



Background Guide

World Health
Organization

1 | Improving global access to sex education to
prevent teenage pregnancy

SDG: 3. Good Health and Well-being, 4. Quality Education, 17. Partnerships to achieve the
Goal

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Committee Introduction	3
Agenda Introduction	4
Letter from the Chairs	5
Key Terms	6
Historical Background	7
Current State of Affairs	9
Stances of Parties	10
Possible Solutions	16
Questions to Consider	17
Bibliography	18

Committee Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the preeminent international public health agency under the United Nations. Since its establishment in 1948, the WHO has been at the forefront of global efforts to combat health crises and enhance healthcare systems around the globe. With 194 member states, the WHO aims to promote global public health, especially in vulnerable areas such as areas of conflict or LEDCs with poor health-related infrastructures.

In the United Nations, the WHO committee plays a crucial role in simulating the complex and dynamic nature of global health governance. Member states collaborate to address pressing health challenges that transcend national borders. The significance of WHO's existence and constant effort towards global health has been proven recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, WHO contributed to easing the crisis by working with governments and organizations to monitor and control the spread of the disease consistently.

The work of the WHO is guided by its General Programme of Work, which outlines the strategic priorities for the organization over a set period. Currently, the WHO's focus includes universal health coverage, health emergencies, and promoting healthier populations. These priorities are driven by the overarching goal of ensuring that a billion more people benefit from universal health coverage, a billion more are better protected from health emergencies, and a billion more enjoy better health and well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been able to achieve significant milestones with the assistance of its partners and donors, resulting in not only momentous occurrences but also the betterment of communities. The clear and secure guidelines that WHO sets out for nations prevent possible outbreaks and prepare response systems.

While also keeping in mind the long-term goals such as ultimately improving global health and preparing for possible outbreaks of new diseases, WHO always keeps an eye on any urgent health crises that bring harm to the global society. With the presence of WHO in the United Nations, member states' public health and safety from disease epidemics can be ensured.

Agenda Introduction

The issue of teenage pregnancies has been a long-standing, widespread, and widely known issue. Due to the lack of sexual education, particularly in underdeveloped regions of the world, the issue has grown to considerable proportions. Even in developed nations, teenage pregnancy continues to be a problem. On average in America, 1 in 74 teenagers aged 15~18 experienced teenage pregnancy. However, in African regions wherein education is less developed, approximately 1 in 5 females experienced pregnancy before the age of 19. As standards for education regarding sex have not improved significantly as well as insufficient contraceptive measures, there has been no real change in teenage pregnancy rates in many regions of the world. Adding on to this, no significantly impactful action has been taken on the international stage, by the United Nations or otherwise.

The significance of this issue is heightened due to the fact that many teenagers who experience teenage pregnancies often experience negative stigmatization by society. Due to the many health risks associated with teenage pregnancies, they are extremely dangerous, often resulting in death or serious injury. Furthermore, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) are extremely likely, as well as harmful diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Moreover, in nations wherein birth rates are incredibly high, teenage pregnancies are considerably hurting nations. The lack of education regarding teenage pregnancy leads to a worsening situation, making a solution crucial in the upcoming years. In Sub-Saharan African countries wherein standard education is limited, sexual education is nonexistent.

While perhaps most prevalent in underdeveloped regions of the world, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, teenage pregnancy is an issue that affects the entire world. Even in developed regions of the world, teenage pregnancy continues to be a huge issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States reported approximately 174 births per 1,000 females aged 15~19 just in the year 2019, and this trend continues to be a problem in the present.

It is crucial that the international community stands united in finding a successful and mutually beneficial solution to the problem of teenage pregnancies.

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

We wholeheartedly welcome you to the WHO committee!

Greetings, this is JunYoung Kim, and I am greatly honored to be serving as your Head Chair. I am currently a junior at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. This is the 4th year of my MUN journey and I have explored different roles of the conference as a delegate, chair, and secretariat. Delegates, please do not be too concerned about being perfect during the conference. I can confidently say that everything you will experience here will eventually come back as good memories to you later. I hope all delegates could gain a unique and memorable experience at this conference. See you!

Welcome to the WHO committee of GECMUN XI, delegates. I am Harry Shin, and I am thrilled to be meeting you all as the Deputy Chair of this committee. I am a junior at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju just like the rest of my fellow chairs, and this is the 4th year of my MUN career after my first conference, JejuMUN VIII. What I can confidently say from experiencing MUN as a delegate, chair, and secretariat is that the most important thing you must keep in mind at a conference is to relax and have fun. GECMUN XI, like most MUN conferences in Jeju, is a two-day conference. You will probably get exhausted near the end of the conference if you stay stiff throughout the entire conference. It is very important that while trying your best to stand out and win an award, you make new friends, enjoy, and rock the two days of the conference. If you keep that in mind, you will realize that MUN is FUN.

Greeting delegates, my name is Noah King, and I am greatly honoured to be serving as your Associate Chair for the WHO Committee of GECMUN XI. I am currently a freshman at St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. I started my MUN journey nearly 4 years ago when I was in 6th Grade, and this will be my first time both attending and serving as a chair for GECMUN. As the conference date approaches, I urge all delegates to familiarize themselves with the Rules of Procedure, this background guide, your nation's stance, as well as your own individual research. Finally, you are encouraged to reach out to any and all of the chairs with any inquiries regarding this background guide, or any conference materials; our emails can be found below.

Best regards,

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Key Terms

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is the national public health agency of the United States. It is a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services, and is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The CDC is tasked with many jobs, particularly concerning preventing the outbreak of diseases. They are also tasked with dealing with certain sexually transmitted diseases.

Conception

The process of becoming pregnant involving fertilization or implantation or both.

Contraception

Methods or devices used to prevent pregnancy. These include birth control pills, condoms, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and etc.

Maternal Safety

Well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Effective sex education can contribute to maternal safety by preventing unintended teenage pregnancies, thereby reducing risks associated with early childbearing.

Postpartum

Occurring in or being the period following childbirth.

Sexual Education

Education regarding sexual safety and activities.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's)

Diseases or illnesses contracted by sexual activities. Examples include HIV/AIDS, among many others. STD's can be incredibly dangerous, in some circumstances leading to death.

Teenage Pregnancy

People from the age of 13~19 becoming pregnant. Teenage pregnancy continues to be a considerable issue around the world, particularly in underdeveloped nations, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Historical Background

1948 December 10th: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted

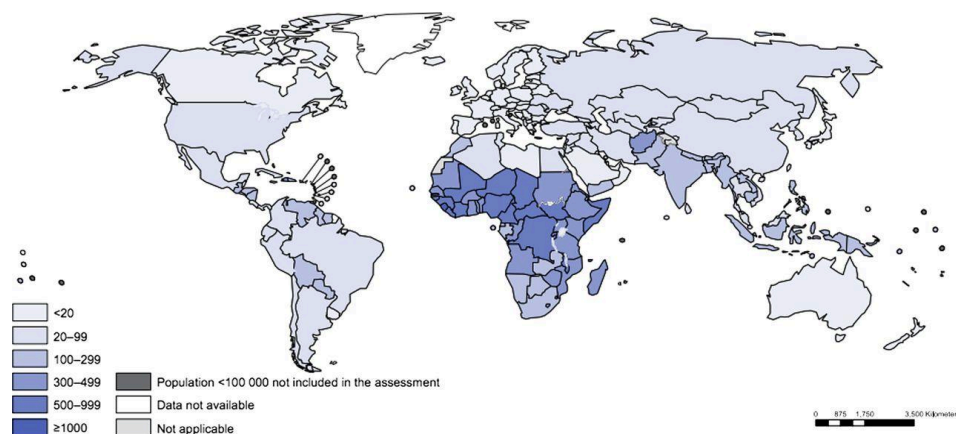
The UDHR, adopted by the United Nations, declared education a fundamental human right. Article 26 emphasizes everyone has the right to education and education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality. This foundational article became the background for future educational initiatives, including sex education.

1994 September 5th-13th: [Population and Development Programme of Action](#) was adopted

In chapter 7 'Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health' subchapter 'Adolescents', it acknowledges that adolescents have been largely ignored from the existing reproductive health services and urges to reform the sex education system that can help adolescents to understand their sexuality and protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and sexually-transmitted diseases. The programme calls upon communities to protect and promote the rights of adolescents to gain access to education and care to greatly reduce the number of adolescents pregnancies. And for governments, in collaboration with NGOs, it requested them to establish appropriate education programmes for those who need it.

2000 September 6th-8th: Millennium Summit and Millenium Development Goals(MDGs) was adopted

The Millennium Summit led to the establishment of MDGs, a set of eight goals to be achieved by 2015. Goal 5 'Improve Maternal Health' includes two primary targets 5A and 5B to improve maternal health and reduce maternal mortality rates. Target 5A aimed for a 75% reduction in the global maternal mortality ratio, and 5B aimed for achievement of universal access to reproductive health. Goal 5 achieved universal success in reproductive health. Reducing maternal mortality since 1990 by 45% globally until 2015. The new target has now been set to MMR of <70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.



Map with countries according to their maternal mortality ratio (MMR, death per 100 000 live births)

2006: UNESCO launched the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education

International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education is a framework targeted to help countries to develop sexuality education (CSE) programs. The guidance includes the importance of providing age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and scientifically accurate information regarding reproduction, sexuality, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) preventions. This guidebook gave a great influence on sex education in schools and communities around the world.

2021 December 1st: WHO and UNFPA launched [Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents \(AA-HA!\)](#)

The AA-HA! Guidance is designed to improve adolescent health and well-being. The guidance highlights that adolescents may face sexual and reproductive challenges especially in fragile settings. It claims that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) should be the part of school curriculums and community programs to provide adolescents with the knowledge regarding sexual health. Furthermore, it also implies that the education, health, and social service sectors have to cooperate to ensure that teenagers have access to quality reproductive health services.

Current State of Affairs

World's youth comes from the urgent and growing burden of adolescent pregnancies. Each year, 21 million girls aged between 15 and 19 years in undeveloped and developing countries are estimated to become pregnant and about 12 million of them give birth. For millions of girls, adolescent pregnancy may deprive their long-term economic advancement through education and employment opportunities. According to the United Nations Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency (UNFPA), it reports:

- Less than one in four sexually active adolescents use a modern contraception method.
- Less than 35% of youth have received sexual and reproductive education in their primary and secondary education.
- More than half adolescent girls report at least one urgent reproductive problem accessing health care.

Long-term and far-reaching economic losses occur due to female students dropping out of school as they face pregnancy. Humanitarian organization Plan International estimates developing countries can boost GDP 10% on average by ensuring all of their female students to finish their secondary education. Furthermore, the benefits of investing in reproductive healthcare access and education far outweigh its costs. Every additional \$1 invested in contraceptive services would save about \$1.95 medical care needed for pregnant adolescents. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) believes that by fully providing access to contraception, undeveloped and developing countries could nearly half the \$2.8 billion they spend annually on abortion and post-abortion care to \$1.5 billion.

Changes are being made to improve sexual and reproductive health for adolescent girls. In 2022, IPPF East & South East Asia & Oceania (ESEAOR) and its partners delivered 19.3 million of sexual and reproductive health services and education, including access to contraception. In addition, Organon's Her Promise Access Initiative is already accelerating towards its goal of preventing 120 million unintended pregnancies by 2030 by providing 100 million girls and women with affordable access to contraception.

Stances of Parties

Angola

Angola remains a nation wherein teenage pregnancy continues to be an issue of considerable proportions. According to the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) over 30% of teenage girls aged 15~19 are pregnant, a figure considerably higher than the global average. Similarly to other Central and Sub-Saharan African nations, Angola's high rates of poverty cause development in sexual education to stagnate. Angola is supportive of a solution in recruiting funding to aid in the development of their internal issues regarding sexual education.

Brunei

Currently ranked around 120th in the world in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and similar measures of economy, historically Brunei has struggled to finance projects regarding and attempting to resolve issues such as teenage pregnancy. Despite this, Brunei Darussalam has recently had moderate success in their teenage pregnancy issue, decreasing their rate of teenage pregnancy by around 5 percent. Taking this into consideration, Brunei should strive to continue their recent efforts and strive to further sexual education programs within their borders.

Cambodia

Cambodia continues to struggle with teenage pregnancy. As a Lesser-Economically Developed Country (LEDC), Cambodia's infrastructural issues have caused them to struggle in preventing teenage pregnancies in the region. Cambodia should strive to find a solution that adequately addresses the need for systems to prevent teenage pregnancies within their own borders. However, Cambodia's lack of those sufficiently qualified and willing to educate on such matters must be considered.

Central African Republic

Due to long-standing cultural and societal norms and standards, the Central African Republic continues to struggle to improve their rate of teenage pregnancy which remains one of the highest in the world. The CAF currently does not have the infrastructure, existing educational system, or funds to support a project dedicated to the improvement of educational standards. Therefore, the CAF should consider a solution wherein funding is delivered from More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC's).

China

Despite China's current status as one of the world's most powerful and economically stable nations, China continues to have struggles with furthering education regarding sex and

teenage pregnancies. Previously, China famously implemented the One-Child Policy limiting families to 1 child per person to attempt to address the population crisis. Despite backlash both internally within the nation, and externally from international organizations, China's One-Child Policy was somewhat successful, particularly in limiting teenage pregnancy. China should strive to develop more internationally acceptable programs to replicate their past success in limiting teenage pregnancies.

Equatorial Guinea

As Equatorial Guinea's education system has not seen any significant improvements, the nation continues to struggle to successfully implement sexual education programs. Equatorial Guinea should focus on the reconstruction of their educational program before making significant steps towards the improvement of sexual education programs. Equatorial Guinea should also consider receiving financial aid from MEDC's in attempts to lower their teenage pregnancy rates.

Finland

Finland remains one of the most progressive and developed nations in the world. The Republic of Finland is ranked among the world's best in terms of gender equality, life enjoyability, and particularly teenage pregnancy rates. Finland's impressive programs dedicated to the bettering of sexual education have been widely successful. At this time, Finland should consider how the nation can utilize their successful program and their moderate wealth to aid in the development of lesser economically developed nations.

France

France continues to be one of the world's pioneers in issues regarding education, particularly sexual education. The French Republic has had continued success in lowering their rate of teenage pregnancies. Programs instituted in rural regions of France have had considerable impact, and may be used as inspiration in nation's wherein the issue remains. As one of the world's most economically stable nations, France should consider what they, and their more economically developed allies can do to aid in the development of education programs in and around lesser developed regions of the world.

Iceland

Iceland boasts one of the lowest teenage pregnancy rates in the world, at only 3.4 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 yearly. Its comprehensive sex education program, which begins in primary school, is credited with this success. Iceland also supports global initiatives, contributing to policies that integrate sex education into sustainable development agendas. Iceland intends to enhance digital resources for global sex education access and provide funding for initiatives in low-income countries. It plans to support international organizations

advocating for universal comprehensive sexuality education as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Indonesia

The Republic of Indonesia continues to struggle with the issue of teenage pregnancy due to a lack of sexual education, particularly in the more rural or underdeveloped regions of the nation. Indonesia should take into consideration their issues of misinformation and poor education when looking for an overall solution to the issue at hand.

Liberia

As a less economically developed nation, Liberia has had trouble building a sufficient education program within their borders, similarly to many African nations. Liberia continues to struggle to institute sexual education programs within rural regions of the nation, leading to no significant decrease in teenage pregnancy rates. Liberia should strive to find a cost-efficient solution solving problems within their own borders and which aids other West-African nations.

Malawi

As Malawi has seen no considerable increase in their economic situation, the nation remains one of the poorest in the world. As Malawi's teenage pregnancy rate sits at around 29% nationwide, Malawi's teenage population face pregnancy at a rate much higher than the populations of surrounding nations. As Malawi's government has acknowledged the issue of teenage pregnancy, it is now important for the nation to take further steps to contribute to stabilizing the situation within their own borders, as well as East African nations. Malawi currently is in dire need of economic aid from developed nations.

Mali

The Republic of Mali is in a similar situation to many North Africa nations; currently the nation suffers from a lack of resources required to build a successful education system. For a sufficient sexual education system to be instituted in Mali, it is important for there to be a significant improvement in the infrastructure in Mali. With this in mind, Mali should strive to find a solution rebuilding domestic education systems.

Mexico

Mexico reports 62 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 yearly, one of the highest rates in Latin America. Despite national strategies like the *National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy*, challenges remain in rural areas where education and resources are limited. Mexico advocates for global cooperation to expand access to education and healthcare to tackle teenage pregnancy. Mexico plans to strengthen ENAPEA by addressing

regional disparities, particularly in rural areas where teenage pregnancy remains high. The government also intends to invest in digital platforms for sex education and partner with international organizations to share expertise and resources. A focus on improving access to healthcare and expanding community outreach programs is central to future strategies.

Mozambique

The Republic of Mozambique continues to struggle from a lack of educational standards within the nation. As sexual education is almost entirely nonexistent in Mozambique, it is important for Mozambique to first address their internal issues regarding education as a whole. Furthermore, it is important to consider the impacts of culture and historical norms on teenage pregnancies and marriages.

Myanmar

Myanmar's education system has only worsened following the Military Coup of 2021, leading to the escalation of the issue of teenage pregnancies, particularly in rural regions of the nation. Due to armed conflicts throughout regions of Myanmar, education, particularly higher education has suffered considerably. Myanmar should consider the importance of education programs, particularly those for younger students and how this, and similar solutions can benefit the nation.

Niger

Niger has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates globally, with 51% of girls aged 15–19 having at least one child or being pregnant. Early marriage is prevalent, with 76% of girls married before the age of 18. Efforts to address these issues include programs by NGOs and international organizations like UNFPA, focusing on family planning and keeping girls in school. Niger aims to increase access to education for girls, enhance family planning services, and integrate community-based awareness campaigns. The government plans to strengthen collaborations with NGOs to scale up sex education programs tailored to cultural sensitivities.

Norway

Norway is one of the most developed and wealthy nations in the world. Norway's teenage pregnancy rate currently stands at around 0.0028%, among the lowest in the world. As Norway has instituted sufficient sexual education and teenage pregnancy education programs within their nation, Norway should consider a solution bolstering the international recognition of the issue as well as methods Norway (and similarly developed countries) can do to aid nations who have not had the same success as Norway.

Philippines

The Philippines has faced challenges in implementing comprehensive sex education due to cultural and religious sensitivities. However, the passage of the Reproductive Health Law in 2012 marked a shift toward improving access to family planning and sex education. While progress is gradual, the Philippines recognizes the importance of addressing teenage pregnancy and participates in global forums to support improved sex education. The government is working to improve the enforcement of the Reproductive Health Law, particularly in underserved areas. Plans include expanding training for teachers on comprehensive sex education and scaling up access to reproductive health services in rural communities. The Philippines also aims to collaborate with regional partners to address teenage pregnancy through ASEAN initiatives.

Poland

Poland has a relatively low teenage birth rate of 8.1 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 yearly, but critics argue that this masks the lack of access to comprehensive sex education. Instead, programs emphasize abstinence and debates around expanding education remain contentious. The country aligns cautiously with international sex education agendas, often prioritizing parental rights. There is no clear government commitment to expanding sex education. However, NGOs and youth groups are lobbying for reforms to include comprehensive sex education in schools. Poland's involvement in EU discussions on health and education suggests potential for incremental changes in line with European standards.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has had moderate success in addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy. Despite this, in rural, less developed regions of the Russian Federation, sexual education remains extremely limited. The Russian Federation should consider the implementation of sexual education programs throughout the nation so as to create a nation wherein all citizens are sufficiently educated on the issue. While teenage pregnancy is not as pressing in the Russian Federation as other nations, it is still crucial for Russia to completely eradicate the issue.

Slovakia

Similarly to many Central European nations, the Slovak Republic has had success to some degree in spreading sexual education and limiting teenage pregnancy. Due to this, Slovakia should strive to find a solution wherein Slovakia can aid lesser developed nations strive to find solutions to this issue. Despite Slovakia's past success on the issue, it is still important for Slovakia not to overlook the pertinence of the issue.

South Korea

In South Korea, teenage pregnancy is not a significant issue, instead the opposite can be considered true. In the ROK the birth rate continues to plummet considerably. Taking this into consideration, it is still important for the ROK to address the international significance of this issue, particularly in underdeveloped regions of the world. As the ROK is a nation with relative economic stability, the ROK is open to international cooperation to solve the multifaceted issue.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has faced considerable improvements in their sexual education policies and education systems. As the UK's situation in regards to sexual education has been sufficiently addressed, it is now important for the UK to consider the utmost relevance of this issue in LEDC's. The United Kingdom is open to working with LEDC's to replicate the success the UK has had within their borders to sufficiently address the issue on a global level.

United States of America

Despite the United State's reputation as one of the world's wealthiest and most economically developed nations, the USA's educational programs, particularly those related to sexual education have not seen any considerable improvement in the last few decades. It is therefore imperative that the United States of America addresses the issues in their education system. The USA's teenage pregnancy rate is considerably higher than the rates of other similarly developed nations. The USA must consider their internal issues before turning to the issue of teen pregnancy on the global stage.

Yemen

Teenage pregnancy is particularly detrimental in Yemen due to the continued armed conflict in the region. Due to the millions of citizens who suffer yearly in addition to the millions who are, and will continue to be displaced, teenage pregnancy is a significant issue within the nation. It is important for Yemen to address the internal conflict within the nation before moving on to issues such as teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, Yemen should strive to rebuild their educational system.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's teenage pregnancy rate currently sits at around 24%. Furthermore, due to the extreme economic instability within the nation, the education system in Zimbabwe is currently very poor. Zimbabwe should strive to find a solution utilizing collaboration with more economically developed nations.

Possible Solutions

Developing Educational Systems Within Nations

The development of educational systems within nations is essential for countries wherein standards of education are not yet adopted nationwide. Taking into consideration the sizable quantity of counties that continue to struggle due to economic strain, this solution should be considered for certain nations. Despite this, this solution requires a considerable amount of dedication from nations, specifically in terms of time. Therefore, it is important for nations wishing to implement this situation to consider what short term solutions may be implemented in order to provide a foundation for which this solution may be built.

Introducing Sexual Education systems within existing education systems

For nations wherein education systems are fully developed, this solution would be the most beneficial. Introducing sexual education systems and programs into nations would be the most effective and sufficient solutions. Nation's should consider the short term and long term effects this solution may have. Furthermore, nations must consider the importance of the proper delivery of education and how to sustain this practice.

Questions to Consider

1. What solutions can be paired with the development of educational standards so as to produce a more cohesive solution?
2. Is devising methods to prevent mass forms of teenage pregnancies considerably beneficial for nations striving to lower their national birth rates?
 - a. For nations with low birth rates would furthering programs to limit teenage pregnancies have any detrimental effects?
3. What can nations with low economic stability and poor infrastructure do to improve their educational systems?
 - a. What short term solutions can be explored in the contemporary context for these nations?
4. How must nations wherein teenage pregnancy is not a serious issue strive to address the international crisis outside their nation?
 - a. How specifically can member nations of the World Health Organization incorporate past actions of the WHO and other similar organizations to create a more modern solution? Why have almost all past solutions on this issue been unsuccessful?

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