

G-18 BRIEFING II

KAHANE OXY-AT-THE-UN NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

KEEP ON, KEEPING ON



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NOW WHERE WERE WE...

The Kahane Oxy-at-the-UN Program cohort has been hard at work this past month balancing full-time internships with UN coursework. In addition, we are making connections between the class material and things we are experiencing in practice in our day-to-day work for a UN agency or Mission. Keep reading to hear about the incredible coursework taking a comprehensive, analytical, and, at times, critical approach to the UN system (and to the Member States in it) while examining both the system's successes and possible areas of improvement. Later in this issue, you will hear from the UNICEF and UK Mission interns, as well as see some spooky Halloween programming and cohort bonding events. Stay tuned!

Above: Facilities Management Service staff cleans the carpet in the General Assembly Hall in preparation for staff to return to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Courtesy of UN Photos/Manuel Elías

DWA 401: (PROF. ROTHSCHILD) HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UN: UNUSUAL ENTRY POINTS



This course sheds light on the workings of the UN system – and on the geo-political contexts that shape it – through using “unusual entry points” to analyze the UN and the human rights system. At its core, the course is about human rights, social justice, and a focus on what are sometimes called “controversial topics” within the UN (for instance, issues related to gender and sexuality, decriminalization of abortion, sex work, etc.). We use those issues as the lens to see the broader geo-political picture and examine the ways States seek to expand or contract what are considered valid human rights concerns. What are governments really trying to do when they take the positions on the issues that they do at the UN? What agendas do they really have? Often their actions have less to do with the issues themselves than their concerns about the human rights or UN systems, overall... Finally, the course also places emphasis on activism and social movement engagement and the ways these can influence the UN.



OUR INCREDIBLE CLASS SPEAKERS



DOMINIQUE DAY, CHAIR OF THE UN WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Day is highly respected in her field, and we’ve learned so much from her visit to our class. She spoke about the inner workings of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), particularly in regard to its discussion on racist policing, a first ever session of this kind sparked by global outrage following the murder of George Floyd. Day also shared the HRC resolution writing process and what kinds of political battles are fought over words on the page. She also discussed the ways legacies of colonialism and inequality persist in the very fabric of the international system and the Global North-South relations.



SUSANA FRIED, FORMER UNDP SENIOR GENDER ADVISOR: HIV, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Fried shared with us valuable insight into the Global Commission on the HIV & The Law drafting process and the importance of UN Commissions in general given their ability to bring the so-called controversial issues to the table and “elevate them to an international level.” Fried and Professor Rothschild helped us unpack the human rights issues related to HIV, sex work, and, particularly, human rights violations resulting from criminalization of sexual orientation, HIV-positive status, and HIV transmission. We also discussed pathways to decriminalization and its positive implications for human rights.



DWA 402: (PROF. FOMERAND) THE UNITED NATIONS & CONFLICT PREVENTION



What meaning did the drafters of the UN Charter assign to conflict prevention? How is conflict prevention understood and operationalized today? In this course, we look at discussions around the meaning and action (as well as in action) taken to prevent the spread and recurrence of internal and external conflicts around the globe. We track how the debate on this complex issue has shifted overtime from a focus on peacekeeping and traditional diplomacy to understanding root causes of conflict, including socio-economic inequity, climate change, and migration. In doing so we take a critical look at the UN's peace and security pillar and assess the need for further integration with the other two pillars: human rights and development.

OUR INCREDIBLE CLASS SPEAKERS



MARIAM JALABI, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN OPPOSITION COALITION TO THE UN & CO-FOUNDER OF THE SYRIAN WOMEN'S POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Jalabi gave background on the situation in Syria before sharing with us insider knowledge on the current mediation and negotiation mechanisms the Opposition Coalition and the Assad regime are taking part in. She also gave valuable insight as to how negotiations have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic - including challenges and advantages of the new, virtual negotiation table.



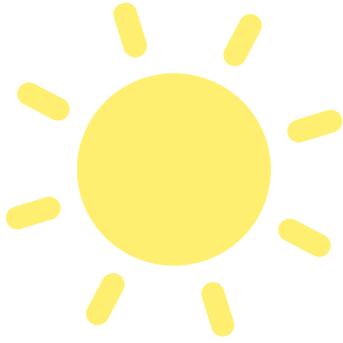
ELIZABETH EDELSTEIN, POLITICAL AFFAIRS OFFICER IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL (USG) FOR POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS

Edelstein intermixed sharing with us her field experience serving in South Sudan (UNMISS) with her work in her current position. We learned about some of the inter-political tensions that occur at the UN itself and how this carries over and plays out in various countries (for better and worse).



MARINA KUMSKOVA, ADVOCACY OFFICER AT THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT (GPPAC)

Focusing on capacity-building of local and regional peace efforts, Marina explained to us the vital role of those on the ground to redefine power within conflict spaces and carry out the Sustaining Peace Agenda. She also gave us insight into her previous work with the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) advocating for gender-sensitive analysis of conflict situations.



MEET THE UNICEF INTERNS



HANNAH TRAUTWEIN

This semester I've been working at UNICEF on the Communication for Development team. I've primarily been supporting a project that connects children in countries around the world with transnational, media-focused NGOs to engage them in participatory research about their experiences during COVID-19. It has been fascinating to partake in bottom-up work that challenges common perceptions of UN processes, and the coursework we've been engaging with has been complementary and compelling.

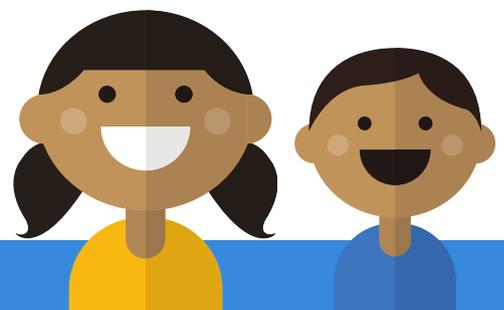
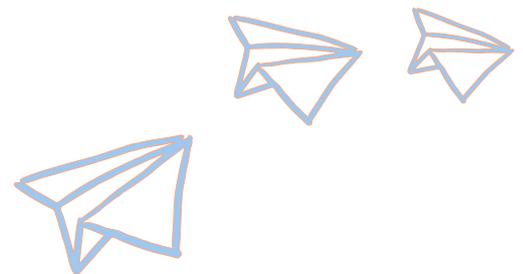


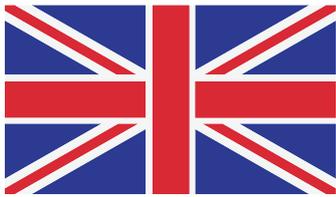
JOHNNY HAMMER

As an intern at UNICEF Communications for Development (C4D), I am supporting the Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families, and Communities (FPCC) Initiative, which works with religious leaders and faith communities worldwide to progress positive social and behavioral change. My various tasks include updating the website, writing articles and a financial proposal, crafting materials for training webinars and consultations, and attending weekly meetings. The FPCC team straddles five continents, so thank the gods for Zoom!

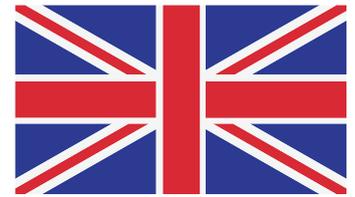


Hannah next to the UNICEF sign





MEET THE UK MISSION INTERNS



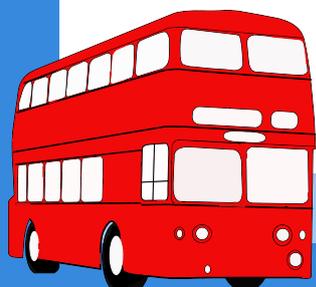
WILL CANAVAN - POLITICAL: STRATEGIC THREATS

Hi, I am Will! At UKMIS, I work in the Political Section on the Strategic Threats Team, which covers hot button issues globally. I've really enjoyed this experience, because the class discussions about UN structure and its capacity as a (theoretically apolitical) body on Conflict Prevention are paired with an eye into the inherently political work and basis upon which Member States engage with the UN. Furthermore, working in the Political Section necessarily reaches into so many different questions – of state sovereignty, of human rights abuses, of migration and destabilized areas, etc. Addressing these questions takes place through a variety of formats (though simpler when made virtual), and I've been lucky to see the actual process of UN resolution negotiating, of event planning, and of lobbying. Simply put, the internship has been eye opening for me, in a new understanding of the complex interests at stake in each minor or major international challenge and in the truly-a-product-of-consensus-result.



Wafa Abedin - HUMANITARIAN & PEACEBUILDING

At the UK Mission, I work for the Humanitarian, Peacebuilding, and Development section on the Sustainable Development and Economic team. Through my internship, I have had numerous opportunities to push forward a wide variety of timely social and economic development issues, including global access to Covid-19 vaccines, hand hygiene, universal access to sanitation, the rights of seafarers and fishers, financing for development, and UN development system reform. I've also had the opportunity to liaise with diplomats from across the world and collaborate with UN agencies, like UNICEF and the WHO. Working at the UN is an exquisite opportunity to experience diplomacy in action, and even become a diplomat yourself!





DYLAN JONES - MANAGEMENT REFORM & FINANCE



Hello! My name is Dylan Jones and I am interning with the Management Reform and Finance team at the United Kingdom Permanent Mission to the United Nations. On this team, I work in the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly, which handles budgeting and staffing processes. I work directly with UK delegates and assist with budget and data analysis, and advise on policy making decisions. Participating in the UN program has been fascinating as I am gaining life-changing internship experience that has taught me so much about multilateralism and the international community.



MAYA ANGULO - GA, HUMAN RIGHTS & COMMUNICATIONS

Hi! I work within the General Assembly, Human Rights, & Communications (GAHRC) team! I split my time between the GAHR side and comms side. In my communications work, it has been fascinating to see how digital communications, especially platforms like Twitter in the era of COVID-19, have become sites of diplomacy and multilateralism via videos, graphics, and Tweets (the founders of the UN never could have predicted this!). In the realm of human rights, I have supported the Mission's work in the Third Committee: Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues by coordinating the interventions made during the interactive dialogues with Special Procedures mandate holders and organizing the Mission's voting positions and statements. during the voting session. As the

session is concluded and I move on to other tasks, I will dearly miss the Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Katalin Bogyay of Hungary, asking us her catchphrase, "are you with us?"

are you
with
us?





LAST BUT NOT LEAST, COHORT BONDING EVENTS

One of the highlights of the Oxy-at-the-UN experience every year is those special moments you get to spend with the rest of the cohort. Although we have had to get a bit more creative this year about planning fun events that accommodate different time zones and remote internship schedules we have still been able to create memories together. Aside from socials, Among Us play parties, and movie nights, one of the biggest highlights was our Halloween bash! The G-18 (along with some of their pets) dressed up and got to partake in a costume contest. We had witches, vampires, Daphne from Scooby Doo, and even celebrity guest appearances like Maddie Ziegler in Sia's Chandelier video. Although the votes were close, Maddie Ziegler (aka Will Canavan from the UK Mission) took the victory! Look to the next newsletter to see what the G-18 has been up to as we finish out this semester.



Thanks for Reading! Don't forget to follow us on Instagram @OxyattheUN

Coming Soon:

Stay tuned for more student introductions and an exciting wrap up edition!

