

Worksheet 1: The UNIS-UN youth Conference

Every year (since 1976), the United Nations International School (UNIS) organises a youth conference in New York. More than 500 students, between 16 and 18 years of age, from all over the world discuss controversial issues, and the UN General Assembly Hall is given over to them for two days in March. In past years the conference was regularly opened by the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. In recent years, some German schools have also been included in the invitation to the conference – each school can send six students only. The conference is completely and only organised by Year 11 of UNIS as their final school project. The theme of the 2016 conference (the 40th anniversary, cf. <http://www.unis-un.org/confs/2016/>; last accessed June 2016) is “Media’s Influence: Opinions, Activism, & Outcomes”.

Voc.: General Assembly Hall: Konferenzraum der UNO Generalversammlung

Task 1: Describe which aspects of the dress code surprise you and which you find reasonable. **Explain** how the code of conduct fits in with the special location of the youth conference. **Discuss** in plenary whether your school should apply.

Dress Code – As the attire worn by participating students should show respect for the special place of the conference and the integrity symbolized by the United Nations, the UNIS Student Organization Committee has recommended the following dress code for participating students:

None of the following should be worn on either day of the UNIS/UN conference: jeans, sneakers, hats, thongs, trainers or rain boots; baggy clothing; sweatpants or tracksuits; tight, revealing or see-through clothing; high heels or low cut dresses.

For **girls** it is appropriate to wear knee-length skirts or dresses or dress pants and to have their shoulders covered. Only when wearing dress shirts, opaque leggings are acceptable. For **boys** it is appropriate to wear a suit or dress pants accompanied by a jacket, dress shoes, and collared shirt with a tie.

Voc.: attire: Kleidung; integrity: Seriosität; opaque: blickdicht; collar: Hemdkragen

Code of conduct for the United Nations General Assembly Hall

Students are representing their schools and the UNIS community. They are therefore supposed to be acting accordingly and behave with courtesy and self-control:

- ▶ Students should remember that there will be many dignitaries present at the conference on both days, so they are to be respectful and thoughtful of all personnel and staff;
- ▶ Polite behavior is expected at all times;
- ▶ No food, drinks gum etc. must be brought into the General Assembly Hall at any time during the conference;
- ▶ Valuables must not be left unattended;
- ▶ Mobile phones are NOT permitted in the General Assembly Hall;
- ▶ The participants are not to touch, tamper with, or remove any microphone, earplugs, or material that have not been distributed by UNIS. They are not to touch any United Nations Equipment;
- ▶ Students must always sit in their assigned seat, and follow all instructions given by ushers and advisors.

These rules are to be observed without exception, contravening behavior will lead to intermediate exclusion from the conference.

Voc.: courtesy: Höflichkeit; dignitaries: Würdenträger; to tamper with: hantieren mit; usher: Platzanweiser

Worksheet 2: The issues

Task 2: Analyse the issues behind the 40th UN-UNIS conference on “Media”. In groups write a crib sheet* with key words and compare in plenary.

The topic

Media’s influence on opinions, politics, culture and social networks are the focus of the 2016 UNIS-UN conference in New York. Media related topics will be explored by students from 30 different countries from all over the world. They will investigate social media as a source of change and a platform for propaganda, social reform and activism. The focus is on the ways media shapes statistics and trends, informs and manipulates people and even can bring about political unrest or social improvements. During the last decade there has been a drastic change in the media landscape. Not only how it is consumed, but also how its growing influence effects the way people are thinking and acting. Social media enables businesses to advertise their products in an inexpensive and successful manner, allowing companies to promote their respective brands. Social media has also inspired mass movements in many countries and encouraged people to demonstrate for freedom and political change. Still, traditional forms of media (television, newspapers, magazines and books) have great influence on culture, politics and international relations. They can offer broad perspectives on many challenging issues. But the days are over, when leading newspapers or television shape opinion and influence how people think. More than 60 % of young people get their information and news from the Internet, and more than 50 % share personal messages and news with their friends on social platforms. Recent developments show how the impact of media can support different forms of activism, like protests and assaults against refugees, right wing movements and riots, even influence national referenda or presidential elections. The question is therefore whether the use of social media is beneficial or detrimental to our society.

Task 3: Outline the influence of YouTube on millions of people and the reasons for its growth. **Characterise** the purpose of the video clips and their effects. **Evaluate** your own experiences and why you think that YouTube has either a beneficial or negative impact on people’s opinions, including your own.

YouTube – a universal source

Every day, millions of people watch video clips on YouTube and some have been viewed more than a billion times. Amongst topics and presentations there seems to be a fierce competition as to their popularity and usefulness. YouTube has the potential to transform an idea into politic actions or social movements and hence act as a tool for global activism. It can also transform an idea into successful projects, which may result in major scientific advancements. In an everyday sense, people use YouTube to upload personal preferences for music and hobbies, learn about difficult matters or even use it as a tutorial for digital and other technological details.

One youtuber has over one million subscribers (“Make it count”). His videos and “vlogs” describe his voyages to countries all over the world and explore thought provoking concepts in a creative format. His clips are unique in that they demonstrate the value of routine experiences and force viewers to abandon old routines and evaluate their own lives from a new perspectives presented here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxfZkMm3wcg>).

While YouTube has been used as a means for corruption and deceiving people, it may also work as a catalyst for global interaction, discovery and support in times of conflict and crises. Finally, YouTube is able to provide information that would have taken years to uncover and reveal in the past.

Voc.: scientific advancement: wissenschaftlicher Fortschritt; unique: einzigartig; catalyst: Katalysator, Auslöser

Worksheet 3: Case studies pro and con

Task 4: In an inside-outside circle* **describe** the advantages and disadvantages of the impact of social media. Present and **discuss** your findings in plenary.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Case study pro: Social media as a tool for global activism

Communication has always depended on location and the society in which it occurs. With globalisation barriers seem to disappear and social media has taken over as a mainstream outlet for communication. Websites and applications enable users to create and share content or even participate in social networking. Journalists are enabled to avoid censorship and publish unfiltered news in that they can reach a public unhampered by political repression and cultural differences. In this way they can formulate well-supported opinions and activists can use social media to communicate opinions and their cause to a wide audience.

A case in point are campaigns like the PrayforParis and the #BringBackOurGirls which have gained global recognition in 2014 and 2015. In the 24 hours following the terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of 129 people in Paris (2015), more than 70 million people went to Instagram to share their support and prayers for the French victims, according to the social network. In Nigeria, the extremist group Boko Haram captured 200 girls from their local boarding school, and in spite of protests the government paid little attention. But social media played an instrumental role in forcing the national and international governments to react to the situation. Such campaigns demonstrate the social media's ability to raise awareness and promote change on local and international levels, enabling actors to initiate protest and change within their respective communities and providing the global community with immediate access to relevant information.

Voc.: unhampered: ungehindert; to raise awareness: Bewusstsein wecken

Case study con: Business manipulation

Social media is an interactive instrument and has developed into a promotional platform upon which companies can target various communities. It allows for direct communication between business and their customers. This is why companies use social media as a primary form of advertising using easy access to a wide audience. At the same time, the number of social media users is rapidly increasing – to 2.13 billion in 2016, one third of the world's population. There is a wide range of audiences, from teenagers to adults of all ages. LinkedIn, for example, is the most popular form of social media for professionals to network and search for jobs. In the retail market, on the other hand, networks like Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook are made use of. These platforms are designed for young customers but not limited to them.

Most social media users are not aware of the fact that every activity is shared with both their followers and companies that can be connected with its contents. If you order books from Amazon, there is a hint that other readers liked this or similar products. If you visit a retail platform, other products are advertised at the same time and it takes some effort to delete adverts. Certain methods are used to locate keywords that companies can then use to appeal to peoples' interests and needs. Social media also provides information regarding the latest trends: who is wearing what, who is eating what and who is using what. Thus, social media is a powerful networking and marketing tool.

Voc.: to target communities: Zielgruppen erreichen; range: Bandbreite; retail: Einzelhandel

Worksheet 4: Word search

Task 5: Do the word search to **check your understanding** of key words and concepts concerning the American debate and the motion involved.

Word Search

J	A	O	F	A	C	E	B	O	O	K	P	S	D	Z
K	I	Y	Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	I	L	E	R	S
O	D	U	N	N	H	Q	T	D	M	J	F	V	B	O
C	E	E	L	E	E	Y	M	O	S	R	B	T	L	C
O	M	A	Q	M	B	C	B	N	I	P	Q	K	O	I
N	K	D	K	E	I	A	K	E	L	Y	A	R	G	A
S	Y	N	I	S	A	C	Z	W	A	H	P	A	S	L
U	F	A	E	I	S	O	D	S	N	O	S	C	M	Y
M	S	G	L	T	H	V	U	P	R	D	Z	T	O	C
E	T	A	C	R	I	D	U	A	U	Y	Q	I	V	W
R	C	P	I	E	L	A	T	P	O	P	H	V	E	C
R	A	O	T	V	H	E	E	E	J	G	V	I	M	A
B	P	R	R	D	D	L	O	R	A	D	S	S	E	N
L	M	P	A	A	X	L	A	B	O	L	G	M	N	L
C	I	L	L	L	O	U	T	C	O	M	E	S	T	E

Key words and concepts:

ACTIVISM ADVERTISEMENT ADVOCACY ARTICLE BIAS BLOGS CONSUMER CORPORATE
FACEBOOK GLOBAL IMPACT JOURNALISM MEDIA MOVEMENT NEWSPAPER OUTCOMES
PROPAGANDA RELIABILITY SOCIAL

Worksheet 5: American debating

Task 6: Depending on your own opinion, **decide** which group you would like to join, either in favour of social media or sceptical of it; the **motion** of the 2016 youth conference being “**Is the use of social media beneficial or detrimental to society?**” Based on this motion, the panel discussion is the highlight of the UNIS-UN youth conference, following the rules of American debating.

The rules for American debating

On the panel are: two speakers for the affirmative rebuttal and two speakers for the negative rebuttal. The affirmative speakers propose the motion and second it, the negative side opposes it and tries to weaken points made. *Only the affirmative speaker can cross-examine.* In the second phase of the debate the rebuttal speakers appear: rebuttal 1 speaks against the motion, attacking the affirmative position and defending his own, negative one. Rebuttal 2 is for the motion and defends affirmative position. This can be repeated as long as new arguments are presented. Finally, rebuttal 2 sums up debate from his team’s point of view, selects winning issues and sells them to the audience. A concluding vote is taken by the chairman – the audience raises hands pro or against the motion.

Further roles on the panel are: the jury – up to three people; concentrate on delivery, deduct points if speeches are mainly read, if unfair personal comments are made; if speakers are talking off the point; the chairman – concentrates on but does not get involved in the debate; the audience – listen to arguments; vote on the motion at the end of the debate; time keeper – stops speakers if they exceeded their time limit and makes sure that the timing of turns (5 minutes max.) is observed.

Check your comprehension

Familiarise yourself with the different stages of the American debate and tick the correct box. Correct the wrong ones in complete sentences.

- 1) The first speaker introduces the motion true false
.....
- 2) All speakers are allowed to conduct cross-examinations. true false
.....
- 3) Cross-examinations take eight minutes each. true false
.....
- 4) Rebuttal speakers perform the same role as the others. true false
.....
- 5) The jury can deduct points. true false
.....
- 6) The chairman can actively participate in the debate true false
if arguments go wrong.
.....

Worksheet 6: Useful phrases

Task 7: In order to prepare for the event – as a role play in your class – you can **practise useful phrases** (see below “useful phrases ...”) in your group of either pro or con advocates. Also, **discuss** the strategy your group wants to apply either in the affirmative or negative of the motion; special attention is needed for the agents of rebuttal* and cross-examination.

Useful phrases for your debate

expressing your opinion	agreeing
as far as I'm concerned the way I see it in my opinion I'm convinced that it seems to me according to I expect I can't see any reason after all/above all	all right/that's right absolutely, I couldn't agree more yes, that's definitely the case that's how I feel about it, too that's true/possible exactly that's great good point
disagreeing	(rhetorical) questions
I beg to differ I doubt that very much that can't be right on the contrary I hear what you are saying, but I can't agree with you on that point that doesn't convince me at all that's not the problem/the question	I wonder if you could are you implying that excuse me, how are you saying may I request would you like to comment on are you seriously suggesting that
persuading people	rebuttal
you ought to I think we'd better it would be a good idea how can you persuade people to I'd like to propose a motion I'd advise you I'd like to make a suggestion it is generally accepted I assure you	have you ever considered is it right that in my opinion I see what you mean but let's now look at would you mind telling us what about the (next) point I would like to make is I'd like to stress the fact that to sum up I would like to say

Worksheet 7: The debate as a role play

Task 8: In **preparing role cards** for your debate (speakers, rebuttal speakers, jury, chairman, timekeeper) you may want to draw on the open dialogue. **Role play** the debate in plenary and stick to the roles described in the rules (see worksheet 5). After the audience has taken their vote, **evaluate** the debate.

Open dialogue

pros	cons
<p>The social media campaign in April of 2014 known as <i>#bringbackourgirls</i> stirred global outrage after 276 schoolgirls were kidnapped in a Nigerian village by the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram.</p> <p>This hashtag raised global awareness and was aimed at the Nigerian government, as they did not take systematic action against Boko Haram: it was mentioned through various social media platforms over one million times.</p> <p>The Arab Spring was a revolution of anti-governmental protest in the Middle East and North Africa demanding democracy. Arab Spring was mentioned throughout social media. During the Tehran protest, Americans could see the protests and support the protesters through posting with the hashtag <i>#arabspring</i> on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.</p> <p>Independent media is more accessible, allowing anyone with access to the Internet to share and interact within the online community.</p> <p>The information provided through independent media is not subject to censorship, which gives the public more freedom to openly discuss and share news. Independent media enables activists to reach and connect with a wide global audience in order to support social and political movements.</p>	<p>Propaganda operatives working under ISIS post thousands of videos on YouTube showing torture, murder, attacks and suicide missions.</p> <p>Cyberbullying occurs when a person is humiliated or harassed by another person through the Internet, digital technologies or mobile phones. In 2014, 25 % of teens explained that they experienced some form of repeated bullying via the Internet or cellphone.</p> <p>Of the young people who reported incidents against them, they stated the bullies used online threats. Cyberbullying can have extreme psychological impacts on a young person. This can hinder emotional development and academic progression.</p> <p>Stories and news covered by independent media tend to last very short periods of time, since most of what goes on in the online community is spontaneous.</p> <p>When a reader relies solely on popular social media for news, they will receive unverified facts that can be misunderstood.</p>