

**Oasis International School Model United Nations**

Status of Women

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Guiding Package

**Topic 1:** Ensuring equal pay for women in all work fields.

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***Abstract:***

Ever since women have joined the workforce, they have faced countless forms of discrimination, such as being limited to low-paid and poor status occupations, or being given jobs that have the role of “caretaker” such as nurse or teacher. This has challenged women to fight for their right to be equal to men in every way, pushing women to become equally and sometimes more qualified than men so that they can have the right to work the same jobs and be rewarded equally for their work.

As the fighting for equality continues, women are still facing an inequality in earnings, this is called the gender wage gap. A wage gap is the difference in earnings between workers, which can be caused by multiple aspects such as difference in experience, difference in work hours and in this case, discrimination. Women who give in the same effort as their male counterparts tend to get paid less, as their work is considered less valuable because of their social role as the “caretaker” of the family, depending on a “breadwinner” to actually earn money. This has led to the impoverishment of more and more women, which has not only deprived women of the right of financial stability and security, but has affected our society by lowering the economic status of half of the population, causing women to not be able to provide for themselves and for their families. Another factor that widens the gap is the race of the woman and whether or not she is a mother, causing the gap between different groups of women to be even wider than the gap between women and men.

***Introduction:***

The gender wage gap is an ongoing issue that women all over the world are facing. Women with equal or better qualifications than men are unequally rewarded for the same tasks done by men. Women are still not getting their basic rights to equal pay.

The current stabilisation of the gender pay gap has given us an opportunity to assess the situation and try to find solutions to tighten and hopefully close the gap, helping countless of women get their well deserved pay and ending the effects caused by the gap such as the higher risk of impoverishment and the higher difficulty for a woman to be able to get ahead financially which not only has an effect on women being able to have a stable and secure financial life but can also have an effect on their future generations, such as single mothers not being able to save and provide for their children. Women won’t be able to earn their independence. Furthermore, most fields will continue to be dominated by men.

**The Global Wage report** shows that **education** is not one of the main causes of the wage gap, **women wage employees** across the world have just **as good educational accomplishments** – that is if not better- than their male colleagues.

The main issues that cause the wage gap are occupational segregation[1] and the fear of women inheriting or adapting masculine behavior. Women are under-represented in traditionally male occupied categories, and are getting paid less than men, even when women’s educational attainments are higher than men.

Along with, one of the other causes is that women do more hours of unpaid work, such as childcare and housework. Which affects their time in their paid work. On average 30% of women work part time, when only 8% of men work part time. When calculated both paid and unpaid work are considered; women work more hours per week than men. Moreover, women’s work decisions are more limited by care and family responsibilities.

***Key terms:***

1. **The wage gap:** The wage gap in general is the difference in the salary between working employees, for reasons other than the normal objective factors that affect the wage. The gender wage gap is simply women earning less than their male colleagues for providing the same work.
2. **Pay disparity:** pay disparity is when two workers doing the same job earn different pay. There are legitimate reasons for two employees to earn different salaries. Such as education, for example an employee that holds a certificate or an advanced degree than his other employees that can justify being paid more. Moreover, job experience is also considered one of the facets that is justified to affect the pay disparity. These are the fair pay disparity, unlike gender pay disparity. That consists of paying a certain gender -women- less for the mere reason of being women.
3. **Occupational segregation:** Occupational segregation is the distribution of workers based on demographics, most often gender. Other types of occupational segregation may be because of race or religion.
4. **Gender Equality:** gender equality is the position in which gender has no effect on a person’s access to rights or opportunities. It’s when all people of different genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.
5. **Male dominated fields:** male dominated fields are industries that are controlled by men or that most of the higher positions are held by men. Male dominated fields are harder for women to work in because all position holders are men, they mostly underestimate women. The fields who face the widest wage gaps are the male dominated fields.
6. **Gender discrimination:** Gender discrimination is when a person or a group of people is treated unfairly or differently because of their gender.
7. **The patriarchy:** a social or political system in which males control the majority of the authority and women are essentially excluded. For example: In a patriarchal society, males dominate and create all the regulations, while women stay at home and care for the children.
8. **“Equal pay for equal work”:** is a term used for labour rights that states that those who perform the same job should be paid the same amount. The same amount of wage, bonuses, and allowances.

***Background information:***

1. **History behind the wage gap:**

Women throughout history have always struggled to work, it was all rooted from when women weren’t even able to get education, to society limiting women as only caretakers and nothing more. Which led to women being absent in most work fields, which turned out to be in favor of men, it helped them dominate most fields. The struggle and the absence of women in the work field has lead to injustice and discrimination for women in their work, through many aspects such as their wage.

The second wave of feminism was a period of feminist activity which lasted from the early 1960’s to the 1980’s. While the first wave of feminism focused more on women’s suffrage and other legal obstacles to gender equality, the second wave of feminism focused more on the issue of systemic sexism - such as unequal pay, reproductive rights, etc… - and another wide range of issues - such as domestic violence and marital rape.

This wave of feminist activity started in the United States of America, where it has been able to achieve one of its goals of legally obtaining equal pay for equal work by influencing the government to sign the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits sex-based discrimination between men and women in the same establishment who perform jobs that require equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions.

Another place where the second wave of feminism was able to make achievements was in Sweden, where groups such as Group 8 - a feminist organisation in Stockholm founded by 8 women - and the Women of Labour - a feminist group split from the original Group 8. These groups pushed for gender equality by tackling issues such as unequal pay. Through their activism, the Swedish Women’s Lobby - a nonpartisan political advocacy organization - has been founded on the initiative of the Swedish Government in 1997, resulting in achievements such as the Discrimination Act of 2008, which states that employees and employers should get equal pay for equal work.

1. **The wage gap current crisis:**

According to the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** the gender pay gap exists in nearly all the industries, male dominated fields tend to be the fields with the largest pay gaps such as business. In most business companies it is apparent that women get underpaid than their male colleagues. It was proven through studies by the (WEF) that the gender pay gap is not affected by any objective factors that normally influence income. According to the gender pay gap report by pascale, on average women earn 86 cents for every dollar earned by a man in 2021.

Also, according to the **WEF** women earn an average **68%** of what men are paid for the same job, in countries with **less gender parity** women earn an average **40%** of what men are paid for the same job.

The pay gap is different from one field to another. The fields with the least pay gaps are **food workers, writers, counselors, pharmacists, and social workers**. In the state fields women earn between **97-99%** of their male colleagues. However, the fields who face the largest pay gaps occur amongst financial services such as **financial services sales agents, financial managers, and financial advisors**. In the stated fields the pay gap between men and women is between **61-66%.**

Across countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development **(OECD)** the statistics show that women earned **12.9%** less than men in average earnings in 2018.

**Women of color** tend to face more inequality in the pay gap compared to white, non-Hispanic men.

On average in the U.S it was shown that women from different races and ethnicities’s wage gap for every dollar a white man earns; **Latinas** make **55 cents** for a dollar, **Indian American women** make **57 cents** for a dollar, **Black women** make **63 cents** for a dollar, and **Asian women** make **87 cents** for a dollar

Mothers face an even wider pay gap than women without kids, mothers gaps increase after motherhood. Mothers are considered a threat to most companies or workplaces in general because they are held back by the responsibility of their children and they are seen as more limited than other employees. Mothers earn approximately 72 cents to every dollar paid for a father. Which interprets a loss of 16,000$ yearly.

***Major Countries Involved:***

* **The United States of America:** The gender pay gap has remained relatively steady in the United States over the past 15 years. In 2020, women made **84% of what men earned**, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of the median hourly earnings of full- and part-time workers. By that ratio, it would require women to work an extra **42 days** to earn the same wage that **men earned in 2020**. “The gender wage gap has only closed by 4 cents in more than a decade["](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/03/24/482141/quick-facts-gender-wage-gap/). At the current pace, women are not estimated to reach pay parity with men until **2059**. On average the U.S is one of the countries that are fighting against the gender wage gap. The US has an advantage , it is that the citizens have a right of speech therefore, people are aware of the problem and the government itself is aware of the problem , and they have been implementing rules in order to decrease the gender pay gap.
* **The Russian Federation:** On average women in Russia earn 30-35% less than their male colleagues. The **gender gap** in employment in Russia has been one of the smallest in the world. However, **the gender gap in pay** in Russia is one of the largest among high income countries. The gap is just above **30%** and is the second (after South Korea) largest gender pay gap in high-income countries. Russia has a law that advocates equal rights to both men and women and equal opportunities to exercise them as well - article 37.3- which sets out the right to work without any discrimination or lower wage gaps.
* **The Republic of South Africa:** South Africa has multiple policies of legislation aimed at preventing gender discrimination in the workplace. Yet, the country has a gender pay gap of between **23% and 35%**. The gender pay gap is causing a block in achieving gender equality in South Africa. In South Africa, around **38% of households are headed by women**. Female-headed households are approximately 40% poorer than those headed by men. Which means women struggle with **earning less**, **taking care of the house** and **providing for her kids**.
* **The Islamic Republic of Pakistan:** Women are significantly **under-represented** in Pakistan’s labour force, despite their huge contribution to daily life. Pakistan also has one of the **highest** wage gaps in the world. According to the International Labor Organization; women earn **34%** less than men **on** **average** in Pakistan. In Pakistan it is mostly rooted in women’s education and **a society** that **doesn’t encourage women in the workforce**, which limits their potential.

***Major Organizations:***

* **The Association for Women's Rights in Development:**

The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) is an international feminist organization which fights for gender justice and for women’s rights worldwide. Their goal is to support women across the globe through feminist/women’s rights movements, using their power to influence policies that will result in equality and justice, which also includes the equitable distribution of wealth and the strengthening of women’s financial lifes. They have been able to research and provide reports that showcase data and analysis that informs us more about the status of women’s rights and other philanthropic issues that women face, such as the issue of equal pay. One of the ways they accomplished this is through their multi year initiative, Resourcing Women’s Rights, which was comprised of the building of knowledge on women’s rights issues, advocacy through partnerships with other organizations to influence agenda regarding feminist movements and acquiring funds to support feminist movements.

* **The American Association of University Women:**

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is an American organization that has been advocating for women’s rights since 1881. Their mission is to ensure gender equity and economic security for women by training women to negotiate for higher salaries, pushing women to pursue higher earning positions, and advocating for federal and local laws and regulations that will ensure equity and end discrimination. One of the way’s AAUW has been able to help women is through their courses, such as the “Work Smart and Start Smart” salary negotiation course which has been able to help 180 thousand women to negotiate their salaries, with a recorded success rate of 70% of women who saw significant change in their salaries.

***UN Involvement:***

Since 2010, the UN has actively taken measures to better the situation of not only the gender pay gap, but the entire status of women around the world. They have done this by creating a new entity called the UN entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

UN Women is the United Nations entity created to fight for gender equality and the empowerment of women. They work with UN Member States to implement policies that will better the status of women and will achieve gender equality. They work with governments to create laws, programmes, services and other policies that will help achieve the goal of gender equality. The entity itself is made up of four offices which are:

* The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), - which provides financial support to programs and strategies that help improve the status of women and achieve gender equality.
* The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), whose mission is to support formulation of policies and global standards that will help achieve gender equality, monitors the implementation of international agreements - such as the Beijing Platform - on gender equality. They do this through multiple domains, such as research and analysis of global issues that support women, and the facilitation of NGO participation in the solving of these issues.
* The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI), whose main purpose is to promote and strengthen the implementation of the Millenium Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the 23rd session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5).
* The UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), is a program whose main purpose is to create a knowledge-based environment in which a gender perspective is integrated in a variety of sectors. They fulfill their purpose by using technology to provide gender-knowledge, such as their study on the gender dimensions of financing for development, which was finalized as a follow up to the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development where they were able to follow up with strategies that integrate gender into the plans for financial development.

The mission of these offices/entities is to handle issues such as gender inequality, which include the issue of the gender pay gap. They have done this by supporting the Commission on the Status of Women in formulating policies, then helping member states implement them.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the global intergovernmental body whose sole purpose is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by ECOSOC Resolution 11(II) in 1946. During its annual session, representatives of the UN member states, UN entities, and civil organizations gather to discuss the implementation and the progress of policies such as the Beijing Declaration ,the Beijing +5, and other current issues that face women worldwide. The CSW is able to achieve progress by implementing multi-year frameworks to discuss, create, and implement policies to achieve sustainable development of the status of women.

The overall mission of UN Women is to meet the needs of women all around the world, ensuring that women get their basic rights of equality, which are enshrined in the UN Charter. Through these different entities and organizations, the UN has fought for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerement of women, and the equality between men and women in all spheres of life, including the equality of income.

***Possible solutions:***

1. Urges the enforcing a minimum wage for all low paid workers
2. Supports the implementation of social protective services, such as paid maternity leave and income security
3. Encourages transparency within companies, especially regarding wages
4. Endorses a commitment to gender balanced and diverse leadership
5. Encourages countries to legislate a minimum living wage

***Guiding questions:***

1. What sustainable solutions can we put in place to help close the wage gap?
2. What can companies do to close the wage gap?
3. How to reach a gender equal workspace?
4. What can governments do in order to support families and single mothers?
5. What have countries with a small wage gap done to achieve a minimal wage gap?

***Useful links:***

* Article explain the reasons behind the wage gap: <https://timewise.co.uk/article/article-real-reasons-behind-gender-pay-gap/>
* Article displaying stats about the wage gap and outlines possible solutions to it: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-the-gender-pay-gap/>
* Article showcasing the current situation of the wage gap: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2019/01/18/465361/treading-water-current-challenges-womens-work/>
* Article explaining the struggles mother face in getting a job (the motherhood penalty): <https://gap.hks.harvard.edu/getting-job-there-motherhood-penalty>
* The CSW’s “about page” explaining how the committee is in involved in the issue of the wage gap :<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>
* The Equal Pay International Coalition’s site showing the current progress being made to tackle the issue of the wage gap: <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org>

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