



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

SOCOMUN XXXIII

NOT FRESHMAN D

TOPIC: ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN
PRISONS



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NOT Freshman D Access to Education in Prisons

Hello delegates, my name is Angelina Tao, and I am excited to be your chair for the 2024 SOCOMUN conference! I am a Junior at Santa Margarita, and this is my third year in the MUN program. MUN has allowed me to strengthen my research and public speaking skills while also learning skills such as collaboration and organization. Outside of MUN, I enjoy playing golf, listening to music, volunteering, and hanging out with my friends. I am looking forward to seeing you all and discussing this topic!

Hi, my name is Truman Huang, and I am a Senior at Santa Margarita. This would be my fourth year in MUN as I have been doing it since Freshman year. Aside from school I enjoy participating in activities such as Mock Trial, magic, music, and travel. MUN has really helped me integrate myself into school and has given me the chance to surround myself with many great people.

Hi delegates! My name is Arya Parag, and I am so excited to be your rapporteur for SOCOMUN 2024. I started MUN freshman year, making this my second year in MUN. Before MUN, I struggled with public speaking, and after just one year in MUN, my public speaking improved greatly. MUN has also helped me develop research skills, as I went from taking hours each day to write my paper, to being able to do it in just a few hours. I am also involved in Kung Fu, piano, and at SM, the book club and Art Therapy and Hospice club. In my free time, I love to read and hang out with my friends. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you at SOCOMUN 2024!

One of the best aspects of MUN is being able to research and discuss a range of international issues while collaborating to create solutions. We are excited to hear all your unique ideas and invite you to learn the most you can about your country and the topic! SOCOMUN is a teaching conference and gives delegates a great opportunity to grasp the typical procedures and format of a MUN committee.

Committee session will start with roll call, where each country will be called. You will answer "present" or "present and voting" for the country you are representing. While "present" simply means that you are here in committee, "present and voting" means that you cannot abstain (not vote) when voting for resolutions. Following roll call, we will begin with a speaker's list, which delegates can raise their placards to be added to. This list will be the default, or backbone of the committee. It gives each delegate a chance to present their ideas and solutions. After each speech, two delegates will be called on to comment on the previous speaker. While progressing through the speakers list, delegates can motion for formal consultations or informal consultations. To motion for a formal consultation, the delegate who motioned for it will propose a topic, the overall time allotted formal consultation, and the speaking time for each delegate. Delegates can raise their placards to be chosen for a formal consultation and will speak for the allotted time on the topic. Additionally, informal consultations are an opportunity for delegates to meet with each other and discuss ideas or solutions. The final goal of informal consultations is to form groups to create resolutions. Usually with delegates that have similar solutions or represent countries in the same region end up together. These documents will be presented at the end of committee and voted on by all the delegates. If you have any questions about committee procedure, the topic, the conference or anything related, please reach out to us at socomunnotd@gmail.com! We understand that this may be the first conference for many



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delegates, so don't hesitate to ask questions and familiarize yourself with MUN procedures. We hope this committee will be a fun and educational experience!

E4JMUN Resources from the UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has provided helpful resources to aid students in MUN that you should consider when researching for the topic. Through this link, delegates can discover relevant UN bodies and information regarding the SDGs, along with other guidance.

[MUN Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/)

Additional information and valuable resources can be found under the other Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice sections of the website. The following link provides documents relating to numerous related topics.

[MUN Resources Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/)

Background

Reform of the criminal justice system has been a topic of international concern for decades. Recent surges in crime and federal arrests have called attention to education in prisons as a way to lower crime rates and incarceration costs. Providing education to incarcerated individuals has proven to increase employment rates after release, aid social integration, reduce reoffending rates, and lower cost burdens. The benefits of prison education reach beyond prisoners and provide positive effects for citizens too. Taxpayers provide up to \$182 billion annually to fund the costs of prisons. This is why preventing recurring offenses can be a huge step in reducing the financial strain of prisons. One recent study found that funding educational initiatives in any type of prison is a better investment than prison housing costs. Furthermore, the RAND Corporation has discovered that taxpayers save five dollars on reincarceration expenses for every one dollar invested in correctional education. Benefitting both consumers and incarcerated individuals, education in prisons is a powerful but scarce resource. This is due to many programs not receiving sufficient support.

Reintegration into society is one of the main objectives of incarceration. Incarcerated individuals must be able to support themselves in society and prove they are able to enter the workforce. College education can allow these individuals to pursue careers and degrees after their release. In fact, some universities are already working towards developing ways for prisoners to pursue higher education. Other schooling includes vocational training. Vocational training provides basic skills and tools needed to pursue a particular job or field. Additionally, prison environments often lead to negative mentality and low self-esteem, reducing the success rate of the individual upon release.

Education in these settings can lead to motivation for self-improvement and rehabilitation. When individuals learn that they can improve and succeed, they may be more likely to seek employment and a sustainable lifestyle outside of prison. This mentality, combined with the skills and education that these programs provide, equip prisoners with the resources and ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This generally decreases reoffending rates, or recidivism. Research conducted by the Political Economy Research Institute at Middle Tennessee State University found that the implementation of education in prison systems brought recidivism rates down. The likelihood of returning to prison was 14.8% lower than prisoners who did not have access to these education programs. This includes college education and vocational training, demonstrating their positive benefits to prison systems. Moreover, job advantages are also



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positively highlighted by the statistics, with education allowing for a 6.9% increase in employment after release and an additional \$131 in quarterly income.

International action on the topic of prison education has been prioritized by the United Nations and UN members. This is because working towards equal education in incarcerated individuals is tied to Sustainable Development Goal #4. There has been a recent increase in support for educational systems in prisons both logistically and financially by governments. However, there still lacks a nation-wide or universally implementable program. While federal funding is essential to support these programs, NGOs, including Project Rebound in California and the Petey Greene Program, play a big role in shifting public opinion and providing educators. While Project Rebound works with California State University in supporting the education and reintegration of the formerly incarcerated, organizations such as the Petey Greene Program works on training volunteers to tutor and teach prisoners. In the United States, the expansion of “Pell Grants” has provided opportunities for incarcerated students to enroll in prison education through federal aid. According to Department of Education projections, 760,000 additional persons will be eligible for federal financial aid as a result of the reinstatement and extension of these grants. Looking more internationally, in Norway, all incarcerated individuals are required by law to have access to any sort of education program. Furthermore, other countries of the European Union have similar policies within their prison systems.

Potential Solutions

As delegates approach this issue, it is important to address all facets of the topic, Access to Education in Prisons. Some examples of basic solutions have been provided for you to build on. We strongly suggest that you only use these solutions as inspiration to create unique, detailed solutions. When forming your own solutions, keep in mind your country’s stance and the period needed for the solution to be implemented. Try to develop both short-term and long-term solutions to the problem and think about future issues that may arise. Making sure that your solutions are comprehensive and have proper implementation will ensure that other delegates will be willing to discuss them. Please note that funding is not a primary concern, as it is presumed that all resolutions passed will be supported by the UN and the UN’s 5th committee.

One potential solution could be to expand current educational programs. As most countries do not have a uniform and national prison education framework, the first step in establishing these programs must be to develop them. By working with UN bodies such as UNESCO and other organizations, countries can develop their own programs to be instated in prisons. As developing countries may not have adequate resources to provide education, it is important to create adaptable initiatives and utilize the needed support.

Another solution is to raise awareness for this issue. It would be impossible to pass legislation or reforms of prisons without support. This includes both public support and the willingness of lawmakers to make these programs successful. To garner this support, there should be effective use of several forms of media to reach the largest possible audience.

The third solution that could be implemented is training for educators. This could be supported through NGOs that are already working towards this goal, such as the Vera Institute and Prison Education Foundation. As many universities are providing teachers for these programs, they could pass through a short additional training session to ensure that they are aware of the impact and message that they are delivering.



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Questions to Consider

These questions should be considered to guide you in your research, but they do not need to be answered formally. They are meant to assist you in expanding on your country's policy and developing thorough solutions.

1. Does your country currently support access education for prisoners?
2. What has your country done in the past to reform prisons, especially about the quality of life for incarcerated individuals?
3. How can you ensure that racial inequality, along with other forms of bias, is not worsened through unequal distribution of federal aid in prisons?
4. Should incarcerated students be able to carry over their credentials to other degrees once they are released?
5. Is your country able to provide quality education to its population?
6. How will developing countries, in which most of the population lacks access to education, manage this issue? How will your solutions help them?
7. Should all prisoners have access to education, or should it depend on factors such as their sentence and severity of their crime?
8. How will you gain public and international support for these programs?



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