



UNA-USA Global Classrooms – Mini-Simulation

Topic: Gender and Science

Committee: UNESCO

Introduction

Gender inequality in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) has been ingrained into many societies since human civilization first began. While more and more women have gained access to education and expanded their professional career options, there is still a stigma against women in STEM fields arising from traditional gender roles and persisting stereotypes about women's competence. It is the responsibility of UNESCO, in keeping with its stated priority of promoting gender equality, to reverse the exclusion of women from STEM fields in developed economies, while working to instill values of equality in developing markets.

Step 1 – Set the Scene

Access to technology and information is becoming increasingly widespread and the STEM fields are becoming more popular. With the attraction of billions of dollars' worth of startup money, students are flocking to these fields, and men make up a large proportion of these industries. No region of the world reaches 50% average representation of women in research. This reflects the prevailing belief that STEM fields are traditionally a man's profession, and consequently contributes to the existing gender gap in financial stability and access to education that exists in the world today. That being said, the international community is also more equipped to resolve this issue than ever before. With many less developed nations just beginning to come online, there exists a perfect opportunity to build gender equality into the foundation of these fields as they develop. Should UNESCO act swiftly and effectively, gender equality can become a central tenant of STEM research in some of the most important developing markets in the world.

Should the UN:

- A. Encourage all countries to create domestic policies reversing gender equality in STEM fields?
- B. Create an international agreement or convention highlighting the issues of gender inequality in science, and take direct action to counteract it?
- C. Allow countries to create their own policy to address this issue, and be measured by setting standard international quotas of women professionals in STEM fields?



Step 2 – Introduction of Countries and Topics

There is no topic-specific text content for this step. There are just the resources listed below, to be attached or linked.

Resources:

1. UNESCO Facts (separate document: Background Information)
2. Background on Gender and Science (separate document: Background Information)
3. Priorities to be Discussed (separate document: Background Information)

Step 3 – Country Presentations

There is no topic-specific text content for this step. Only the topic name in the instructions needs to be corrected.

e.g. **If breaking up the lesson plan in two sessions, end the first session after country presentations. This will give the students time to think over the information presented on **Gender and Science** and their country's stance on the issue.*

Step 4 – 1st Coalition Session

Examples to help guide the discussion:

- What anti-discrimination laws and programs exist in your country?
- How does your country partner with the private sector to promote gender equality in employment?
- Does your nation have any reservations about women coming into the workplace, particularly with them working side by side with men? How does your nation propose that these be reconciled?
- How can the UN combat social and cultural factors that deter young women from seeking education in the sciences?
- How does your nation ensure that women take an active role in shaping the field through leadership and high-level research positions?



Step 5 – Group Discussion

Examples to help guide the discussion:

- What can the UN do to increase the proportion of female scientists?
- How can the policies your nation is using be adapted for less developed nations?
- What actors other than member states can be called upon and engaged with to reach women in science and make a worldwide impact?
- How can UNESCO prevent women in science from being pipelined into teaching careers or careers in life sciences and medicine?

Step 6 – 2nd Coalition Session

Examples of resolutions include:

- Recognize and publicize the accomplishments of women in science to create role models for female students.
- Utilize opportunities for women to enter scientific industries in nations with especially low representation of female scientists.
- Train teachers to actively combat negative stereotypes against women's capability and encourage female students to seek out careers in science.
- Actively engage women at the university level by providing support and creating positions that are accountable for the representation of female faculty and students.
- Use research grants and achievement awards reserved for women to foster increased representation in the upper echelons of the scientific community.

Step 7 – Introduce Resolutions

There is no topic-specific text content for this step.

Step 8 – Voting

There is no topic-specific text content for this step.

Other Resources:

Country Backgrounds (*separate document: Country Backgrounds*)

Placards (*separate document: Placards*)