



THE ZÜRICH CONFERENCE

UN Women

Study Guide for Zurich Model United Nations

Written by Malak Hassan and Jennifer Angst

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Letter from the Chairs

Dear delegates,

We are happy to welcome you to our committee at ZuMUN 2022!

We have chosen two topics for you to debate: The Gender Data Gap and the hidden effects of the pandemic on women, the so-called “Shadow Pandemic”. In a world where COVID-19 has accelerated the ongoing digitalization of almost every aspect of human life, these topics concerning the status of women are as pressing as ever. The issues are not new - the current situation has simply made them more visible.

Let us shortly introduce ourselves:

Hi, my name is Malak. Originally from Egypt, I am currently studying Political Science at the University of Bonn. And surprisingly, that’s not the reason why I started participating in MUNs. My first MUN experience was actually in high school, when I was 14 years old (way before I realized I was interested in politics). Fun fact: My first time ever as a delegate, I had to represent a group of terrorists. Somehow, this didn’t put me off, and I decided I wanted to do this again (maybe representing a different delegation this time). And from then on, I have been participating in several MUNs, having gained experience as both the chair and the delegate. So, don’t worry, you’re in good hands *discreetly pointing at my co-chair*.

Hey, my name is Jenny. I am part of MUN Team UZH and I study law at the University of Zurich. I experienced MUN for the first time in high school when the UZH MUN Team visited us and held a debate on the freedom of religion and belief. Once I started studying at University, politics and international issues began to interest me even more, and that is how I got into the world of MUN. I have had many fun experiences as a delegate with our Team here in Zurich and at conferences around Europe. In the last year, I chaired for high school delegates on different occasions and I am happy to have another opportunity to do so at ZuMUN!

We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference,

Malak Hassan

Jennifer Angst

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1. UN Women

The United Nations celebrated its 75th birthday two years ago, and with it the accomplishments of the previous decades. UN Women, on the other hand, is a relatively new organization compared to its mother organization, having been established in 2010 by General Assembly Resolution 64/2891. With its creation, UN Women replaced four existing sub-bodies responsible for diverse facets of women's empowerment with a single body.

UN Women is a United Nations Organization that reports to the General Assembly. It is also a High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. As such, the topics on our agenda are highly relevant for the work of UN Women.

When we simulate UN Women, we usually simulate the Executive Board, which consists of 41 member states, based on equitable geographical distribution, as defined by the UN. They are elected for three-year terms by the UN Economic and Social Council. Currently, the executive director of UN Women is Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who is also United Nations Under-Secretary-General. UN Women entertains a sub-body, the Commission on the Status of Women, that hands in regular reports on progress in women's rights and equality around the world. They also administer certain funds directed to support specific goals. One of UN Women's primary concerns is women's representation within the United Nations and in UN-led projects.

Furthermore, UN Women plays an important role in pushing the international community for equality for all, calling for legislation that not only protects women but also gender-diverse people. Having hosted the first high-level event at the UN headquarters on gender diversity and non-binary identities in 2019, UN Women speaks up against human rights violations everywhere, which naturally includes supporting the LGBTI community.

Regardless of gender, we want you to debate on how we can achieve gender equality and create sustainable solutions. You will not only be fighting to ensure the rights of half the population. Not granting women the same rights has consequences on all people regardless of gender. Where would we be without Ada Lovelace creating the first computer algorithm or Maria E. Beasley inventing the life raft? Ensuring women's rights is of utmost importance because any human rights and all human development have gender dimensions. UN Women simply addresses the priority areas that concern women but ultimately lead to progress for everyone.

2. Topic A: Addressing the Gender Data Gap

It is widely known that some women earn less money than their male counterparts, despite being just as qualified. However, the Gender Pay Gap is only one of the various forms of discrimination that women have to face. The structural disadvantages are so deeply rooted that many are not even aware of them.

Human knowledge is based on data collection. For centuries, however, scientific data has been collected mainly from men about men. And as of today, many areas of scientific research do not distinguish or do not have gender-specific data. This resulted in the creation of a knowledge gap about women, which undoubtedly has disadvantageous effects for women in public infrastructure, or may even lower their chances of success with medical treatments. Delegates should seek to find strategies to close the Gender Data Gap and establish more gender-equal approaches. [1]

2.1 Current Situation

Example 1: Gender Data Gap in Health (2021)

In medicine, for example, the male body has always been synonymous with the human body. For this reason, it continues to be the preferred basis for drug testing, medical research and patient treatment. Despite the fact that science has identified fundamental differences between the male and female body, as well as in the occurrence, course, and severity of most prevalent human diseases, we continue to use the male body as the norm.

Researchers discovered a few years ago that women are more likely than men to die of a heart attack. A major reason for this is likely due to the gender-specific and little-known symptoms of women: younger women in particular do not experience the "typical" chest pain, but instead abdominal pain, shortness of breath, nausea and tiredness. As a result, heart attacks in female patients are often overlooked or misdiagnosed. [2]

Example 2: Gender Data Gap in Infrastructure and Politics (2021)

Women in executive government positions

- 10 countries have a woman as Head of State, and 13 countries have a woman as Head of Government.

- Worldwide, 21% of government ministers are women.
- Only 14 countries have a 50% or more quota of women in their cabinets.

Women in national parliaments

- Only four countries have 50% or more women in parliament as of 2021: Rwanda with 61%, Cuba with 53%, Bolivia with 53%, and the United Arab Emirates with 50%.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Northern America, women hold more than 30% of parliamentary seats.
- In Northern Africa, Western Asia and Oceania, less than 17% of the seats in the national parliaments are taken by women.
- In the Pacific Island States, women's representation is the lowest with women holding 6% of the seats.
- There are 27 countries in which women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including four single/lower chambers with no women at all.

Women in local government

- From the 133 countries, that were analyzed, data show that women constitute 36% (2.18 million) of elected members in local deliberative bodies.
- Only two countries have reached a representation of 50%, and an additional 18 countries have more than 40% women in local government.
 - Central and Southern Asia: 41%,
 - Europe and Northern America: 35%,
 - Oceania, 32%,
 - Sub-Saharan Africa: 29%,
 - Eastern and South-Eastern Asia: 25%,
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: 25 %,
 - Western Asia and Northern Africa: 18%.

Despite the fact that the world has experienced the largest jumps in women's political representation in recent years, the number of countries with no women ministers has increased from 9 in 2020 to 12 in 2021. As of January 1st 2021, no women serve in the governments of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Brunei

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Darussalam, D.P.R. Korea, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, and Yemen. [3]

Example 3: Gender Data Gap in Design

The consequences of the Gender Data Gap can be of different nature. They can be annoying and make daily life burdensome, but are overall harmless. An example of this is the standard temperature in offices, which are always a bit too cool (on average five degrees too cold) for the average woman. [4] That's because the standard temperature was calibrated for men's body heat production. Similar to how pianos and phones were sized to fit a man's hand. [5]

However, the data gap can also become life-threatening for women, for example if they are on the road. Men are more likely than women to be involved in a car crash; thus they account for the majority of those who are critically injured. Despite research being done on factors such as height, weight, seatbelt usage, and crash intensity, women are still 47% more likely to be seriously injured, and 71% more likely to be moderately injured during a car crash. They are also 17% more likely to die. And it's all to do with how the car is designed – and for whom.

Women tend to sit further forward when driving because, on average, they are shorter and need to sit closer to reach the pedals and need to sit more upright to see clearly over the dashboard. This is not, however, the “standard seating position”, researchers have noted. This deviation from the norm makes women more vulnerable to an internal injury on frontal collisions. [4] Furthermore, because modern car seats are too firm to protect women against whiplash injuries, women are also at higher risk in rear-end collisions. [6] Until a few years ago, manufacturers and regulators exclusively used male crash-test dummies (2011 in the US, 2015 in the EU by EuroNCAP). However, many criticize the move, saying some manufacturers are just using a sized-down version of a male dummy, and that women are not “mini men”. There are many differences in their physiology, such as their muscle mass, their bone density, and the distance between the vertebrae. And these distinctions are significant. [4]

2.2 Main actors (in private sectors) & initiatives

UN Women is not the only entity addressing this issue. The non-profit organization Open Data Watch together with Data2X, a civil society organization and gender data alliance, recently published a report on the Gender Data Gap. The 2022 report titled “Transforming the Digital Landscape: Solutions to Close Gender Data Gaps” offers, exactly as its name suggests, an inventory of methods to improve the production and use of gender data. It goes further than just identifying problems and offers a step by step guide to fill the Gender Data Gap. The proposed steps range from “increasing smart investment in Gender Data Systems” to “ensuring Gender Data are open and easily accessible to increase their value through use and reuse”. [7] Aimed at policymakers, civil society leaders and the public, this report may also prove useful to you as delegates in debating this issue at ZuMUN 2022.

2.3 Guiding Questions

- How can the UN improve the collection of more gender sensitive data?
- How can the UN improve the access to intersectional data about structural discrimination?
- What measures can UN Women introduce to overcome design problems based on the gender data gap?

2.4 Further Reading

- Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments: <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=10&year=2021>
- Explore the Data. UN Women Data Hub. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2022, from <https://data.un-women.org/data-portal>
- “Invisible Women” by Caroline Criado Perez (not relevant for the conference, but a great deep dive on the topic)
- “The Women’s Atlas” by Joni Saeger (again not relevant, but offers a great view of the lives of women globally)

2.5 Ressources

- [1] Criado-Perez, C. (2021). Invisible Women: Data bias in a world designed for men. Abrams Press.
- [2] Gender Data Gap: Wie Frauen in den Daten vergessen werden. Menschenrechte Schweiz. (2021). Retrieved Feb 2022, from <https://www.humanrights.ch/de/ipf/menschenrechte/frau/gender-data-gap-frauen-daten>
- [3] Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. UN Women – Headquarters. (2021). Retrieved Feb 2022, from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#_edn10
- [4] Guardian News and Media. (2019, February 23). The deadly truth about a world built for men – from stab vests to car crashes. The Guardian. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/feb/23/truth-world-built-for-men-car-crashes>
- [5] Ayou, N. (2022, March 7). Gender Data Gap: Warum unsere welt nicht für frauen gemacht ist. Utopia.de. Retrieved Feb 2022, from <https://utopia.de/unsichtbare-frauen-gender-data-gap-234970/?amp=1>
- [6] Eikeseth, U., & Lillealtern, R. (2013, January 24). Gender equality for crash test dummies, too. ScienceNordic. Retrieved Feb 2022, from <https://sciencenordic.com/cars-and-traffic-crash-test-dummies-forskningno/gender-equality-for-crash-test-dummies-too/1381623>

3. Topic B: Shining the Light on the “Shadow Pandemic”

We all know about the pandemic that has come to define 2020. Understandably, the COVID-19 has dominated the world’s agenda, and mandatory lockdowns were introduced in many countries to help control the spread of the virus. However, for some women, being in lockdown suddenly turned into being locked-in with their abusers. All over the world, numbers of reported abuse are rising. In one weekend in 2020, calls to domestic abuse helplines in the UK went up to 65%. This is known as the Shadow Pandemic.

3.1. Definitions

Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Intimate Partner

Intimate partner violence refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object, attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching and other non-contact forms". [1]

3.2. Current Situation*

**The statistics presented only take reported cases into account. The actual numbers may be much higher, especially regarding sexual harassment because many cases are not being reported.*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic:

- According to WHO estimates, one in every three (30%) women, aged 15 and older, has been victim to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence, or both at some point in their lives. [2] This figure does not include sexual harassment.
- In comparison, women who have experienced violence have a much higher rate of depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV, as well as other health issues that can have a long-term effect. [1]
- Most violence against women is perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners. More than 640 million women aged 15 and older (26%) have been subjected to intimate partner violence.
- Almost one in four adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 (24%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband. [2]
- 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. More than half (50,000) of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by intimate partners or family members, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report. Globally, as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. Women account for 82 percent of all homicide victims committed solely by an intimate partner. [3]

During the COVID-19 pandemic:

UN Women has published a new report that compiles survey data from 13 countries around the world (Kenya, Thailand, Ukraine, Cameroon, Albania, Bangladesh, Colombia, Paraguay, Nigeria, Côte D'Ivoire, Morocco, Jordan, and Kyrgyzstan). [4] These are a few examples of how COVID-19 has impacted women:

Sense of Safety:

Although the figures vary by country and demographic, the pandemic has increased women's experiences of violence and diminished their sense of safety:

- In the 13 countries, 2 in 3 women report that they or a woman they know has experienced violence at some point in their lifetime.
- Nearly 1 in 2 report direct or indirect experiences of violence since the start of the pandemic.
- The most common form is: verbal abuse (50%), followed by sexual harassment (40%), physical abuse (36%), denial of basic needs (35%), and denial of means of communication (30%).
- 7 in 10 women surveyed believe violence against women is common in their community.
- Most women believe that COVID has made things worse. Nearly 7 in 10 women think domestic violence has increased during the pandemic, and 3 in 5 think sexual harassment in public has increased.

Mental Health

Violence against women has had a significant impact on women's mental health during the pandemic.

- 1 in 4 women feel more unsafe at home since COVID-19.
- Women who report feeling unsafe at home or in public, or who report direct or indirect experiences of violence, are more likely to report that COVID has worsened their stress and anxiety, especially in cases of physical violence.

Factors:

- Age is no factor when it comes to violence against women.
- Socioeconomic factors, such as financial independence of women and level of education, a well-known driver of violence against women, continues to play a major role throughout COVID-19.
- 4 out of 5 women whose partner has no income report that they or a woman they know has been subjected to some sort of violence.

- Food insecurity is also a factor: women who say domestic violence is very common are more likely to be food insecure.
- Women's economic roles within their household also have an impact:
 - Full-time unpaid caregivers are more likely to claim they or a woman they know has suffered violence, in comparison to employed women, unemployed women, and students.
 - Earning an income appears to reduce experiences of violence. These women are less likely to perceive domestic violence as common, with the exception of women who out earn their partner.

3.3. Global Estimation of Violence Against Women

Over a quarter of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. It is estimated that the prevalence of lifetime intimate partner violence ranges from 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in high-income countries and Europe and 25% in the WHO Regions of the Americas to 33% in the WHO African region, 31% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in the WHO South-East Asia region.

Notable NGOs:

Over the last decade and over the world efforts to end violence against women have emerged at regional and national levels. Countless organizations, collectives and groups are working for change in many sectors. WHO recognizes the effort of these organizations, not only in advocacy but also in developing strategies, services and counseling to respond to the needs of women.

Asian Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (Arrow)

Malaysia

ARROW produces bibliographies, annotated resource materials and a bulletin. The organization advocates for more extensive national data collection and research, gender sensitive health interventions and swift implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Coordination of Women's Advocacy*Switzerland*

Coordination of Women's Advocacy is a network which consists of women in twelve countries specialized in legal, psychosocial and medical, developmental and emergency aspects of women's human rights abuses in times of war and conflict.

There are also grassroots collectives advocating for women's rights. A prominent example is the NI UNA MENOS collective. Inspired by latinx activists against femicide, the collective organizes vigils for every woman that has been murdered in Switzerland. By early March already three women have been murdered in the year 2022. To find out more about "Ni Una Menos" visit their website: <https://feministischerstreikzuerich.ch/ni-una-menos/>.

Health and Development Policy Project (HDPP)*USA*

HDPP works to ensure that the field of international health becomes a constructive force in addressing violence against women.

Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)*Uganda*

Isis-WICCE works to change the social, economic, political and cultural institutions that perpetuate or reinforce gender violence. They also provide information to influential actors and policy-makers.

Latin American and Caribbean Women's Network against Domestic and Sexual*Chile*

It has ensured the issue of violence against women is on the public agenda through organizing seminars, coordinating regional campaigns, and raising the issue with governments and international organizations.

Women in Law and Development, Africa (WiLDAF)*Zimbabwe*

WiLDAF, a Pan-African Women's Human Rights Network with membership in more than 22 countries, works for the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

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3.4. Guiding Questions:

Addressing the victims

- How can we better reach victims who might be “locked-in” with the perpetrator?
- How can we encourage more women to report domestic violence?
- How can we ensure the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ people, who experience domestic abuse from their partner?
- How can we provide help and support for victims?

Finding sustainable solutions

- How can we ensure equality and a sense of safety for all citizens?
- How does education for girls and boys look like?
- What did we learn from this pandemic?
- How should the future look like after the pandemic?

3.5. Further Reading:

- UN Women (2020). COVID-19 and gender monitor, <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-and-gender-monitor>
- UNODC (2020). Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN_BriefFem_251121.pdf
- UN Women (2021). COVID-19 and Violence Against Women: The evidence behind the talk, https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/COVID-19%20and%20VAW_Insights%20from%20big%20data%20analysis_final.pdf

3.6. Ressources:

[1] World Health Organization. (2021, March). Violence against women. World Health Organization. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>



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[2] Facts and figures: Ending violence against women. UN Women. (2022, February). Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#notes>

[3] UNODC (2019). Global Study on Homicide 2019, pg. 10. Retrieved 2022, [fromhttps://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_5.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_5.pdf)

[4] Covid-19 and violence against women: What the data tells us. UN Women. (2021, November). Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2021/11/covid-19-and-violence-against-women-what-the-data-tells-us>