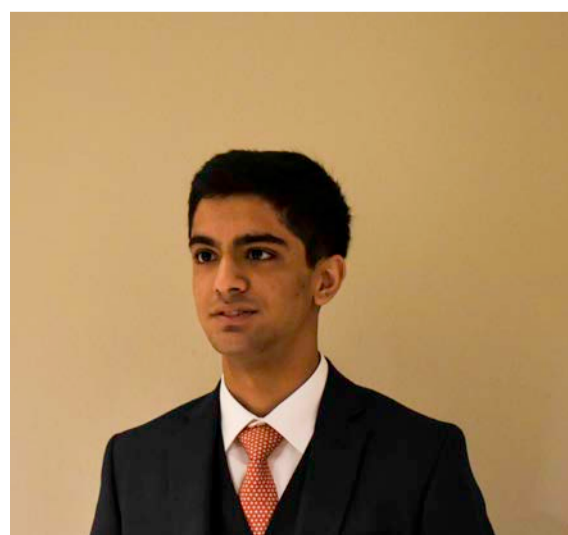
An undeniable determinant in who can attend THIMUN is wealth, a factor inextricably connected to financing international schools, which are typically private. Saransh Malik from the United World College of Southeast Asia in Singapore is staying with his delegation in

a significant role. Maria Isabel Dias, who attends the United World College of Southeast Asia (Dover) shares that her peers come from over 80 differ-

per night. Costs remain steep for twin rooms as well, with prices in the upper €100 and lower €200 range. Since only four out of 200 schools in attendance are not staying in hotels, financial stability, too, practically becomes a prerequisite.

It would be simplistic and invalid to claim that only students from international schools thrive in this conference’s environment, however. Second-time THIMUN-goer, Ted Barnes, attends an American school in Germany. “My school is a public school and I feel very happy that we have the opportunity to come,” he explained. For Barnes, attending the conference is a much anticipated event. “It’s fantastic, where I’m from it’s very cloistered. I live in Germany but there’s a big American community so I don’t get as much international interaction as you might elsewhere. Here, there’s so many people from everywhere.”

Layout by Doris Huang



To Clique or Not to Clique, that is the Question

by Suakshi Soni

In school, we have our exclusive groups and cliques. Here at THIMUN, we are a more sophisticated group of people so... we get blocs instead! While we may not have our very own “mean girl” Regina George strutting down the corridors of the World Forum, we do have our own version of her clique in our committees.

Sahil Rane (Delegation of Chad, Economic and Social Council) notices this. He said, “members from the American School circuit seem to know each other really well, which is why my delegation got shut out from being the main submitter.” He added that since the main submitter knew most of the other delegates in their bloc, they all rallied behind her.

Tina Chen (Delegate of Egypt, General Assembly 2) echoed the concern of many delegates at THIMUN 2020, saying that “a lot of schools seem to have large delegations to the same committees, so many of the delegates

know each other already which makes the process more complex.” While the complexity of the issue does not hinder MUN debate, it can, to some extent, make passing resolutions more difficult.

Speaking on cliques, Ishaan Goel (Delegation of Chad, Economic and Social Council) states, “In my opinion, in a THIMUN conference, it is essential to leave behind your personal relationships, as you are now representing your country. Personal relationships should not be allowed to infiltrate diplomacy. Hence, combating such cliques is of paramount importance.”

Some delegates have started brainstorming ideas to resolve the issue. Laura Hwa (Delegate of Afghanistan, Human Rights Commission Sub-commission 2) said, “Greater moderation by chairs could possibly help solve it.” She elaborated that if “during lobbying, the Chairs could make sure that such cliques do not form and everything is fair” then it could help solve this problem.

In the end, however, the formation of cliques does help THIMUN parallel the UN in more ways than just procedure. “The thing is, we are here at THIMUN to learn about diplomatic relations and personal relations – whether

it’s forming cliques or just liking someone better – even in the real world plays a very important role in how diplomacy is carried out,” said Rhea Ravindra (Delegate of Chad, Human Rights Commission Sub-commission 2). She added that “we should not be minimizing that here because then we are not exposed to the reality of the real world”



Artwork by Zoya Lulu Kirmani

Public Speaking: Fight or Flight?

by Ella Westland

Let’s face it: public speaking is scary. In fact, it’s one of the most common phobias. An estimated 75% of the world population is afraid of speaking in front of an audience. Maybe your hands start to shake, your legs turn to jelly and your mind goes blank. Unfortunately, the situation is often unavoidable, and cracking under pressure isn’t an option, especially when you’re trying to make an opening statement or express an opinion to your bloc. There are many tips and tricks out there to combat public speaking anxiety, but what actually works?

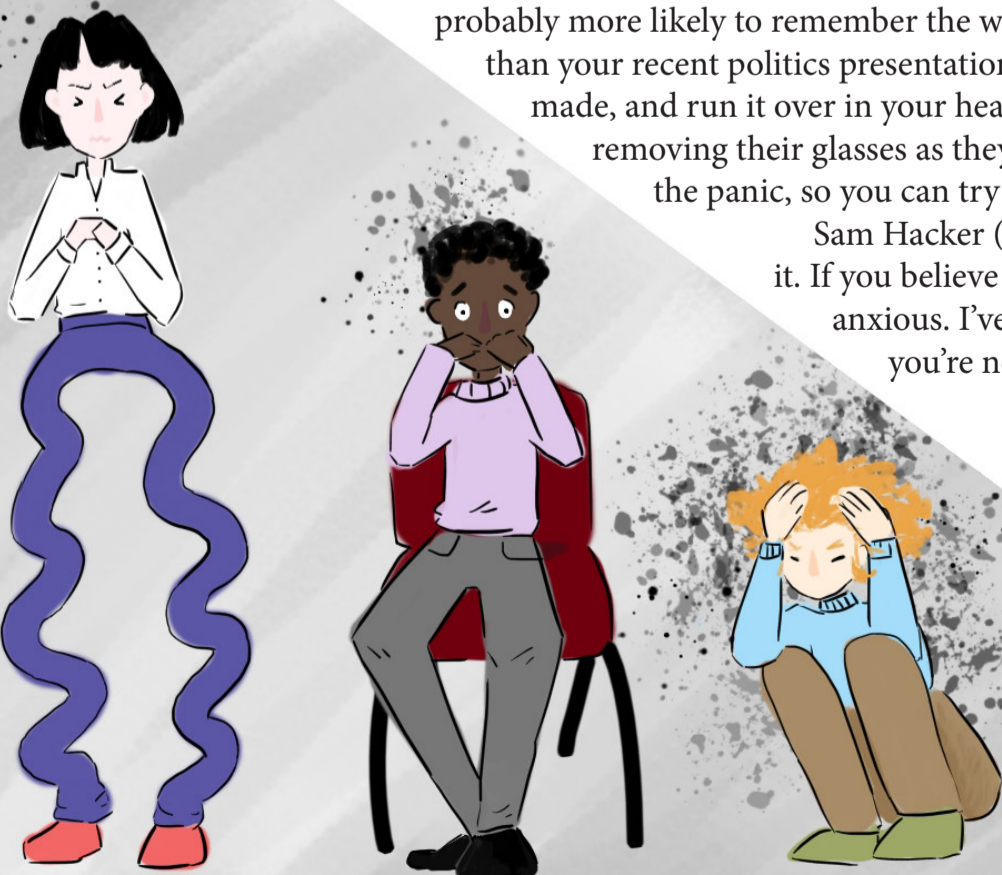
For many, public speaking triggers the fight or flight response — a rush of adrenaline that helps your body react to danger — hence, the sudden need to call in sick. Experts recommend using breathing exercises and practicing mindfulness. For public speaking specifically, however, the general consensus is, as always, practice makes perfect. Make sure you know your topic inside out, make cue cards and practice at least ten to thirty times. Once you’re confident, try standing in front of a mirror to gain some perspective and practice body language and eye contact. Eye contact is often key to keeping an audience engaged, but if you’re still not confident you can always try looking over the audience’s heads or even at the back wall for a similar effect. “It’s about just believing in yourself: you can get up and make a valid point. Once you start making little points you’re going to build up and manifest bigger things,” said Dex Op den Camp (Delegate of Guatemala, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1).

Naturally, there are some niche tips out there. Songs are far easier to learn and remember than anything else; you’re probably more likely to remember the words to a childhood Disney classic or a One Direction song ten years later than your recent politics presentation. Try learning the words to a tune, in addition to all those cue cards you’ve made, and run it over in your head before you start. Anyone with less than twenty-twenty vision can also try removing their glasses as they stand up to present. Looking at the faces of our audience is often what starts the panic, so you can try blurring the world around you to mimic all the practice you’ve done alone.

Sam Hacker (Delegate of Georgia, SPC1) advised fellow delegates: “Fake it ‘til you make it. If you believe you know what you’re doing, they will too! Remember that it’s okay to be anxious. I’ve been to many conferences, but I still lose sleep before each one. It’s normal; you’re not alone!”

Many people in the room are in the same situation and are equally as scared. “Everyone who has done MUN before has probably had that same experience... so there’s really nothing to be too worried about,” said Winston Awortwi (Delegate of United Kingdom, General Assembly 1). Simply getting up and trying will always be impressive. Focus on those who you’re primarily addressing, perhaps the delegate you’re questioning, and calm your nerves because if nothing else you can always try picturing the audience naked or, according to Sebastian Morch (ESA, Head of Delegation, General Assembly 2), “in tuxedos!”

Layout by Melody Tai



Morch

THIMUN vs Local MUN Conferences



Christopher Warren
Delegate of Human Rights Watch, Special
Conference Sub-Commission 2

“I have only ever been to much smaller conferences. The main difference with THIMUN would be the atmosphere: discussions about resolutions are more serious and in depth here. It helps that this is a much more global conference so more opinions are included in the debate.”



Brian Lain
Delegate of Afghanistan, SPC2

“I’m from Taipei, where I participate in a lot of regional Chinese conferences. I think while the people in Asia are a lot more reserved and shy in terms of offering resolutions, they also are a lot more competitive. In The Hague, however, there is no emphasis on main submission or awards, and everyone just wants to discuss the topics, which is really nice and positive for everyone’s personal growth. At our school’s conference, we do a fundraiser for an NGO and each committee raises a certain amount of funds.”



Selin Edil
Delegate of Sudan, General Assembly 1

“I go to many conferences in Turkey, and they are attended by about a few hundred people. The procedures are very different there and I think that the quality of the debates is better here. I have attended a Harvard procedure conference which I think is more interesting than the regular THIMUN procedure. There are no cultural differences or traditions in Turkish conferences except for the fact that sometimes we conduct the conferences in Turkish.”



AnnMarie O'Shea
Delegate of Costa Rica, Sustainable
Development Commission 2

“In our conference in St. Louis we have a very different MUN procedure, and it is much smaller than here, so, for me, THIMUN is super different. My local conference is only for people from St. Louis so we really lack diversity. Here, we have people from everywhere which really changes our debates. It is even interesting to encounter Americans from outside of Missouri because their views and opinions are also very different from mine.”



Cosme Centis
Delegate of Yemen, Environment Commission 2

“I am from Paris, where I participated in PIMUN. PIMUN is much smaller, although it is large for France and I would say the level is not as high, because there [is] not as much diversity in the points of view. I think THIMUN has a lot more diversity of thought because of its internationalism. However, in France, we really try to imitate THIMUN to get an experience similar to this one, so there are no big differences between the two.”



Dania Al Sahli
Delegate of Human Rights Watch, Special Conference Sub-Commission 2

“In Kuwait, we use a different procedure: the American procedure. Also, the students from different schools sit down to take pictures together, comment on each other’s performance and try to give feedback — something that we do not do at THIMUN.”



Marnix Zimmemerman
Delegate of Seychelles, Sustainable Development Commission 2

“I go to school in Switzerland and attend many local conferences there. I think the spirit of THIMUN is very different from that of local conferences. It is a lot more relaxed at other conferences, whereas at THIMUN people are more focused on work. Here everyone is very different and unique. There is a big range of opinions and views which allow for more meaningful debates.”



Adit Aar Kadakia
Delegate of Chad, General Assembly 3

“Within Indian conferences, the topics are usually very India-focused, so we do not get a bigger world picture or the opportunity to debate more international politics. THIMUN Singapore, though a lot more international than Indian conferences, still remains very Asian-based. Also, people were more competitive at those conferences. In The Hague, however, it seems like the people are more willing to learn together rather than compete against each other.”

To Clique or Not to Clique, that is the Question

by Suakshi Soni

In school, we have our exclusive groups and cliques. Here at THIMUN, we are a more sophisticated group of people so... we get blocs instead! While we may not have our very own “mean girl” Regina George strutting down the corridors of the World Forum, we do have our own version of her clique in our committees.

Sahil Rane (Delegation of Chad, Economic and Social Council) notices this. He said, “members from the American School circuit seem to know each other really well, which is why my delegation got shut out from being the main submitter.” He added that since the main submitter knew most of the other delegates in their bloc, they all rallied behind her.

Tina Chen (Delegate of Egypt, General Assembly 2) echoed the concern of many delegates at THIMUN 2020, saying that “a lot of schools seem to have large delegations to the same committees, so many of the delegates

know each other already which makes the process more complex.” While the complexity of the issue does not hinder MUN debate, it can, to some extent, make passing resolutions more difficult.

Speaking on cliques, Ishaan Goel (Delegation of Chad, Economic and Social Council) states, “In my opinion, in a THIMUN conference, it is essential to leave behind your personal relationships, as you are now representing your country. Personal relationships should not be allowed to infiltrate diplomacy. Hence, combating such cliques is of paramount importance.”

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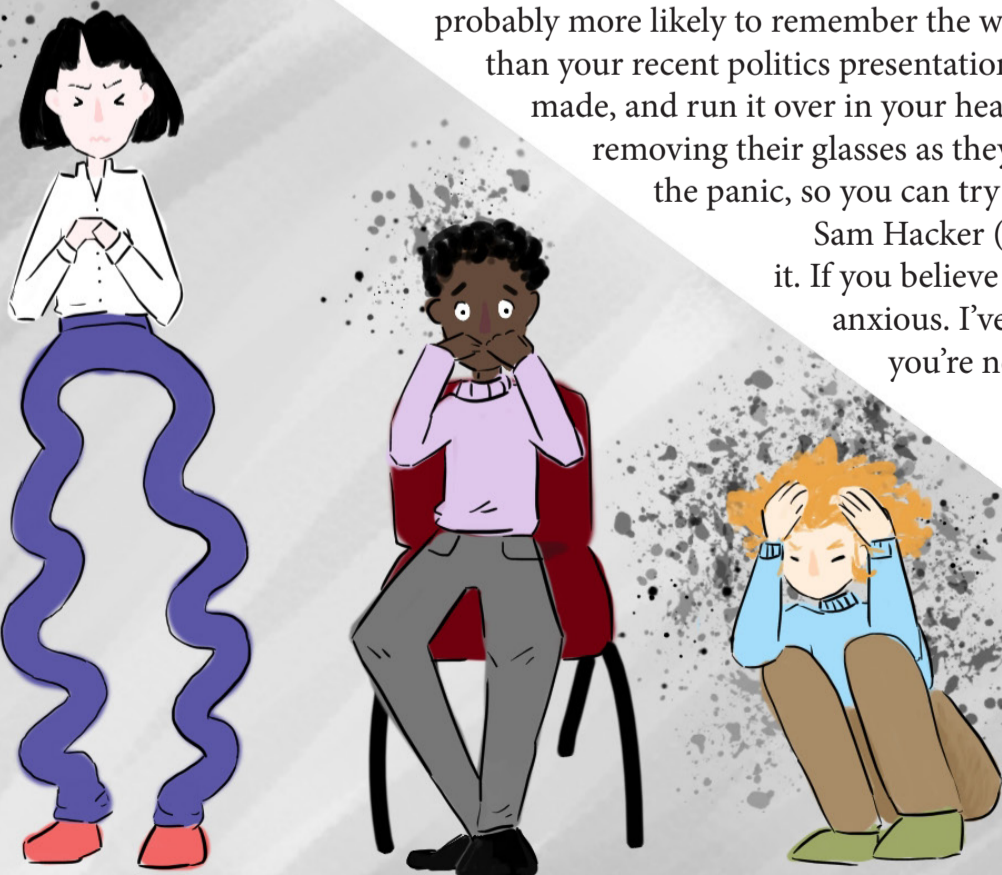
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Layout by Melody Tai



Morch

Secrets from Main Submitters

by Yunrong Chen & Gabe Fleisher



Photograph by Julie Anderson

Many delegates at THIMUN secretly nurse the hope that they will emerge as main submitters when their resolutions come up for debate. Main submitters at the 2020 conference said there are a variety of traits that led them to attain that status, from bringing a mastery of the issues to just raising their voice until it is heard.

Kaan Akin (Delegate of Vietnam, General Assembly 4) said that “a combination of social skills and political knowledge” are needed to become the main submitter, because “you have to actually answer any questions that are directed to you on the issue” during the debate.

On the other hand, Eric Han (Delegate of Luxembourg, Special Conference Sub-Commission 1) advised,

“Be confident when lobbying and merging, and be confident in the resolution that you wrote.

Try to be the loudest one in the group. I know it’s bad, but it’s honestly true. If other people know that you are confident while speaking, they will want you as a main submitter.”

Han added that “social skills” and the ability to work with other delegates are crucial to the quest to become No. 1. “Collaborating with others is very important and you always have to express what you want,” he concluded.

While some delegates may wish they were representing more powerful countries at THIMUN, Thomas Shanks (Delegate of Antigua & Barbuda, GA4) said that having a low profile can actually be an advantage for those hoping to become main submitters. “My country being relatively unknown [means] that I cannot be well-attacked for being [in support or opposition of a resolution],” he said. “Basically no one knows our national platform.”

As of this writing, the delegation with the most resolution leaders is Belarus, a 16-person delegation with eight main submitters. Jadyne Chowdhury (Delegate of Belarus, SPC2) attributed his delegation’s success to the preparation process they undergo in the months leading up to the conference. The team “prepares them through practice and the op-

portunity to learn from past delegates which gives a unique perspective in approaching THIMUN,” Chowdhury explained.

“The way we have learned to do MUN, the way we create resolutions is not a very static, linear process, but rather a process in which we’re taught how to work with people [and] how to interact with others,” Theodor Weiss (Delegate of Belarus, Economic and Social Council) added.

While becoming the main submitter is perceived as a coveted honor, many veteran delegates urged their peers not to stress about reaching the status or treat it as a competition.

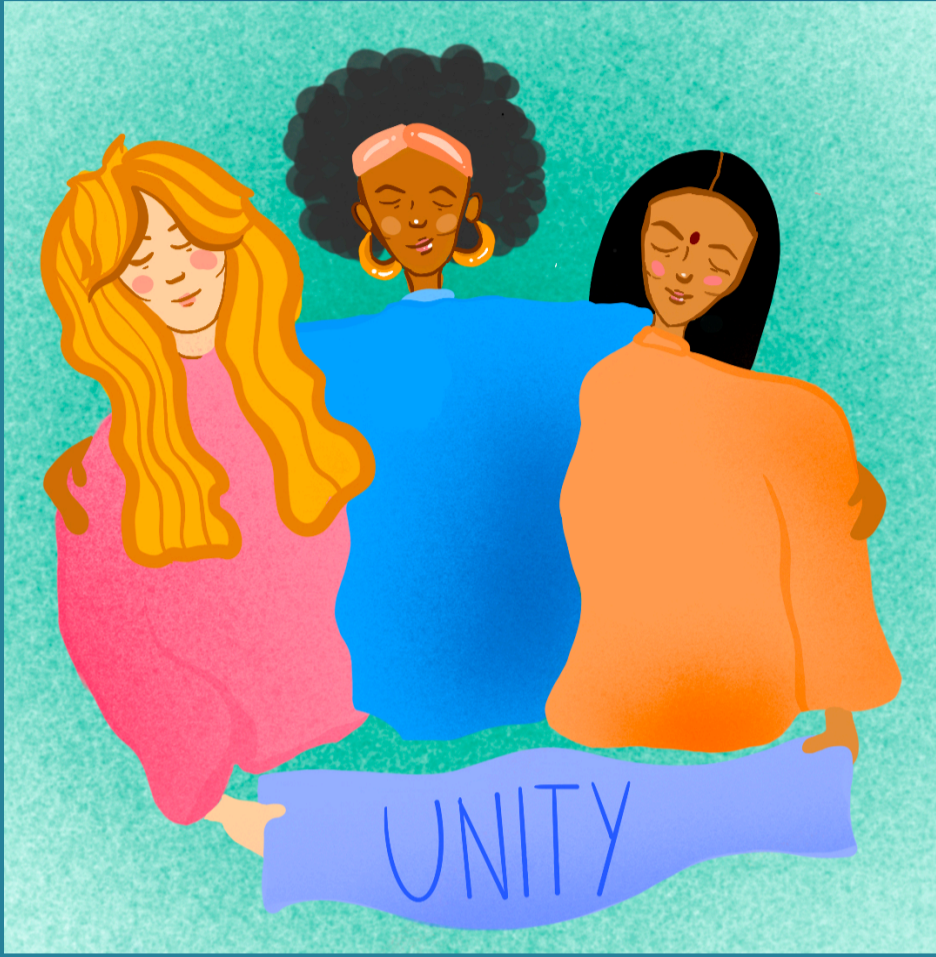
“Being a main submitter is very nice, because you get to represent your ideas and take your stands on the great issues that we discuss every day,” Akin said.

“But not being the main submitter is not the end of the world, because you still get the opportunities and experiences during the debate.”



Photograph by Yunrong Chen
Layout by Samantha Edwards

----- M-Unity: Cartoon Collection -----



Artwork by Parea Rohera & Tep Khemarin Chan & Martina Rodriguez