

Houston Area Model United Nations Standard Committee

Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee



Chair | Sophia Pham
Topic A: Addressing the Needs of Adoptive
and Foster Care Systems
Houston Area Model United Nations 52
February 4 & 5, 2027

Chair Letter

Hello Delegates,

My name is Sophia, I'm a Sophomore majoring in Biology and minoring in Health at the University of Houston this year!

I joined Model UN during my sophomore year of high school and it instantly became a big part of my life. Model UN has pushed me out of my bubble, shaping me into someone who is more confident and outgoing, and while that sounds typical, I'm sure many of you can relate. After my first year, MUN became the club that I looked most forward to as the school year would creep around again. I've been blessed to have had the chance to serve as a Chair at one of the biggest Model UN conferences in the state two years in a row now.

I'm excited to be Chair-ing for SOCHUM at the upcoming conference alongside my Vice Chair, and more importantly, being able to meet you all! We're going to be covering some exciting topics and I can only hope that you'll be as thrilled as I am to talk about these topics.

I expect everyone to work hard and to do more than just the bare minimum. If you're looking to be able to fully participate in our debates, you'll feel as though it's a whole lot easier when you know your stuff. Do the research, spend the time to understand the concepts, and ask questions! If there is something you truly want to know but you can't find it anywhere, shoot me an email and I'll respond to the best of my ability.

Make sure to have fun and hopefully you love these topics like I do. See you all in February!

Lots of Wishes & Luck,

Sophia Pham

Sophia Pham

Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee

HAMUN 52

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How We Run Things

To prepare all delegates for how Michael and I run our committee, I've provided information about certain things that we do or tolerate that might differ from what you've learned or experienced in other committees in the past. Below, are also the broad ways that we grade papers/rank delegates so you can understand what we look for in best delegate(s).

1. Opening and beginning debate is as usual. It is discouraged to motion for unmoderated caucuses until we have done, at the very least, speaker's list and 1-2 moderated caucuses.
2. Don't curse out/make personal attacks at other delegates. Those will result in a report to the OSG and/or your school's sponsor. We don't tolerate disrespect amongst delegates.
3. There is no tolerance for delegates who decide to come back 10-20min late, it's disrespectful to the other delegates and to us as Chairs. If your school is late or there are other circumstances, let us know in advance. This also includes disappearing for no reason in the middle of session without informing us.
4. Positions papers are all scanned for AI use before we even read them; if they fail the initial scan, we won't read them at all, period.
5. Our methods to find the best delegate include looking out for those who put in the effort to help draft resolutions, include others, and promote the wellbeing of the committee itself. It is not about talking a lot or making your face known to us, but rather your efforts towards the topic and debate as a whole. We give feedback at the end of Day 1 for a short period of time, so feel free to seek us out post-session for notes on how you performed.



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SOCHUM's History

The Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian committee (SOCHUM), founded in 1945, was created in order to address global human rights violations, social inequities, and various cultural disputes. This committee, being the third body out of the main six, has helped to create unity amongst nations in promoting fundamental freedoms and drafting declarations. One of the major achievements that it has accomplished is the signing of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The committee commonly deals with issues facing gender equality, indigenous rights, and human trafficking. SOCHUM has also dealt plentifully with the protection of children, a particular point of focus in one of the topics that we will be discussing. While this committee has no official motto to stand by, it constantly advocates for the same matters. SOCHUM is built around some of the most fundamental standings that we as a race hold onto, and it continues to guide the globe with its instructions and settings on many subjects such as worldly equality and human rights.





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Background Information

Adoptive and foster care systems have existed for many decades now, and are active all around the world. While these systems are providing homes for children of all ages, the security of said networks and organizations needs to be further delved into. The diligence and care put into checking up on the children after their placement needs to be assessed deeper. Or the consideration of placing a child of certain needs into the correct homes to ensure they can grow up with their particular needs properly met. Many children who have found new families due to these organizations have faced abuse and unfair, life-altering treatment due to the ones who have let them slip through the cracks.

With this, delegates are to debate on various procedures to improve adoptive and foster care systems. The areas on which improvement is focused on is solely up to the delegates, but debate should attempt to cover, and is not limited to, subtopics such as enhanced background checks, check-ins post placement, data-driven parent to child arrangements, etc. Connect the focus of this topic to the general motives of SOCHUM and identify how this topic pushes for all of what SOCHUM is driven to do.

TOPIC HISTORY

The concept of foster care and adoptive systems have been around for quite some time. While that is so, global mandated regulations hadn't begun until 1993 and the first notable act by the UN towards initiation of those regulations begun in 1989 (more information under "UN Past Actions"). Internationally speaking, these systems are relatively new, but take into consideration how individual countries may have different timelines for which they have initiated these systems within their nation. Around the globe, these differences in laws, resources, and varying access to care, have created challenges that require international cooperation. Past actions on adoption has played a crucial part in establishing a greater international focus on safety and well-being of children in foster and adoptive systems. Unfortunately, it is not quite enough to create a firm foundation for unity amongst the many nations that still struggle against this issue due to the lack of resources to better the foundational hands that reach the children and the children themselves.

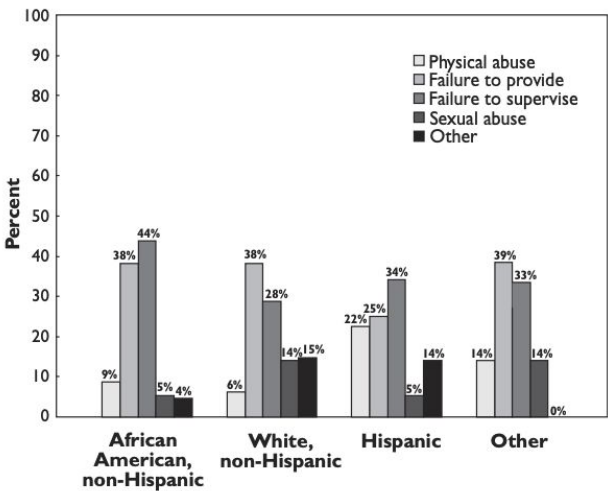
CASE EXAMPLES & FACTS

7 out of 1000 children in foster care systems alone were confirmed to have faced maltreatment while living within their temporary homes (data from 2023-2024).

- 18% are physically abused
- 9% are sexually abused
- 7% are emotionally abused
- 2% have been medically neglected

Account for the differences in age and how that relates to individual treatment.

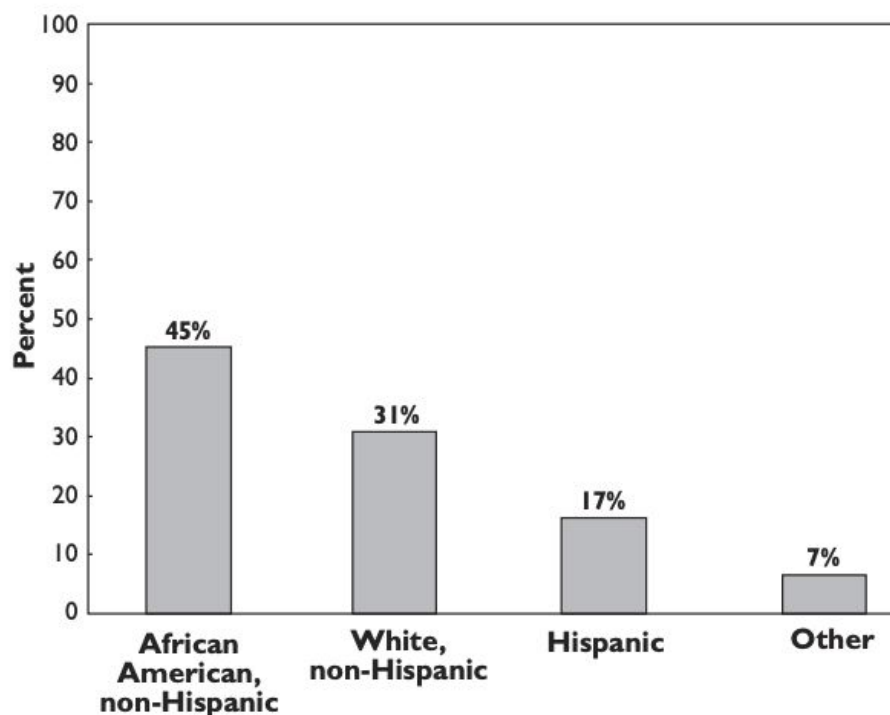
Figure 4. Most serious type of maltreatment by race/ethnicity.



Differences in race and background does not make a large difference in abuse, but the main type of abuse faced varies from population to population. For instance, children of African American descent are more likely to be left unsupervised by foster parents while those who are of European origin are most likely to be unprovided/improperly provided for.

CASE EXAMPLES & FACTS CONTINUED...

Figure 2. Race and ethnicity of children in foster care.



The graph listed to the left shows the percentage of children in foster care who come from specific, racial origin. Kids of biologically colored parents make up two-thirds of the group that is in foster care. Identify the factors which may result in that outcome and understand how it may be fixed through properly developed solutions.

Understanding the Function of Orphanages: Orphanages are known as the standard location where “unwanted” or unhoused children are brought to. Though there is a movement to end the policy of orphanages worldwide, the number of actual orphans continue to grow by the day. Adopting helps to decrease those numbers and foster care allows those children to have a little normalcy brought back into their lives.

Globally: 140 million orphans → 80% of which have at least one living parent

Evidence shows that children have strong opinions on where they would like to be placed, and the types of families in which they would like to be a part of. Most, especially younger, non-resistant kids, are suppressed of their opinions, leading to unsatisfactory placements.

How to Use (For Delegates): collect case examples and facts to help deliberate about why factors such as security and keeping status on children post-placement is important. From the given and found data, show that there are both underlying and surface issues that are solvable through thoughtful action.

UN PAST ACTIONS

1. November 1989
The General Assembly planned for and adopted this resolution to enforce the idea that children are also humans that have their own rights. Establishes that children are independent as a person from their parents, though legally cared for until the age of 18, and that every child has the right to live. Adoption and foster rights of the child are discussed starting at Article 20, going over the circumstances of adoption/fostering and how those operations perform.

Read more: [Convention on the Rights of the Child - United Nations Human Rights](#)

2. September 2022
Various United Nations committees and subgroups came together to work on a joint statement clarifying the issues of illegal international adoption. The statement indicates that illegal adoptions are a violation of human rights, and are subject to the assumption that it is attached to crimes such as child abduction, sale, or genocide. Prevention methods included exhausting all inner-country options before allowing the child to be adopted internationally, and allowing the child to express their opinions on being adopted out of their home country.

Read more: [UN Experts - Illegal Intercountry Adoption \(Includes Full Statement Linked at the End\)](#)

3. December 2019
All member states of the General Assembly came to an agreement that orphanages should be put to an end worldwide. Actions have been taken to close these facilities, reason being that the majority of orphans have at least one living family member who could take them in. It is also believed that orphanages operate without care for the children and that proper placement into temporary homes would be a better outcome for them. Current efforts are not as successful as they were expected to be and rates of closure decrease due to lack of enforcement.

Read more: [Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly - 74th Session](#)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1). Surface Level: What are specific areas of the adoptive and foster care systems that need adjustment and focus? Take into consideration the amount of time that it may take to resolve the issue before determining what should be targeted first out of the long list of material that needs attention.
- 2). How can the systems become more protected across nations, helping to prevent children from unfitting families or placements? The lack of proper structural foundations to connect systems from country to country leave many children vulnerable to long-term instability within their placements. How can caseworkers from different nation states work to communicate and help one another ensure the safety of children who have been adopted internationally.
- 3). Children of color and those in minority populations are less likely to be adopted or taken in by foster parents due to their racial status/ethnicity. What kinds of policies can be implemented to help prevent that racial disparity from increasing? The same goes for gender and age—couples prefer to adopt girls and younger children compared to boys or teens. Consider if there should be restrictions and laws requiring couples to consider children of all ages, genders, and race.
- 4). There are severe shortages in funding to keep up these systems moving as they should be. What are cuts that should be made, if any, to ease stress due to lack of funding, and what are ways to boost funding outside of borrowing money from the World Bank.
- 5). Under the circumstance where only one issue can have a solution, what is, arguably, more important for the nations to prioritize? The rights of the child to a proper home or ensuring that children are placed into a home that is right for them? Deliberate on if finding any home for them is inherently more crucial than finding the *right* home for them.



Topic A References

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