



THE OLIVE BRANCH

MODEL UNITED NATIONS NEWSLETTER



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ONLINE EDITION

Conference Calendar

Upcoming Dates:

12/17-12/21
LUMUN

12/19-12/22
PLMUN

1/28-1/31
THIMUN Qatar

1/22-1/25
NIMUN

1/29-2/2
LEBMUN

2/1-2/4
EMIMUN

2/19-2/22
HIAMUN

Online MUN:

12/21
Middle East/Africa

12/28
uni-OMUN

12/29
Pacific Regional

Defining Success at DCMUN VI



On November 14-15, over five-hundred delegates gathered together to debate at DCMUN VI.

By Alisha Kamran

IT WOULD be near impossible to say that the next DCMUN Conference could result in a bigger and better conference

than DCMUN VI; however, every year, the new conference outdoes the previous year's. Just a few weeks ago, Doha College hosted their sixth annual DCMUN conference over

a span of two days, with over five hundred participants in attendance. Delegates showed their great talents and put their leadership skills on display. At the same time, with all of the

hard work also came social relationship development and increasing levels of personal understanding, along with ris-

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What Makes a Best Delegate?

By Nabila Elassar

IT IS THE moment of truth. You have just walked into the conference hall and caught a glimpse of the hundred other delegates eagerly preparing their opening speeches. After weeks of building up your

expectations, the sight of the conference is still intimidating. During moments like these, you don't just need the tools to be a good delegate — to set a mark and clearly differentiate yourself from all these other great delegates around you — you're looking for how to be-

come the *best* delegate.

Although every crisis, every chair, and every group of delegates are different, you can always employ a few handy strategies that will show everyone you are best delegate mate-

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How to Treat a Treaty



Signed in 1928, The Kellogg-Briand Pact "outlawed war."

By Julian Bava

AS MODEL United Nations delegates, we always try to make maximum use of the resources available to us. This often entails researching to the point that we know our country's gross production of baskets, scouting for that perfect seat at the start of committee,

and employing the most emphatic language possible to point out that the other delegate in the committee room is just wrong. Whether or not these tactics work for an individual delegate, an invaluable tool is often overlooked by everyone: international law.

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ICJ Online: O-MUN Pioneers Open Accessibility

By Timothy Shu

DO YOU know what the ICJ is? If you do not, I will tell you!

The ICJ is an abbreviation for the "International Court of Justice." The court is based in The Hague, Netherlands, the city of peace and justice. As the primary judicial institution in the United Nations, the ICJ serves primarily to mediate and better understand conflicts between nations. Recent con-

flicts such as the ownership of the Preah Vihear Temple, illegal whaling in the Antarctic Ocean, and the delimitation of various maritime borders between nations, are all within the jurisdiction of the ICJ.

The ICJ is an activity that should be made a sport, a sport that receives the same amount of attention as MUN in school and anywhere else. That is why

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THIMUN Online

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Conference Spotlight: DCMUN VI

By Oliver Tull

On the 14th and 15th of November, Doha College hosted the 6th annual Doha College Model United Nations. Over 500 students came from 16 schools across Qatar and the wider region to take part in a simulation of the real United Nations. Students took on the roles of delegates to debate key world issues and find solutions to them. In addition, participants could take the roles of administrative staff, press members, advocates, student officers, and executive members.

A notable addition to this year's DCMUN was the Training Group, in which 40 students who were new to MUN were given an introductory course in how to be a delegate. Led by DC students Jonathan Coutinho and Hiba Argane, the students were given tours around each committee as the debates took place to get a feel for the conference. They were also fortunate enough to be taught by the head of Thimun Qatar, Cameron Janzen, who generously gave up his time to impart his considerable expertise to the group.

Mr. Janzen also made an appearance as a guest on the talk-show panel "Blue Truth" during the Opening Ceremony, and he was interviewed by Yousif Taki. This was followed by a showcase of some of the very best musical talent from Doha College, including a number called "Mack the Knife" from the Drama department's 'The Threepenny Opera' (don't miss this show!), and inspiring musical interludes by Ainsley Jordan and Oliver Morris, as well as by our new superstar Nareh Safiah-Garabedian. To round up the first day, the Secretary General, Nismah Siddique, delivered a moving speech.

One of DCMUN's featured committees was the International Court of Justice, led by Khusro Mir and Areesha Mirza. Delegates debated two cases throughout the conference. The atmosphere was very tense and professional, illustrating the huge amount of preparation that staffers and students had put in in the six weeks prior to the conference.

Proceedings came to a close on the second day at the Radisson Blu Hotel. The British Ambassador, Nicholas Hop-ton, began the ceremony by addressing the participants and giving an insider's view on the world of diplomacy that the conference had aimed to emulate. The ceremony also included presentations of the best delegates of each committee, and a video by the press team looking back on the conference. The highlight of the ceremonies was the address to the Conference given by DCMUN Kushagra Kohli, which the audience gave a standing ovation.

DCMUN has always prided itself on functioning as a student-run activity, and Nismah and Kush certainly did the lion's share of the work, but the success of this conference could not have existed without the 43 strong Administration Team members who looked after us and kept us all well-fed over the thirteen hours. Many thanks to the conference sponsors, Geometric, and to all of the staff members: Mr. Butler, Mrs. Conly, Mr. Syed and Ms. Chudleigh, and our IT experts Prasad and Jobin, Nurses Comfort and Heather, and our very special and always patient Lorraine in reprographics. All of these individuals gave up their time to assist with the conference and contribute toward its end result.

Oliver Tull is the DCMUN VI Deputy Secretary-General.



Kushagra Kohli delivers a speech during the Closing Ceremonies of DCMUN VI.

Neglected and Forgotten: The War in Yemen

By Rita Akilla

Yemen: The Forgotten War

The Arab League has discussed three pressing issues: media policy, military and defense, and the forgotten war. Due to the controversy surrounding all of these topics, the debates are expected to be heated. The civil war between the Yemeni government and an armed group has now lasted for six years and has resulted in 25,000 deaths. In addition, 300,000 people have been displaced. It is a war that is forgotten in the eyes of the world due to the limited information available on almost all aspects of the conflict. When asked about the issues Alisha Kamran, Deputy President of the Arab League, said "These issues give the delegates a good heated debate and result in strong delegation views." The Head Chair President herself, Nicole Law, stated, "I wish I were

a delegate again because these issues are so intriguing." They have formed a well-balanced argument, and the resolution could tip in any one of the issues.

The Forgotten War: A Possible Solution

One of the solutions suggested involved raising awareness among the youth on the ill-effects of violence and terrorism. This would be done through implementing moral and global political education in secondary curriculums, posters on the street, walls, and hoardings. Placing advertisements in the newspaper, television, radio and internet based forums would also reach a wider audience. Further action should be taken against Al-Qaeda's presence in Yemen through an increase in standard police and domestic intelligence. Furthermore, to ensure the increase of awareness among the youth on the ill-

effects of violence and terrorism, intervention from organizations such as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and Human Intelligence (HUMNIT) should be involved in spreading awareness. These initiatives could be self-funded by previously mentioned organisations, but also funded by the United Nations' funds if the need arises.

Considering the Implications

The implications of these solutions must be taken into consideration. The delegate of Yemen stated, "We need to do whatever we can to make people more aware of this atrocity". But, how will the people react to the posters and advertisements? Making such big changes in a short period of time may cause dissatisfaction with the new system. Implementation of such strategies needs careful consideration; the

reactions of the people could fail to raise awareness and could anger them instead. Furthermore, Yemen may not want foreign intervention, and therefore, any action may lead to further complications rather than solving the issue of Al-Qaeda. Increasing the standard in police and domestic intelligence may help Yemen keep Al-Qaeda under control; however, the terrorists may realize that Yemen is increasing security and thus aim to be more cautious.

What Should be Done?

The actions that need to be taken in Yemen must be promptly delivered but fully implemented at a gradual pace. People are more likely to accept the changes if they are given time to adjust, and actions against Al-Qaeda need to be as discreet as possible. Finally, policing standards should also be gradually raised and strengthened.



Founded in January 2013

The Olive Branch

Kevin Felix Chan and Ryan Villanueva, Best Delegate Co-Founders

Lisa Martin, Online Model United Nations Director/Co-Founder

Cameron Janzen, Head of THIMUN Qatar

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Photo Contest!

Photos, illustrations, and political cartoons are welcome! The submission cycle ends on the 30th of each month. For more information, email info@bestdelegate.com.

Definition of Success, cont.

ing patience and appreciation for other delegations' views and beliefs. I can confidently put these aspects of the conference onto paper after having chaired the newly introduced committee: The Arab League. Though it may be a committee of small size and concentrated topics, by no means was this committee incapable of demonstrating exceptional potential; they certainly did. The delegates truly encompassed the meaning of leadership, reiterating the idea that every conference adds onto the next, seeing as a

majority of the delegates had attended the highly successful Qatar Leadership Conference that took place in early September this year. A top participant never leaves a conference without having taken something with them, be it a new experience, or a new learning.

DCMUN VI was an opportunity to meet new delegates of varying experience: some were professional in their manner, and some were attending DCMUN as their first ever conference. For my fellow colleague Nicole Law and me,

it was almost impossible to distinguish the inexperienced from the experienced due to all of their professional approaches and mannerly fashions. These are some of the qualities that a successful leader should exhibit: demonstrating the many skills the delegates held within themselves and reiterating the aspect of MUN serving as a 'world inside a world'.

The success of this conference was the result of staffers pouring their hearts and souls into conference development within Doha College. DCMUN is what it is today because of its extremely talented executive team, the hard working administrative staff, and the press team, who all managed to put the whole package together smoothly. That is exactly what MUN is all about: being rewarded deservedly after exceptional hard work. But remember, the hard work comes first!

For me, this conference was about encouraging all members of the committee to take part and engage in the many fascinating and controversial topics. It was to have every delegate confidently display his or her talents because all delegates had qualities that made them leaders and true representatives of their countries. Every conference contributes to experience; no one is born a MUN professional. To quote a common piece of advice, "you never know unless you try." Personally, my first conference back in 2010 was an utter disaster. It was a day filled with regrets and disappointments, without a doubt! Looking back, I wish I had stood up and spoken, taken the podium, defended my resolution better, and delivered stronger and

louder points. I attended that first conference with little knowledge of what MUN really was, but I learned from my mistakes and motivated myself to speak up during future conferences. If I hadn't been pushed into the great big MUN pool of the unknown, I would not have gone on to experience the administrative aspect of Model UN, along with the student officer responsibilities. An individual who has experienced both the hardships and successes of a conference can truly appreciate the happenings of any conference.

I came away from the conference feeling satisfied yet sad after closing ceremonies had ended, yet naturally found a way to bring a smile onto my face. This was the same feeling I felt last year after the DCMUN V Conference reassuring me that this conference was truly a success, and a success deserved and well-earned. And that was the end of the DCMUNVI Conference. Students are suffering from post-conference depression and they are already looking forward to the great TQ14 Conference at QNCC. Doha College students are also looking forward to DCMUN VII to be held 13 and 14 of November 2014.

As an additional note, Mr. Butler, the Conference Director, would like to thank all of the staff members and students for making DCMUN VI a huge success. He says, "It is a joy to work with our wonderful students. For anyone interested, photographs of our event can be found on www.dcmun.org!"

Alisha Kamran is a Year 13 student at Doha College.



The Tough Sell

By Saarthak Saxena

Saarthak Saxena is the DSG for the Middle East region. Here, he shares what it has taken, both in personal determination and in team effort, to build the O-MUN name, and the sometimes less-than-positive reactions he gets from traditional delegates.

I've been doing MUN for just over two years now. In that time, I've had the pleasure of being the delegate of the United States to the Security Council at the inaugural THIMUN Qatar, the delegate of Hungary to the Disarmament Commission at BEIMUN 2012, the delegate of Morocco to the Disarmament Commission at THIMUN Q 2013 — where I first main-submitted a resolution — and I'll be finishing my tenure as a high school MUNer as the delegate of the DPRK in the Disarmament Commission at THIMUN Q 2014.

In these two years, MUN has become one of the most important parts of my life. The forum's floor is somewhere I can display a proclivity for persuasion that is not confined to the simple back-and-forth of a debate team. I can show the room a wealth of knowledge, and more importantly, an ability to utilize it effectively. A conference or debate is somewhere I can be an entirely different side of myself: snarky, witty, sarcastic, intelligent, pernicious, and resolute — equal parts that have both redeeming and condemning qualities. MUN is, in its most basic form, a portal to freedom.

I joined O-MUN in October 2012, when it was just O-MUN — still without the well-earned tag of THIMUN — in order to get a greater grasp on that freedom. I moved up the ranks, jumping from delegate to Moderator to Ambassador to Chair with relative expedience. In June of 2013, I applied, and was generously chosen, for the position of Deputy Secretary General for the Middle East. This position was my introduc-



A Tough Sell? Saarthak Saxena explains why O-MUN is just as good — if not, better — than traditional debate.

tion to the reality of MUN and the little details that are necessary to ensure that a conference — or in this case, an entire organization — functions as it should.

Our organization has a lot of expectations to meet, and it has done so consistently through the hard work and diligence of dozens of people who log-in from six continents. It's a process that should foster commendations from all who have the privilege to observe it and participate in it.

It's with a heavy heart, then, that I tell you that there are people who view THIMUN O-MUN without the respect its name deserves. I've dedicated the past

two years of my life to helping build this organization, managing debates, writing articles, and conducting outreach. I've spent dozens of hours in debate with some of the most intelligent delegates I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I have a firmer grasp on THIMUN Procedure than anyone I have debated with in a face-to-face conference. I've stayed up until all hours of the night doing what must be done to ensure that something went off without a hitch — although I recommend you refer to Samuel Smeele, DSG Pacific, for a guide on how to deal with sleep deprivation.

As a DSG for the most innovative

THIMUN — and dare I say MUN — in the world, I would hope that people are interested and engaged when I talk to them about the world I promote. It's an uphill struggle to make people realize the brilliance of the program, at times, but I think in the end it may just be worth it. Every day, I see people becoming slightly more receptive to the idea of debating in an unconventional manner. Hopefully I'll be around to see other delegates from my school partake in it.

DFTBA,
Saarthak Saxena, Deputy Secretary General for the Middle East

SAVE THE DATE

February 12 - 15, 2014

King's Academy Model United Nations Student Conference

King's Academy would like to invite your school to participate in the fourth annual King's Academy Model United Nations (KAMUN) student conference, to be held on the King's Academy campus in Madaba, Jordan in February 2014.

Our conference will stimulate the minds of delegates and broaden their horizons on world issues, ranging from the peace process in Palestine to the recent political uproar in Iran.

We look forward to seeing you in Jordan and hope that you will take part in our conference.

For more information please go to <http://kamun.net> or email us at info@kamun.net



AMMUN in November

By Shambhavi Tiwari

I RECENTLY visited the annual Amman Model United Nations (AMMUN) conference that was hosted by the Amman Bacculaureate School, one of Jordan's most prestigious academic institutions. Offering delegates and their supervisors a wide array of forums to choose from, the conference included more than ten forums, including Security Council, Advisory Panel, ECOSOC, and an all-new forum in which delegates could only debate in formal Arabic: the Peace Building Commission. I had the privilege of attending most of the forums, and was able to witness the meticulous planning of the leadership team, the refined chairing skills of the presidents and their chairs, the attentive and orderly delegates (who still managed to have a lot of fun), and finally, the thorough work of the experienced admin staff. Some delegates, though surprisingly young, managed to effortlessly control the debate and steer it for their own national benefit, while others used the natural power of the country they represented to their advantage. The experience of AMINI-MUN showed in the words of ABS delegates, who seemed to thrive in the massive stress associated with a three-day Model UN session.

A THIMUN-affiliated conference, AMMUN hosted 395 delegates, nine of who came from international schools and twelve of who attend local Jordanian schools. Additionally, three of our chairs were also from international schools.

An interesting moment occurred when a delegate in the Disarmament Commission tried to retract his point of information, but his chair directed him to either come up with another point or to dance for the forum. The delegate, who had previously tried to become the "cool delegate" of the forum, turned red with embarrassment, and the whole floor erupted into laughter. Although the delegate refused to dance, everyone got a few laughs out of the situation that lightened the otherwise tense atmosphere of the room as delegates discussed nuclear weaponry. The experience and wit of the chair shone through the most in this episode, and the rest of the chairs, first time chairs at AMMUN, also seemed equally calm and in control. For another year, AMMUN definitely did not disappoint!



Delegates listen as a member of their committee begins to deliver a speech.



Three members of the dais deliberate among themselves in responding to a delegate's note.

Students Debate at the Fourth Model UN Summit in Jeddah

DAR AL-HEKMA COLLEGE in Jeddah recently hosted its fourth Model United Nations Conference with 190 students from 10 different secondary schools and universities. The four-day event concluded with a gala dinner held on Thursday.

The conference is an initiative of the MUN club members in Dar Al-Hekma. Model United Nations is a student-level simulation of the United Nations. Participants experience how committee and council sessions run at the UN by adopting roles and simulating scenarios.

In the fourth MUN conference, six committees were included — the General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council, United Nations Children's Fund, Economic and Social

Council and Historical Cabinet.

Delegates are assigned to one of these committees representing a certain country. The committees debated a variety of topics, such as Children's Rights in Times of Conflict; Military Intervention: To Strike or Not to Strike; and Multinational Corporations: Contemporary Colonization or Legal Trade.

The participants were from Dar Al-Hekma College, Jeddah Knowledge School, British International School, and British Intercontinental School, among others.

At the end of the conference, some delegates were awarded prizes. The International Indian School bagged the prize for the best delegation while four students from Jeddah Knowledge In-

ternational School — Solafa Ghoneim, Rana Al-Baghdadi, Amina Zawawi and Jana Bawazir, won prizes for the best delegates in various committees. Dar Al-Hekma student Ahlam Abbaq won the prize for the best delegate of the Historical Cabinet.

The club started back in 2008 with only 30 delegates, and in only four years its strength grew to over 150 members. "I am so proud of the girls for all their hard work and to see how much they grew and how passionate they are is heartwarming," said Dr. Chaman Rahim, the club's founder and adviser.

During the opening of the conference, Layan Al-Khouli, a senior legal studies student at Dar Al-Hekma, gave an inspirational speech.

"When people used to ask me why I participate in the Model UN, I used to say I love it regardless of all the hard work it requires. Now I change my answer: Not only I love it, but it also helps me understand the pressing issues around me and it gives me the tools to discuss and express my opinion in a strong and compelling way.

"The MUN is not a whole other world we are just pretending to be a part of, the MUN is actually a replica of how this world actually runs and that is why it helps us better understand it."

This article was originally published in the Saudi Gazette. You can view the original article [here](#).

The Training Institute: Understanding How the UN Works

By Maimana El-Tilib

INTRODUCING the first training institute to go along with DCMUN, Mr. Cameron Janzen, the Director of THIMUN Qatar, began the session with the question, "Why does the United Nations matter?"

Just as many heated debates have centered around the relevance of the United Nations as an organization, public conception has not always been favorable toward the UN. At the training institute, Mr. Janzen made a case for the United Nations by emphasizing the importance of why countries should not be diplomatically isolated. As the enthusiastic trainees launched into a discussion about the various roles and responsibilities of the UN, Mr. Janzen pointed out that the segregated discussion groups

that were forming were clear examples of isolation highlighting the importance of an international body such as the UN.

"To us, why is the UN important, and why is 'MUN' important?"

To students, Model UN is a platform for expressing their ideas and concerns on global issues in an academic forum. MUN presents an academic platform for students to experience their own perception of the role the United Nations plays in our world. He stated, "MUN is the ideal platform for students to debate about societal changes. It is a simulator of reality."

"Equality? Yes, because the United Nations is not a government."

Mr. Janzen briefly outlined the benefits of the UN assisting economic development, maintaining peace, establishing human rights, and promoting equality. On the other side, the Director also raised the problems associated with the UN, notably the issue of conflicting foreign policies between nations. The most common scrutiny directed towards the United Nations is the notion of "all talk and not enough action!"

As the first session drew to a close, Mr. Janzen concluded with the United Nation's primary motive, "to develop international consensus." "Now, is this a good thing?" one of the trainees was quick to ask. The response given was an analogy where the UN was compared to the way teenagers conform to peer pressure.

"Is it right to conform to peer pressure?"

"It depends. Is it inevitable, however, that in a group setting, students, communities, and a set of nations will succumb to this pressure? Yes." So is it good to establish this international consensus? Again, the answer is a "yes"; as it is the only feasible solution of reaching collective decisions and for any subsequent, necessary actions to be implemented.

The launch of the training institute at DCMUN this year was an overall success. The first-year delegates seemed captivated by not only what the THIMUN Director had to say, but also the way Mr. Janzen had tailored the information presented in the session by making it relevant to the aspiring future leaders.



THIMUN Director Cameron Janzen presents his training institute on the importance of the United Nations to the world as well as the importance of Model UN to students.

ICJ, cont.

we are bringing it into THIMUN O-MUN, the fastest growing MUN community online.

In September 2012, the former President of THIMUN Qatar, Akarsh Vinod, first introduced the ICJ to THIMUN O-MUN, when he organized the case of Illegal Wailing in the Antarctic Ocean. The zealous environment that O-MUN had cultivated proved to be a fertile starting ground for the ICJ because registration was plentiful and debate was fruitful. The second conference was even better with delegates following up after the conference eagerly asking the question, "when is our next ICJ debate?"

A standard ICJ case is much like a court case in United States, except the primary evidence is based on international and regional laws, treaties, and conventions that were signed by nations. Two teams debating against each other, with members serving as advocates for their respective countries; each team consists of three advocates. On the side, judges listen and ask questions. The number of judges may vary, but an ideal O-MUN ICJ conference will consist of 13 judges. The primary function of judges is to question advocates during debates, analyze evidence, compare arguments, and at the end, cast their votes

for the strongest team based on these criteria.

My reason for making ICJ a sport is that the ICJ investigates very contradictory and entangled issues. All cases that end up needing ICJ jurisdiction are fastidious cases between two countries that are utterly unsolvable through domestic institutions. So a high amount of diligence and delicacy is needed when constructing arguments and researching for evidence for ICJ debates. I promise you, after you have been through an ICJ conference, you will want to do it again due to its highly debatable nature. To further my point, ICJ, I would dare

say, is a better academic activity than MUN, simply because it requires more diligence, analysis, public speaking, rhetoric, and research skills as students investigate into the tiniest details within a single case.

Our next O-MUN ICJ debate will occur in January 2014. This time, the topic will be between Chile and Peru over the issue of the Maritime Borders. Everyone is encouraged to join! For more information, you can visit the O-MUN ICJ [here](#), or join us on [Facebook](#)!

Timothy Shu is DSG for THIMUN O-MUN's ICJ at the Taipei American School.

Digital Badging and Credentials Debut at O-MUN

By Lisa Martin

DIGITAL BADGING and credentialing is an idea that first took root here at O-MUN in 2011. It was driven, in part, by the demand for old fashioned paper certificates, requested of us by some of our very first delegates in the fall of that year. Besides being quite inept at mail merge and converting these certificates into PDFs, it was clear that we were merely offering students proof of participation. I wanted to believe that there was a better way to capture the “deep stuff” that Model UN promotes: leadership, public speaking, research, empathy, active listening, and collaboration. With this tucked in the back of my mind, I embarked on a journey to find that better way of recognizing student engagement and achievement, and quickly fell into the digital badging movement. At that time, digital badging was still in its infancy. Early enquiries and emails pleading for assistance made me realize that, in the words of one kind individual who bothered to return my email, “Consider your organization an early adopter, and it’s still too early to adopt.”

So for almost two years, I have hovered on the periphery of the Mozilla Open Badges Initiative (OBI), the col-

lective brain trust of educators, coders and tech specialists, who are developing the infrastructure to help make badging possible. I perused the contents of the Mozilla wiki, and even posed a few questions, but the discussion was so far removed from my area of expertise that I knew I was still too early to join the party. So I patiently waited, telling my O-MUN leadership team “The badges are coming... soon... I think.” I said this for 18 months, until just two weeks ago, when the long awaited day of digital badging arrived at THIMUN O-MUN!

A company in Rhode Island called Achievery is helping to make our badging ambitions a reality. Two individuals in particular saw the unique role that badges and digital credentials could play for us, Damian Ewens (CEO for Achievery) and his CTO, Kerri Lemoie. Several lengthy conference calls this summer led to private Beta testing in August, and just recently, the full issuing capabilities of badges off the Achievery platform. And at that moment, Online Model United Nations had lift off! With just two weeks into this, O-MUN has developed eight unique badges to recognize delegate participation and engagement, leadership positions, and writing for the O-MUN blog.

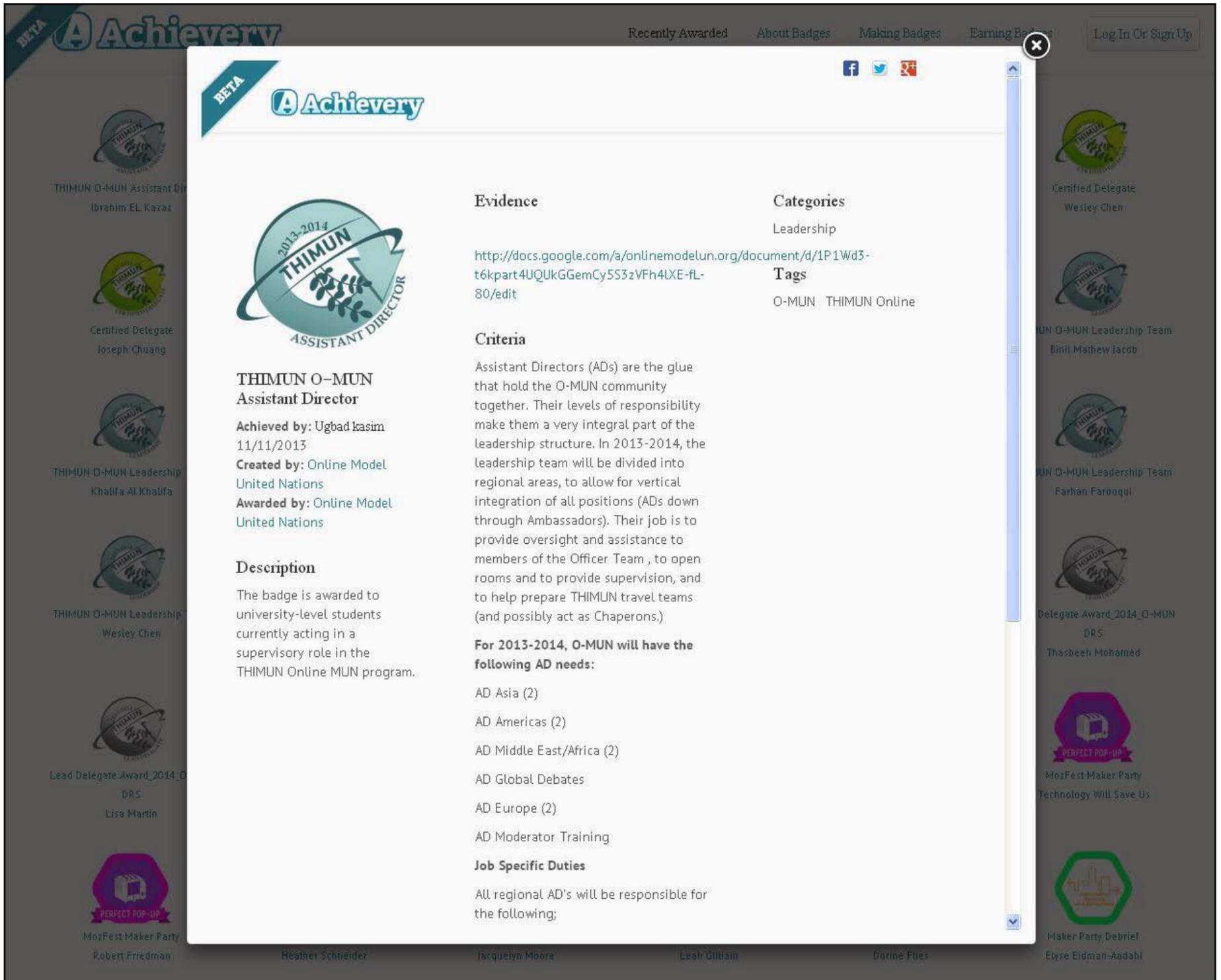
Even among the tech savvy digital natives that make up the O-MUN student community, many questions emerged: “why do I need these,” “how do I use these,” and frankly, other than looking kind of neat, “who cares?” To which I give my most simple answer: badges contain the proof of the many skills and leadership traits developed through O-MUN. Before badges, students could only refer to their Model UN experience in college essays or as part of a simple list of extra-curriculars on an application. Digital badging is a more powerful symbol of commitment: a student officer at O-MUN can link their badge to their portfolio, and, with a simple click, reveal proof of their position attached to our job description. Let’s take another example: perhaps a delegate from the O-MUN community has written a piece for our blog. Instead of just writing about that activity, a digital badge links back, through its evidence bearing URL, to the actual piece of writing itself. Our Delegate Recognition System (DRS), developed by Assistant Director Thasbeeh Moosa, focuses on engagement and levels of participation. For students with no MUN program at their school and thus no way to share the skills they have learned through MUN,

these achievements often go unrecognized. A digital badge can fix this.

Most MUN students know how important involvement in the program can look on a college application, or for a job or internship. Badges are a great way of documenting and sharing accomplishments and contributions in O-MUN. You can link or embed or attach the badge file with data placed into the image itself. Badges are a cross between a paper certificate and an online transcript; it’s no wonder that digital badging is being taken very seriously by tech folks at Mozilla and educators around the world.

Now, I am more convinced than ever that this represents a significant moment in Model UN and global education community. Because now, O-MUN, or any MUN organization wishing to badge, can provide delegates with far more validation of the personal growth trials and tribulations that make Model UN a truly transformative educational experience. O-MUN is very excited to be a very early adopter of this idea, and to promote the use of badges around the world.

For more information on badge-related items, check out [THIMUN O-MUN’s digital badge page](#).



An example of digital badging for one of THIMUN O-MUN’s leaders

My MUN Story: Lessons Learned

By Nabila Elassar

Every story in MUN is unique. If you ask any hardcore MUNer to explain why he or she cares so much about a “make-believe” United Nations, or why there are tears streaming down his face in his conference’s closing ceremony, you will probably get the same answer. “You have to go through it to understand.” I agree, and here is my MUN story.

My first taste of MUN happened when I was 10, right after I moved to Egypt. In my four years in Cairo at The American University’s Junior Summer Program, I gained a smoother transition into what would have otherwise been a very difficult phase. Joining MUN eased the challenge of making new friends and communicating with others in a country and society I had not yet adjusted to. At the same time, I learned how to analyze, research, and debate. Most importantly, I gained the confidence to voice my opinions at a young age.

By my fifth delegate experience in CU’s Model American Presidency, MUN had become my retreat. The sessions were my favorite part of the week, and the friends and community were the best part of university life. After winning best delegate in that year’s conference, I joined The German University in Cairo’s Model United Nations, and again, won best delegate.

Finally, I became a GUCMUN committee chair (Research and crisis co-ordinator) in my senior year of college. I wanted to be the one to guide and help others grow, as I had as a delegate.

But, nothing could have prepared me for the massive development I went through myself as a secretariat and chair. Being responsible for the development of others, watching them change and

grow, encouraging them, mentoring and helping them all throughout their journey was beyond words. In my delegates, I saw myself. I saw the shy girl that turned into a fearless speaker. I saw the little delegation making wonders in the conference. I saw massive change in seemingly quiet human beings. I saw miracles in action. It was by far, the most rewarding, inspiring, amazing journey imaginable.

That is when I realized why Model United Nations is so much more than just a make-believe UN:

1. MUN can help you grow every part of your skills and potential as a person.

2. MUN can make you uncover talents you never knew you had.

3. MUN can transform you from a person of a passive non-interested view of politics, into a research hungry, debate welcoming fanatic.

4. MUN can dissolve your fear of public speaking, foster your self expression and eloquence, push out your creativity, and turn you into an influencer of others.

5. MUNs are usually a community. They invite you into a circle of lifelong friends, and newly found family.

6. The process of representing a country, while defending its rights and interests in an actual international conference setting, proposing real solutions to fix an ongoing world problem that the UN itself has not resolved yet... is indescribable. It makes you feel so powerful. For a young person, it pushes you leaps forward in terms of maturity, problem solving ability and responsibility.

7. MUN shows you your weaknesses, and pushes your limits in handling challenges and pressure.

8. MUN teaches you massive interpersonal skills, diplomatic skills, profes-

sionalism, crisis management, and true leadership.

9. MUN can give you hope, and belief in what you are capable of in life.

10. The honor of being able to develop other people, and help them grow with this journey, turns you into the best version of yourself.

It is the normal sequence of events. You graduate, you move on. You start your professional life. I knew that. It was definitely possible to stay for a year, as others had. But, that’s not what I wanted. I didn’t want a re-do, nor did I want to take away someone else’s place, and chance to benefit from the secretariat experience. So, I had to endure.

But then, I found bestdelegate.com. After reading Ryan and Kevin’s stories, I could hardly believe myself. I wasn’t alone! There are others! They actually left their professional careers to form a different kind of professional career in which they did what they loved. The best job on Earth. Travelling the world,

teaching MUN.

And with that, came a spark of hope. I now know what I want to do in life. I know what I am capable of. That would have never happened without the life skills and inspiring breakthroughs I made through MUN. Yes, there were challenges. Yes, it wasn’t easy. But every obstacle, every difficulty only made me stronger. To those difficulties, whether caused by other people, or by circumstances, I say: Thank you. You are the reason why MUN is, and will remain the best thing that has happened to me.

And that is why, with every bit of passion I have, I will always carry on teaching others how to make the most out of their time in MUN, using all my knowledge.

I now aim to encourage others to go through the expedition of being inspired and becoming inspirers through Model UN.

This was my MUN journey. What will be yours?



As a delegate and secretariat member, Nabila Elassar shares her personal experience in MUN.

Interview with Arabian Gulf Region’s Canadian Ambassador

By Maryam Al-Ammari

THIS NOVEMBER, I was able to meet the Canadian Ambassador to the Arabian Gulf region. Thanks to my father’s law firm, Ambassador McDonald attended a recent function at my home. My father first came up with the idea of interviewing the ambassador, and I was so excited to write up the questions. My approach was to create a set of questions that related to issues relevant to students my age, so I posted on the O-MUN Delegates Facebook group, and with the help of students from around the world, was able to put together five key questions.

Ambassador McDonald was very

considerate when answering the questions, and I would like to thank him for participating in the interview!

Maryam: Where have you been stationed in the past?

Ambassador McDonald: [I am] currently in Saudi Arabia as the Canadian Ambassador covering Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Yemen. Previously, I was Consul-General in Sydney, Australia. I was ambassador for Canada in Buenos Aires, covering Argentina and Paraguay. I spent five years in London, three years in Brussels, two years in Mexico. I’ve also spent a lot of time in

Ottawa for diplomatic and trade negotiations.

M: What inspired you to pursue a career in diplomacy?

A: Obviously the adventure; it’s fascinating to see a lot of different parts of the world. It is always an adjustment and a challenge but you do get an opportunity to get outside your normal domestic environment. So that is probably one of the primary things. Your particular area of interest is also important. My particular area of interest was trade so I did a lot of trade negotiations: it might be UN, it might be peace and security. In my case it was trade negotiations, I felt very comfortable with this and motivated by that, so that drew me into the world of international negotiations.

M: Did you study international relations at school?

A: In my case, there probably wasn’t too much IR when I was in my university, but I studied history and political science, which is a bit like the IR courses one would take. History, I think, is a very broad discipline. It teaches you to write and to analyze, and the subject gets you interested in other cultures as well as how things develop. So, I might have studied the equivalent of IR at the time. I also studied Spanish and French. I did center my studies on what would

become an international career.

M: Is there a current or past world leader you particularly admire?

A: If I look at Canada for instance, Pierre Elliott Trudeau* was a person who really put Canada on the map. He was a visionary leader for Canada and got a lot of recognition for the country. He had a big heart and many ambitions in terms of making our world a better place. He talked about a just society for Canada. (*As a note, Trudeau was the Prime Minister of Canada in the 1960s-1980s. He was instrumental in negotiating Canada’s constitutional independence from the Britain).

M: What advice do you have for students?

A: My advice to students is to enjoy yourself. Don’t get too preoccupied about your future or what you’re going to do. I think, too often now, universities are job focused and students are job focused. They go to university worrying about: what am I going to do when I get out of university? That’s quite different. I went to university in the late 60s, so I’ve got a different perspective on it, but I do think my perspective is a good one. Do what you like, do what interests you, and enjoy yourself. Take things seriously, but life is not all about getting the job; it’s about learning.



Canadian Ambassador McDonald

From the Techie's Desk...

By Abhay Valiyaveettil



HELLO EVERYONE! My name is Abhay Valiyaveettil, and I'll be working as the Technology Coordinator for THIMUN Qatar. I hope to keep this a regular column for the *Olive Branch* since I believe technology is super important, especially for all of us participating in MUN conferences. Now three months into my job, I can really say that I've been fully involved and officially welcomed into the wonderful THIMUN family. But as you may ask, "what's new with technology at

THIMUN Conferences and what are our other plans for the coming year?" This edition of "From the Techie's Desk..." will cover the plans for the coming year and will also briefly touch on some helpful technologies which all of you can use for your MUN programs!

First, the MUNIS System, which we use for managing and organizing our conferences at THIMUN, is doing really well at the moment. We've now extended our clientele to Doha College MUN as well and they managed to pull off a successful conference during the November 14-16 weekend. While several other schools have expressed interest in using MUNIS, I'd like to remind all of you that MUNIS is now available for purchase from our office at THIMUN at any time you want to organize an MUN Conference. The MUNIS system can take care of all registrations and Online Form 2 submissions that the host school would be sending out to all the participating schools. Moreover, it can also be used for generating conference lists and participation rosters. Another great feature of this system is the financing. It has a smooth way of generating invoices for each school automatically, and these invoices can be sent to schools directly to the participating schools'

email through the system itself. Certificates and badge printing is yet another usually complex process, which is taken care of by the MUNIS system as well. If you are interested, just shoot me an email at avaliyaveettil@qf.org.qa and I'll get right back.

Besides MUNIS support, O-MUN is another very important project that I work on at the moment. O-MUN is, as most you know, an emerging platform for MUN simulations that help students from all over the world participate; all that they require is a laptop and an internet connection. O-MUN is currently run using Blackboard suite which is a really cool tool for holding debates, screen sharing sessions, discussions and the like. Most universities today use Blackboard as a means for assignment submissions, forum discussions, and even grade tracking. With distance education options getting popular each day, Blackboard provides a great platform for student-teacher interaction as well. The O-MUN website that we have now is supported by Drupal, and a big goal for me at this point is to handle the website and cater to the growing needs of the website as well.

Another nice tool that I came across lately was the GoFileDrop app that is

freely available for all. GoFileDrop lets you permit other users to securely drop files into your Google Drive account without having to share any information/folders with each other. This can be particularly helpful if you are collecting stuff from anonymous users who you really don't want to share a folder or your e-mail address for that matter. You can simply provide a link and they can upload their files onto your account if they have the link. The free version does have a per file limit of 3mb though (yeah! Nothing really comes fully free these days) But that's pretty a pretty good size limit. For the THIMUN Qatar Film Festival 2014, we are using a pro version of GoFileDrop to collect the entries; so far, it's been great.

That's it for now; I'm looking forward to coming up with more awesome updates to share next time around! Until then, stay safe and best wishes for the new year! Finally, if you come across any cool technology-related services that you think you could use at your MUN, or if you would like to share some of your own technology solutions, I'd love to hear from you; send me an email at avaliyaveettil@qf.org.qa.

Viewpoint: Say 'No' to GMOs?

By Caroline Nunn

YOU ARE standing in the fruit and vegetable aisle of your local supermarket when you catch the sight of a red, juicy apple. It's not the polished shine that catches your eye, or the cheap price tag for a kilo — it's the size of the enormous fruit.

The size of the of fruit is only the beginning of the impact GMOs have. Genetically modified organisms have advanced the agricultural world since the 1940s, allowing the agriculture industry to soar by increasing the yield of crop production by altering a plant's DNA. Alterations can vary from making the crop resistant against drought to even fighting off pests, which causes substantial damage to the crops. The alterations made to some plant DNA have also ensured an increase in the nutritional value of the crop in question. This process has also reduced the chances of food shortages in our growing population, as crops can be grown at any part of the world — through hail, drought, snow, and rain — regardless of seasonal changes. The advantages of GMOs are ongoing.

Yet despite its colossal amount of benefits at first glance, the negative effects of GMOs have only begun to surface.

Corporations

Monsanto. Who are they? What are they? What do they do? Monsanto is one of the largest Agribusinesses in the world, one of the first to genetically modify plant cells, ensuring the public that sustainable agricultural development is their main goal. Monsanto aims to double the yield of corn, soybeans, and cotton by 2030. The company promises to do this through methods which could preserve our environment through using less natural resources:

less water, less land, less energy. All will be possible through the growing use of GMOs.

Monsanto. The same company which produced 'Agent Orange,' the mixture of two herbicides to aid the US in 'Operation Ranch Hand' during the Vietnam War. This was sprayed on to the bountiful crops within the Asian region, resulting in not only the destruction of the crops, but also a backlash on its consumers. Around 500,000 children have been born with severe birth defects as a result of the use of the herbicide during the Cold War. These two herbicides happen to also be commonly used as everyday chemicals in the agriculture industry.

Are GMOs what they truly make out to be? GMOs are beneficial in how they have managed to yield a substantial amount of crops, some of which are high in nutrition, for our population to access yet its drawbacks have proven to be hazardous as herbicides used to treat these GMOs has been used, in the past, as chemical weapons.

The negative impacts on local farmers have also risen significantly. Farmers are being bought out by these large businesses like Monsanto. Organic farm products can't compete with the low prices of GMO products and its mass production: there becomes less demand for organically grown products in comparison for the growth in the demand for the abundance of GMO crops made available all year round. This impact is more evident in poor, underdeveloped regions where agriculture remains as a top industry as these seemingly large independent farmers get beaten out by corporations.

A Swarm of Evidence

Bees are dropping like flies. In the past year, reports regarding dead swarms of bees have escalated. While attempt-



Illustration: Aya El-Husseini

Supermarket struggles? The size of genetically modified organisms may only be the beginning of the burden

ing to pollinate crops, of which their seeds have been treated by pesticides by companies like Monsanto, the bees get contaminated and die without being able to pollinate the crop. This becomes a problem: how are plants to develop if the reproduction process fails and what happens to these creatures that can't fulfill their duties and die out?

In regard to human consumption, the effects of GMOs are still being speculated upon. Though research still lacks in proving that it is harmful, issues still rise. The main problem revolves around the transfer of the altered gene. If a gene is altered to be resistant against a certain pest and is transferred in to human consumers, humans can find themselves resistant against antibiotics which could help them in combatting disease brought about by the pest in question.

Do we Have a Choice?

What are we truly eating? The mar-

ketization of GMOs has stirred a great amount of controversy. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is now urging the labelling of products containing GMOs in order to defend consumer rights. Though the potential risks of GMOs have yet to be uncovered, the FAO believes that the public has the right to make a choice in regards to GMOs and if they could potentially harm individuals who consume them. The lack of concrete evidence should not deter consumers from making their own choices in picking food. We don't know if the products on the supermarket shelves contain GMOs, which is why the FAO is arguing that we should have the right to choose what we want to ingest.

This growing controversy has only began rise recently and the drawbacks of GMOs continue to grow more. Is there a way to tackle this problem, or has our society relied on it too heavily in catering to our own needs?

Point of Order

Point of Order is a regular column that focuses on the values and principles that underline the purpose of MUN programs.

By Cameron Janzen

DECEMBER is a busy conference month for MUN directors and delegates. Every weekend, excited delegates come together to debate in MUN conferences throughout the world. In attending well over 100 MUN conferences, one common issue seems to arise at every MUN conference: the issue of the dress code and adherence (or lack of adherence) by delegates. While MUN should not be defined by how people dress, the manner in which we expect and allow our delegates to dress reflects our MUN values.

One of the great strengths of MUN conferences is the social aspect. There is tremendous education and social value in having students

meet and socialize from diverse schools and nationalities. Students love the opportunity to meet peers and spend time talking with them. When we meet others from outside our normal circle of friends, we have the opportunity to broaden our perspectives. Developing a better understanding of what we have in common is more likely to occur in the lunch room or in the common areas than during a debate on financing of a UN mission. So for many delegates, social success is just as important as being a main submitter of a resolution. This is often where the priorities of the delegate, MUN director, and student leaders come into conflict. Delegates may ask themselves, "Are the clothes I am wearing designed solely for social success or for the professional representation of my assigned country?"

The idea that the individual delegate is a representative of their assigned country is at the heart of MUN's function as a formal educational program. Delegates are expected to learn their country's position and represent that position diplomatically and accurately. As symbol representations of their countries, delegates need to act with dignity and respect at all times. Most MUN conferences do not permit delegates from attending the conference in national dress or costume. Non-nationals wearing traditional national dress can quickly be seen as a significant cultural insult. To pull an outside example, recently, Rihanna and Justin Bieber created considerable controversy in the U.A.E. by appearing in public wearing GCC national dress. National dress represents custom and tradition, and the pride of a traditional way

of life. As reported in *Al Jazeera*, Mohammad Al Hajeri, a Qatari national, summarized the response by stating, "The way [Bieber] was dancing as he was wearing our clothes showed mockery, as if he was a clown."

As result, MUN conferences require a professional dress code from all MUN participants. A sloppy or an unkempt appearance would be a form of disrespect to the represented country. Likewise, dress that is revealing or designed to attract attention violates the spirit of MUN conferences. There is an old saying that form follows function; what you wear should match the function that you are attending. MUN is a formal, conservative meeting place for discussion of serious issues; our clothing should reflect this.

The Press Club

A Guide to Using Social Media as a Tool for Communicating, Marketing and Publishing.

By Rebecca Cain

NOW THAT your press club is up and running and that you're being bowled over by your enthusiastic students, you need to think about using social media to facilitate your team's success. Before you begin, consider that because every school has a unique social media and Internet usage policy, you will need to develop specific guidelines based on what is right for you, your club, and your school.

Communicating, Not Just with Your Team, but with Your Audience, is Vital to Success

Yes, you will have your weekly meetings where you will pitch ideas and assign jobs for your issue, but these meetings are often fast-paced and school life can be hectic. Whether you're a teacher or student, there is rarely enough hours in the day to everything you have planned, so finding a communication platform that is right for you and your club will make a world of difference.

How Should You Communicate With Your Press Team?

There are several options you can — and should — consider. Below are several of the most convenient:

Email: Here is a classic choice and one for the technologically timid. This is still a great mode of communication and one we use in both the PHESMUN and THIMUN Qatar Press Teams.

Facebook: This is not a platform I would recommend, but nevertheless one I know some choose to use. Our school has an official Facebook page, and I often promote our club through this medium. However, I do not use it for communicating with students — most people would typically regard Facebook as too informal for handling school-related business.

Edmodo: Many teachers have found Edmodo to be a great alternative to Facebook. This has all the looks of Facebook, but it is designed for educators. The pri-

vacuity settings are far more secure, and as a teacher, you have more control over comments posted. You are able to create small groups within your club page, which means you can set and maintain a page to have a group for reporters, photographers, etc.

Personally I have set up Edmodo for my Model UN Club. All students, whether they are involved in MUN or the Press Club, are required to sign-up for this. Once you have a group set up on Edmodo, there's the option of creating a small group. I have done this for my press club. That means that they have their own space for announcements, but they are also privy to the general announcements of the MUN Club.

Edmodo also has a library. This is a virtual space for all your resources to be stored, and again, you can control who sees these resources and who can post resources. I have found this useful for directing the team to useful websites and examples.

Google+: I'll admit I'm fairly new to Google+, but I love it! We are using it as our mode of communication within the Press Team for THIMUN Qatar this year, and so far, it has worked well. What I like about Google+ is the clean layout. The big plus for us is that it's very secure. We've set up a community for our Press Team: this has a private setting, meaning the members have to be invited by the owner. This is our main mode of communication with the team and is proving to be successful; even though those who are unfamiliar with Google+, such as me, are finding easy to use. As an added bonus, Google+ has a smartphone app that allows students who do not check their email regularly to receive notifications every time there is an update.

Marketing and Promoting Your Club

Most schools are becoming more environmentally aware and thus trying to use less paper for their functions. One of the most obvious choices for promoting your club would be flyers posted around school. But, there are other methods that not only take less time and less ef-

fort, but reach a wider audience. Using social media to promote your club will engage your target audience and encourage students to participate, while also providing a link to parents and the wider community.

Twitter: Twitter is quick, fast, and open to everyone. Why not use Twitter to promote what you're doing? With 140 characters, you can use this to post headlines and begin your network by following all the local media. This can also be a great tool for teaching your reporters about concise and snappy headlines. You can also use Twitter to direct people to your website or blog. Using free tools such as bit.ly or tinyurl, you can shorten long URL's, thus giving you the chance to maximise your character count.

Facebook: I already mentioned this in a previous section, but if your school has an official page on Facebook, it's a great tool for promoting the work to parents.

School website: If you want a more professional method of promotion, using your school website may be preferable.

Club website: If your club is already established and already organizing conferences on a local, regional, or global scale, you will probably already have your own website. This platform is the

best way to promote your Model UN conference and a good opportunity for the press team to take charge of the site.

Publishing Your Product Online

There are many free blogging sites available, and most are easy to use. In the end, your decisions come down to your personal preferences, so it is worth taking a look at blogs that are already established to get an idea of what will be right for you and your club.

Blogger: As one of the more popular blogging platforms, Blogger is very easy to use with a variety of layout options.

Wordpress: As an already established blogger, I personally prefer Wordpress. I like the variety of layout and design options, as well as the community. I find it easier to use than Blogger, but that is mostly due to the layout of the dashboard. I also find the Blogger community to be more proactive which is always good for widening your audience.

These are all suggestions to get you thinking about how you might use online media to market your club. Remember, since we live in world where much of our communication, knowledge, and interaction come from social media platforms, it makes sense to embrace it.

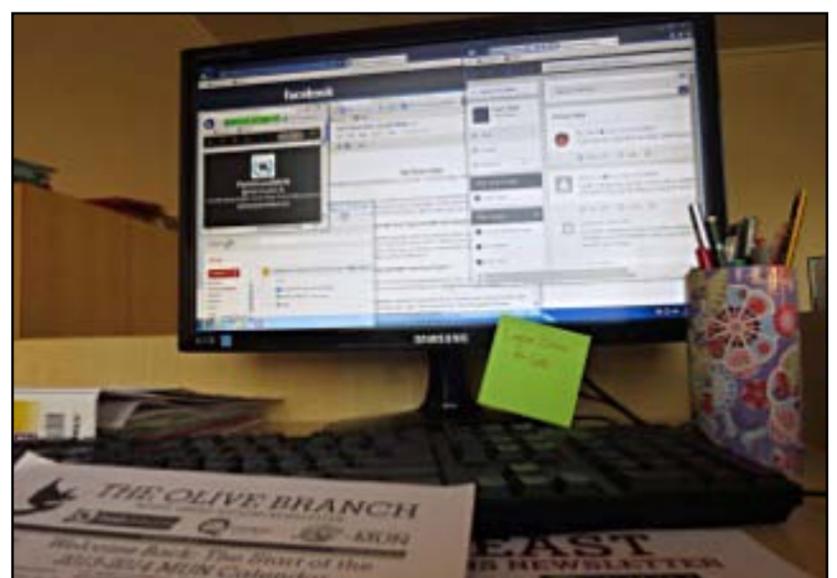


Photo: Elissa Mefleh

Identify, Design, Deliver, Scale: Tackling Poverty, One Step at a Time

By Vanlee Trindade

“PRACTICAL solutions to extreme poverty can only come from listening to poor people themselves.”

Dr Paul Polak, a renowned entrepreneur and psychiatrist, makes his way into news in his mission to serve the poor in a way that would open markets to over “3 billion bypassed individuals” while permanently aiding many in succeeding above the poverty line.

The founder of NGO “D-Rev” sought to create a “design revolution” and urged acclaimed designers to turn their focus to catering for “that other 90%” who live on less than \$2 per day, rather than the affluent 10%. This foundation has led to the development of ingenious tools that aid poverty stricken nations in coping with harsh environmental shortcom-

ings, while appealing to market seeking corporations in the process.

D-Rev has developed a four-step process by which this NGO seeks to gain maximum success: “Identify, Design, Deliver, Scale for a maximum global impact.”

Identify The Problem

Dr. Polak’s business approach to a worldwide problem has seen an incredible amount of popularity in funding, allowing ideas to become a reality. D-Rev has currently worked in 12 countries, including India, Haiti, Iraq, and Uganda, in supplying affordable products to improve health and increase the income of the nation’s people. The first step is identifying areas of problem to target where to improve the quality of life.

Design & Innovate

The next step is to create innovative product designs that not only suit the climate, but also are durable in extreme climates. Such successful products include a “Pot-in-pot cooler,” which allows farmers to evaporate wet sand to keep produce cool and fresh to sell, and revolutionary “drinking straws” which can be used to filter any available water and make the water suitable for drinking.

Deliver: Fuelling Ideas

Although these inventions have the potential to make a change, D-Rev requires funds to be able to supply the demands to people. The company D-Rev relies solely on kickstarter funds and the funds of various major corporations

that help these ideas become a reality.

Scale for Maximum Global Impact

“Spread the wealth,” says Polak in a TEDx talk on allowing designs’ full potential to be reached by marketing on a global scale. Polak’s futuristic vision for currently underdeveloped countries guarantees not only the development of a nation’s business sector, but also encourages poverty stricken men and women to opt for a more sustainable approach to a long term problem.

D-Rev is a prime example of how an idea can turn into a beacon of hope for millions. It’s safe to say that in Polak’s eyes, the only way to tackle poverty is to move forward “one step at a time.”

Key Differences Between a Good Delegate and the Best Delegate, cont.

rial in any given circumstances. In this article, I will explain these tactics that I have accumulated from my experience as delegate and chair. These skills will either make you a very good delegate, or that one-in-a-million Best Delegate, and how these differences can be highlighted at every stage of the conference.

Success in MUN is determined by two factors: first, theoretical guidelines and tasks to accomplish at every phase of the conference; secondly, your passion, character, and spirit while handling these tasks. I will first show you how the best delegate handles every stage of MUN conferences theoretically. The truth of the matter is that MUN is not mastered solely through steps and guidelines, which is why at the end of this article, I will also differentiate the good delegate from the best delegate in spirit and character.

First, here is the best delegate’s agenda during the stages of the conference:

Stage 1. Pre-conference: Planning Ahead.

Committee begins well before you step into the conference room. During the four days of the conference, events will cluster and tend to get hectic, and you’ll most likely feel cramped for time. The preparation you make beforehand will considerably make a difference in your experience as a delegate.

Begin thinking about your committee as soon as you receive your background guide or case. This paper is designed for you to extract as many tools as possible; it should be your go-to source. Highlight the main issues that the case covers (basic and secondary), as well as the main and secondary conflicts. The different conflicts will help you determine the key players, which are the main countries the case topic involves, as well as what countries are affected and *how*. This information should then help you determine blocs.

What are blocs? Quite simply, they are the most significant characteristic of the conference. Blocs are countries that group up (ally) in conference proceedings. They vote together during resolutions and support each other on proposals or stances in the formal debate.

Usually, alliances form due to shared interests regarding the case at hand, but most of the time, bloc “guidelines” are not that rigid as long as you stay on policy. “Shared interests” are actually a subjective matter, since you can choose to prioritize your interests. Thus, you can decide where your delegation stands within these blocs, or better yet, where you would like it to stand. As a result, a helpful idea is to anticipate possible conference scenarios.

Conference scenarios are the sequence of events, or progression of the case and evolution of proceedings from a conference’s beginning to end. For instance, you can “map” a conference into these parts: delegations delivering preliminary stances, exchanging ideas together, proposing initial resolutions, conducting mergers, passing a final resolution. If you have different possibilities mapped out, you can more clearly imagine your delegation’s possible role in committee, and how you can tip committee’s favor toward your country. Again, here are the differences in a nutshell:

A Good Delegate:

- Reads the case fully.
- Formulates his country’s stance.
- Prepares an opening speech.

A Best Delegate:

- Studies the case and gives extra weight to specific sections.
- Highlights the main conflict, the secondary conflict, and other minor conflicts.
- Determines the key players and secondary players.
- Determines likely bloc formation situations. Who are your delegation’s likely adversaries and allies?
- Prepares a detailed plan of action for your delegation in each possible scenario...
- and always has a plan B.
- Prepares an opening speech that commands attention and paves the road for your most favorable scenario.

Stage 2. Pre & During Conference: Research

Research is your most ardent com-

panion before, during, and sometimes even after the conference. But the best researchers are not the ones who spend the most time digging around in all directions or those who take on the responsibility to turn themselves into walking human encyclopedias. The best researcher is the most efficient researcher.

Efficient research begins with acknowledging a specific problem and looking for potential solutions. While general research (wide-ranging knowledge about your country’s background, history, the case’s basic history, etc.) is essential to the foundation of your role in committee, solution-oriented research will allow you to work miracles. For example, knowing your country’s strengths may give you leverage in committee. For instance, Estonia in NATO may appear to have little sway, but in a case dealing with cyber-security, Estonia can have great impact due to its technological advancement.

Now, tie bloc positioning and country research together for bloc influencing. My personal advice is to study every other delegation as carefully as you can. Know their foreign policies, their relationship with your country as well as others, and keep a record of anything you find. You never know when this information can prove useful. You can use a previous conflict between two other delegations to weaken their alliance (indirectly). You can also weaken a delegate’s argument by citing a contradiction you may have come across in your own research.

Most importantly, the crowning jewel of effective research will be influence in resolution writing. Only by establishing parameters for targeted research can you then start proposing the most realistic and inventive solutions. Your chair will immediately recognize good solution-oriented research and reward you for it.

In summary, here are the differences again:

A Good Delegate:

- Spends hours researching basic facts and the background of the case.
- Attempts to stay ahead in terms of general knowledge.

The Best Delegate:

- Makes research his or her armor by defending against accusations.
- Make research his or her weapon by knowing the history (and flaws) of other nations.
- Uses research to create allies (find common interests, find ways to compromise to create a resolution together), leverage your country’s strengths, gain respect as the “go to” source for relevant information, and flexibly deal with any unexpected turns in the conference.

Stage 3. Conference First Phase: Speeches and Debates

Let the games begin! The conference has started, countries have voiced their stances, and the debate is heating up. The strategic significance of this stage cannot be overstated. Every time another delegation makes a speech, true best delegates will have developed a reaction in mind. When others think of solutions, they will consider your delegation’s stance and reaction. When you speak, they will listen, and when you leave, they will notice. Best delegates are attentive during this stage of conference, and respond according to what they see.

A Good Delegate

- Follows the flow of debate and reacts to it.
- Tries to contribute regularly.
- Is well aware of the Rules of Procedure of his council.
- Has diplomatic debating skills.
- Is a good debater.

The Best Delegate:

- Goes beyond simply keeping tabs on the flow of debate and arguments.
- Always keeps his or her country placard up, especially when debate lags.
- Is a diplomatic debater and knows how to navigate through situations most delegates would find stressful.

Stage 4. Conference Second Phase: Caucus.

Here comes the detour. All of the attacks, rebuttals and head-on disagree-

Key Differences, cont.

ments of the first stage now come to an end. Here, your ability to be influential in conflict resolution will be tested.

To master this stage, you need to know how to not only confidently lead, but also listen to and understand other delegates. As a chair, I realized there are different types of personalities that arise in this stage:

1. Aggressive and over-eager (Thinks by talking and yelling the most, others will step back and let him have his way).
2. Quiet retreator (Result of the aggressive delegate — can't blame him).
3. Sneaky influencer (Usually speaks to one person at a time, trying sway the debate in his favor).
4. Researcher (Turns away and researches information, facts, or previous resolutions in similar situations to sway the debate in his favor).

5. Conflict mediator (The balanced one. He'll usually say something like, "Everyone has to speak. Everyone has a good point. We must reach an agreement that caters to all interests.")

Which personality type should you be? Here's the secret: you have to be a little bit of all five! Always be a mediator. If a situation gets too unfavorable, don't be afraid to show genuine disagreement, and be assertive rather than aggressive. Additionally, never underestimate the power of conversations on the side if you need to discuss matters privately with a close ally. And of course, come prepared with research that will give you insight into how leaders handled previous conflicts. By staying flexible during a delegate-created crisis, your chair will spot you as a leader.

That being said, I must highlight a significant factor in this stage: personal connections. To reiterate, MUN is not just about understanding tasks and guidelines. MUN is about personal communication and human relationships. The caucus especially all comes down to how well you deal with people one-on-one, and whether or not you are a leader by encouragement and support, or by dominance.

A Good Delegate:

- Assumes one of the five caucus personalities (mentioned above).
- Tries to lead.
- Is good friends with the allies in his bloc and tries to be nice to the other delegates.
- Prepares the points he wants to see in the draft resolution to benefit his delegation.

The Best Delegate:

- Acts like a little bit of each personality (above) in the needed time.
- Knows listening is key to being influential in an unmoderated caucus.
- May already have genuine personal connections with all other people in the council, even if outside conference time.
- Is his bloc members advocate, supporter, and friend. Knows how to convey information to and through them, and spends time and effort understanding how to deal with them, and make their best qualities come out through encouragement and appreciation.
- Usually the first to submit a valid working paper, and draft resolution, bringing the conference to the next stage.

With the final stage comes the biggest challenge. Resolution writing and voting are mainly the end goals of the conference. A resolution is a series of agreements expressed in a combination of words. When debating on and amending clauses in the resolution, don't attempt to incorporate extreme policies that would only benefit your country or bloc. Rather, try to compromise in order to secure the most votes.

A Good Delegate:

- Knows what his delegation needs in the resolution.
- Rallies up sponsors to his resolution from his bloc.
- Tries to convince others to vote in favor of his resolution.

The Best Delegate:

- Puts his or her delegation first, while aiming to compromise with what other delegations may insist on.
- Knows that a single word can make a considerable difference.
- Rally up sponsors from more than one bloc. This triples its power. While difficult, this is not impossible. Try to make it leverage benefits to as many sides as possible, while maintaining your interests.
- Bind potential voters in favor of your resolution by making them an offer they can't refuse (Add a clause in it that serves their countries interest that they cannot

forgo, even for another offer).

- Always, Always, have a plan B. In councils such as the UNSC, it is more likely than not that the first resolution will fail. Do not be discouraged, and most importantly, plan for this event. Always stay flexible to draft a second resolution, with slightly different clauses, terms, allies, and benefiting delegations than the one before it, but that still maintains your delegation's interests.
- Edits.

Now that we have finished discussing the best delegate's agenda in conference stages and proceedings, what remains is the most important set of differences. These are differences in the person, passion, and personality.

A Good Delegate

- Enjoys Model United Nations.
- Wants to be the best delegate.
- Acts like his delegation.
- Wants to learn and grow.
- Sees the other delegates essentially as competition, maybe as friends.

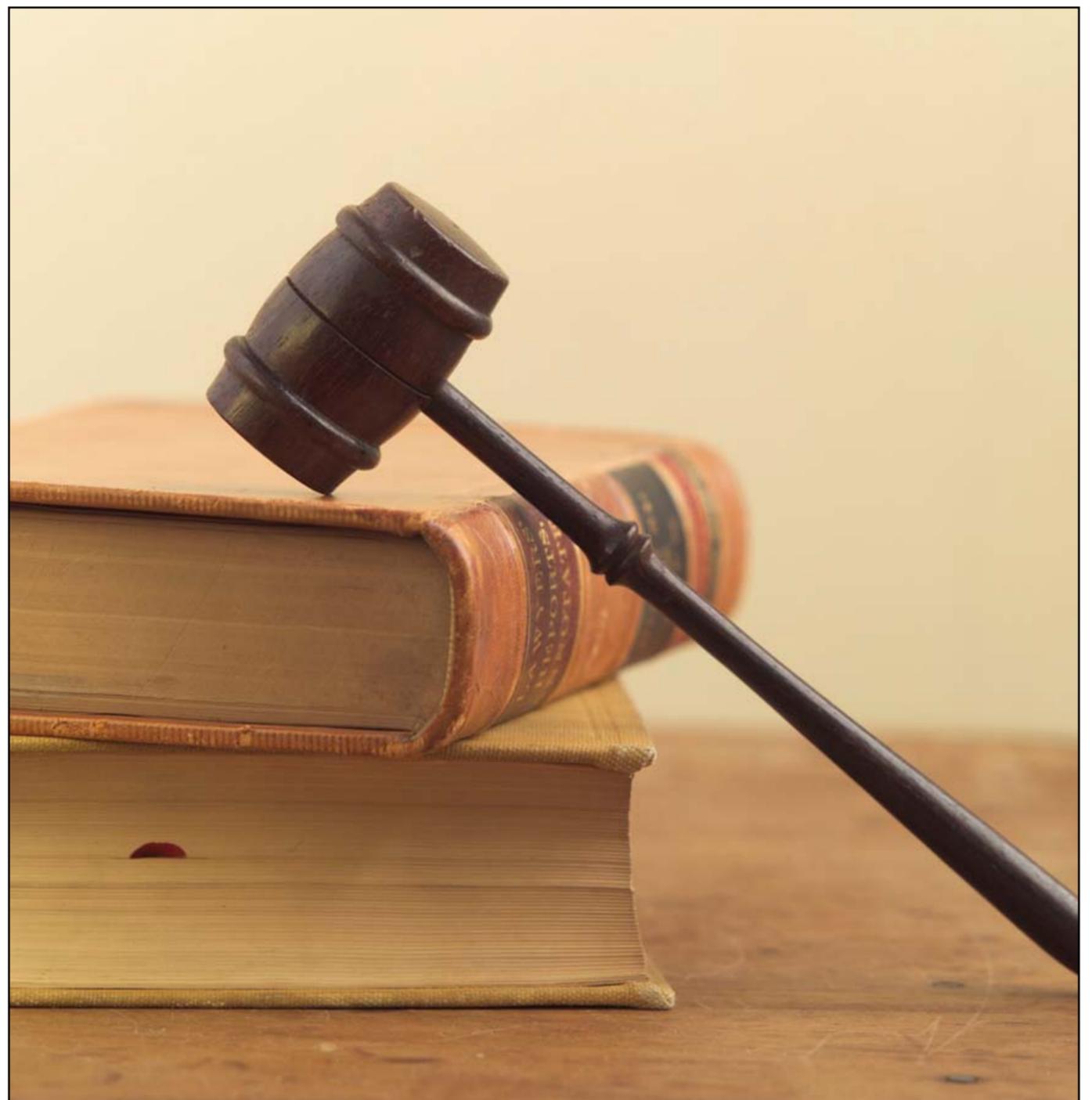
The Best Delegate

- Has a true passion for Model United Nations.
- Sees MUN as his or her platform to discover his potential, his new family and friends.
- Is determined to be the best delegate.

- Is his delegation. Pours his heart and soul in representing and upholding his country's best interests, that it is no longer an act.

- Values genuine integrity and character.
- Sees helping others as an integral part of having a worthwhile delegate experience.
- Is a leader. Through respecting others, appreciating their efforts, and bringing out their potential.
- Is there to build a range of skills.
- Will not step on other delegates to climb to the top.
- Harnesses his or her strengths.

By the end of this article, you're now probably an expert on what the best delegate looks like. In my personal opinion, whether or not you are the best delegate is not really for other people to decide — you are. Model United Nations is not about winning; it's about being proud of your achievements. An achievement can be self-discovery, new friends, or simply a different light into your character. This comes from personal experience, and there are conferences I came out of feeling more proud of my efforts than the delegates who had placed higher than me. If you really have done everything in this article, then you are the best delegate. In the end, you will know — you will always know. And that, honorable delegate, is the best prize in the world.



Resource Corner: Global Peace Index

By Cameron Janzen

IN RESEARCHING for Model UN conferences, delegates may quickly notice the frequent use of indexes: HDI, GDI, GINI, EPI... the list continues on and on. A relatively new index, the Global Peace Index (GPI) is a new resource on this list that strives to provide a measure of national peacefulness.

The GPI is developed under the guidance of an international panel of independent experts with data collated and calculated by the Economist Intelligence Unit. This index is composed of 22 indicators, ranging from a nation's level of military expenditures to its relations with neighboring countries to the percentage of its population in prison (see below for the list of indicators).

The index is tested against a range of potential "drivers" — or determinants of peace — including levels of democracy and transparency, education, and national well-being. The GPI is a helpful tool for assessing some general characteristics of a country's foreign and domestic policies and issues.

The main feature of the site is the interactive map, which is supplemented by quick visual comparative and statistical analysis. The map also allows you to compare changes over time.

By click on a country of interest, one can get the index score on each of the 22 indicators that comprises of the overall index score. By examining the map, one would find that the state of Qatar has the lowest GPI score within the region. The index only identifies four major areas of

concern: number of police per capita, importing of weapons, relations with neighboring states, and limited amount of financial support for UN peacekeepers.

Finally, the site also offers a global terrorism index, which measures the impact of terrorism on individual countries. A quick survey of the map leads to many interesting questions regarding which countries are actually being most affected by the "global war on terrorism."

In addition to the index, the site also provides four excellent teaching modules called the Building Blocks of Peace. The modules are free for anyone to download, and they make for an excellent teaching resource for the regular classroom or Model UN club program.

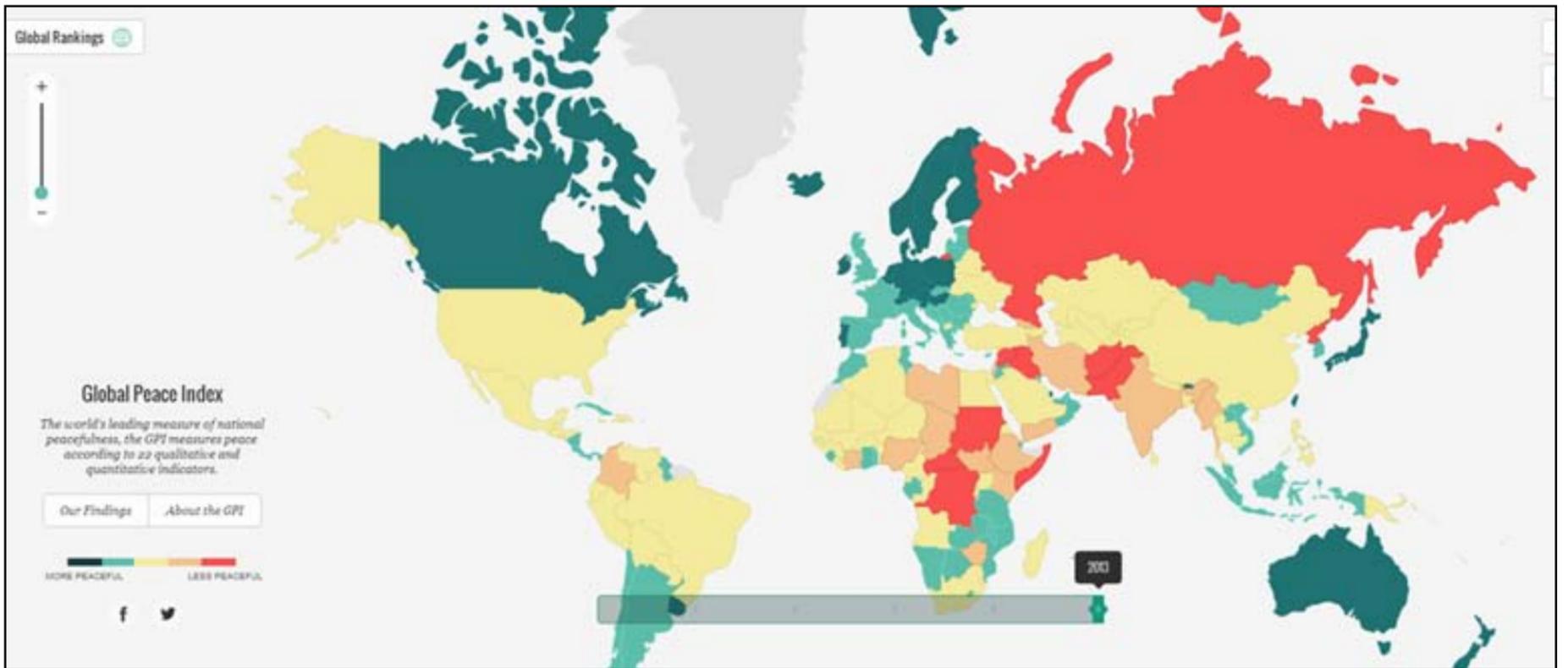
The modules come complete with reflection activities, key questions and data sets. The topics covered in the four modules are:

1. An Understanding of Peace: Explore the factors influencing a country's peacefulness and why the definition of "peace" is more than simply "the absence of war."

2. Peace and Sustainability: Understand the impact of peace on global sustainability through a focus on water access and management.

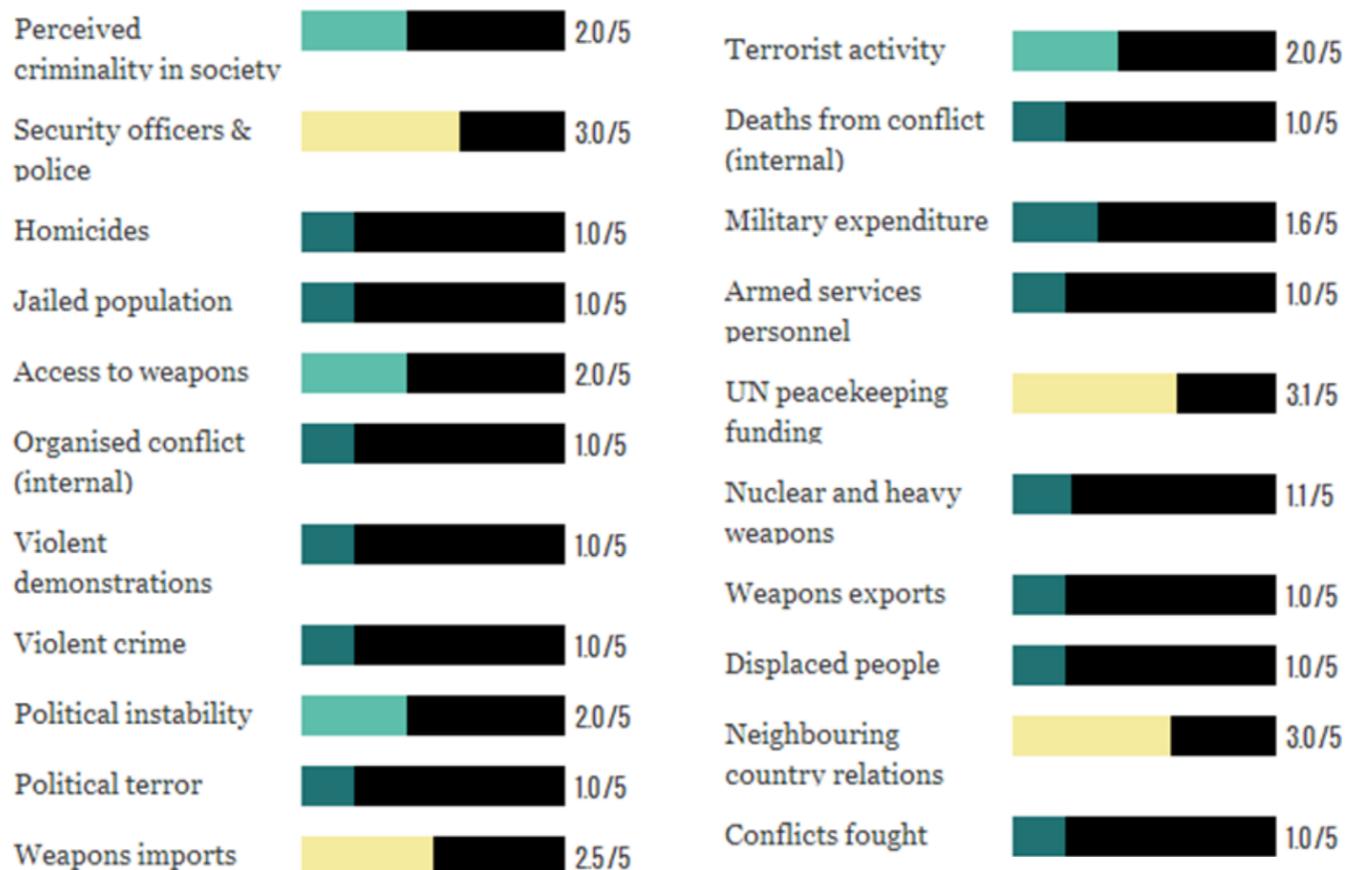
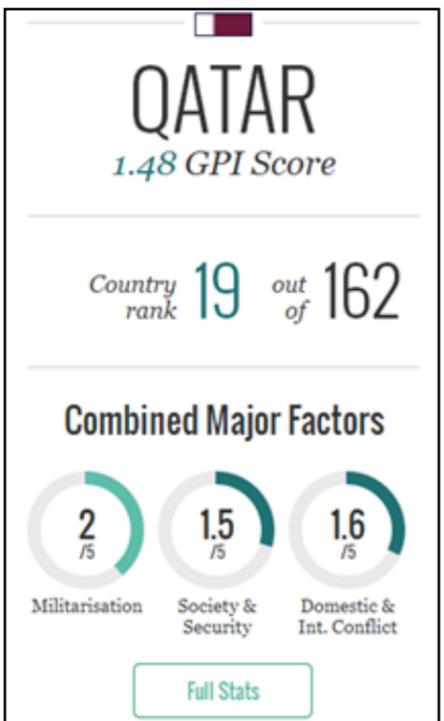
3. Education and Peace: Investigate the important role education plays in supporting a country's peacefulness.

4. Peace and Economics: Examine the benefits of peace in relation to business and the economy through exploring tourism and retail industries.



(Clockwise from top) The Global Peace Index has many interactive features that show the state of peace in 162 countries; List of indicators determining a nation's level of peacefulness; Qatar's country profile

Type of Resource: Electronic
Purpose: To provide a quick overview of national and regional peacefulness. Its interactive map feature allows for quick visual comparative and statistical analysis.
Cost: Free
Website: <http://economicsand-peace.org/research/iep-indices-data/global-peace-index>



How to Treat a Treaty, cont.

Why should I use international law in committee?

Treaties can be evidence of friendly relations among states.

Being able to successfully integrate concepts of international legal norms will vastly legitimize your arguments and will therefore make you appear more prepared. Chairpersons will be more likely to take note of your speeches while delegates will feel more inclined to gravitate toward your working groups.

You can not only use international law to your advantage, but also to your opponent's demise. If I had a nickel for every time I have seen even the best of delegates make comments or propose plans that run contrary to international law, I could fund the entire United Nations for a lifetime. If you familiarize yourself with elements of international jurisprudence, it will be possible to respectfully paint your opponents as ill-informed and you, in turn, as a "best delegate."

Lastly, once you are well versed in the mechanisms of international law, a wide array of opportunities for you to create legally based solutions will present itself. Chairpersons will usually take very kindly to plans that include restructuring or make use of an existing body. Anyone can reinvent the wheel by establishing a new court or committee, but only the most astute have the ability to make full use of the resources already available to them.

Sources of International Law

Treaties and Conventions

First of all, it is important to recognize that there is no difference between a treaty and a convention. Together, they represent the most "concrete" form of international law that we have to

work with. They cover a broad range of topics ranging from environmental and trade agreements to human rights and relations among states. When you research for a Model UN committee, in terms of treaties, you should always have the following questions:

Are there any treaties governing the topic I am researching?

If so, am I bound by these treaties? Are my allies and enemies bound as well? Is it widely accepted?

What is the historical context of this treaty?

Once you have answered these questions, you should have a sense of what exactly you are dealing with.

Next, you should analyze the travaux préparatoires of the treaty. This is essentially the history of the document's drafting. This sheds light on whether your or others' interpretation of this treaty is correct. This may be difficult to research at times if you do not have access to academic journals, but the Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library has an excellent online collection.

Before you begin reading the treaty, however, you should be familiar with some of the terminology used in many of these documents. The United Nations Children's Fund provides a list of some of the most important terms—including ratification, signature, and accession—here. The worst thing that you can do is claim your opponent is violating international law when in fact they aren't!

Equipped with these tools, you should be ready to begin reading. Your first stop should always be the table of contents. Some treaties can be quite extensive—even hundreds of pages long! It is important to look for key words that pertain to exactly what you are looking for.

One invaluable component of a treaty will be its preambulatory articles. As delegates, we usually write these in

haste when drafting our own working papers, so we tend to glance over them when reading actual treaties. They can provide excellent sources for further research and provide much-needed historical context.

Definitions run the world, and many times this is really what you will be looking for when scanning a treaty. In a Model UN committee, one comma might prevent nuclear war! Be careful to read these definitions, usually located at the beginning of the treaty, but also look for them in articles that are relevant to the topic at hand.

Customary International Law

The concept of customary international law (CIL) is very complex but very rewarding if utilized effectively in committee. CIL is evaluated on the same level as treaties and conventions are, meaning it is equally important in terms of applicability. The existence of CIL is determined using the following formula:

State practice + opinio juris = CIL

State practice is the phenomenon of many (if not most) states abiding by a certain norm, or principle. It can be evidenced by verifiable state actions. This element of CIL is easier to understand and to demonstrate, usually because its presence is obvious.

Opinio juris is the belief of a state that a certain practice is legally binding across the international community. This can be evidenced by speeches made internationally or domestically by state officials or internal memoranda, among other forms of proof.

I like to think of this concept in the following way. I picture a square yard bordered by sidewalk with a sign that reads, "Keep off the grass." People generally follow this rule until one day someone walks diagonally across. They may or

may not get in trouble, but then someone else follows suit a few months later. This starts happening more and more, until finally a diagonal path is worn into the grass. After many years, the sign has faded away and almost everyone takes the diagonal route. Finally, the sidewalk border becomes overgrown with shrubbery. A binding custom is born.

Judicial Decisions

There are other sources of international law, but the last one that will be discussed here will be judicial decisions. Firstly, I want to distinguish the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The ICJ is an organ of the United Nations. It consists of a panel of fifteen elected judges, representing all major regions of the world. The ICJ rules on two kinds of cases: advisory opinions and contentious cases.

Advisory opinions address complex matters of international law and are non-binding in nature. However, they carry heavy legal weight and can be designated as binding should the UN choose to do so for a particular matter. Actors that are deemed relevant by the ICJ will present their arguments, but there is no one victorious party.

Contentious cases, on the other hand, settle disputes between states that have consented to the ICJ's jurisdiction. If this is the case, the ruling is binding. Consent is given in at least one of three ways: all state parties voluntarily submit to the ICJ's jurisdiction on a case-by-case basis, the states have consented to the ICJ's jurisdiction for certain matters through a dispute settlement clause in a particular treaty, or the states have issued an article 36(2) declaration under the Statute of the Court in which they agree to compulsory jurisdiction.

The ICC is a completely different body that deals with distinct legal issues. The ICC is an international criminal tribunal that processes individuals for four specific crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. States are only subject to the ICC's jurisdiction if they have signed the Rome Statute, which also details the specifics of the crimes listed above.

Lastly, you should be aware of arbitration and institutional courts as methods of dispute settlement. The Permanent Court of Arbitration is one example of an arbitral tribunal that is in use today. Arbitration differs from litigation in that all parties consent to the proceedings and work together to determine who presides over the case and what law is applied. The document that lists these agreements is called the compromis.

Many international organizations and treaties establish their own court systems to act as enforcing entities. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, for example, arose from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and handles cases relevant to the convention.

"I feel overwhelmed!"

Don't. A basic knowledge of what is discussed in article will set you light-years apart from your peers. Keep references nearby so you can look up anything you may be unsure about. Feel confident that the Best Delegate team can help you with any Model UN related questions, as well. Feel free to contact me at julianpr@bestdelegate.com if you have any concerns!



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