

# Research Reports

## MSMUNQ VI: The SDGs



**Forum:** Sustainable Development Goal 10, Reduced Inequalities

**Issue:** Measures to reduce inequality in the Gulf Region with regards to labour camps

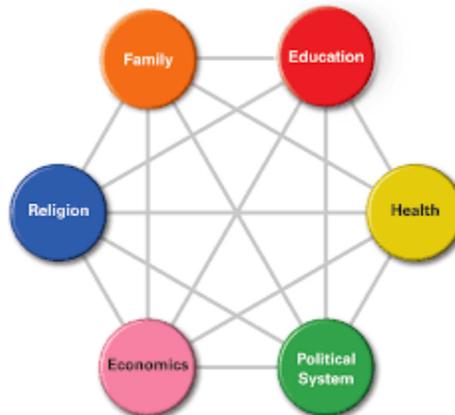
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## PART 1 of the Research Report: Root Causes of the Issue

1. What social factors cause this issue? How does it do so?



- Insufficient job opportunities in origin countries: It is very difficult for people to be employed in overpopulated countries such as those in South Asia. Sometimes, it is the national governments that do not strive to increase employment within the country by starting infrastructure projects etc.. Other times, it is simply because there are too many



people and not enough jobs even when the government is doing everything it can to have people employed. This forces people to look for jobs in foreign countries, sometimes without knowing that their living standards will drop once they accept the job offers that they get.

- Race and cultures: It is an unfortunate fact that racism is quite common in the gulf region. It is believed that people of some origins more than others, deserve to work labour-intensive jobs without getting the opportunity to relax and replenish their energy. Most people hired in infrastructure projects are largely from a small set of countries, and they are forced to live in labour camps under conditions that would never be forced upon people from other, more developed countries.
- Lack of education: People in developing countries may not have attended school long enough to have good human capital (skills that make you a worthy employee) to work tertiary sector jobs such as doctors and accountants. They would never be educated about their human rights and taught what to do if their rights are being violated. It is often these people that go abroad, such as in the gulf region, to work under unsuitable conditions as they were never taught to revolt for their rights.

## 2. What economic factors cause this issue? How does it do so?

- Income inequality: This is usually caused by corrupt government systems where tax from the rich isn't always used for the betterment of the poor. Not everyone in the world is born into wealthy families and must work tough jobs to earn enough money to live. These jobs are often in foreign developing countries e.g. Qatar and the UAE, which have several infrastructure projects that offer employment opportunities. However,



infrastructure projects are expensive as it is, and to cut costs, companies often violate the rights of these immigrant workers such as providing them with insufficient housing, and the workers have no choice but to work under these conditions as their primary objective is to earn money and provide for their families.

**3. What political factors cause this issue? How does it do so? Political factors can be:**

- Labour laws in a country: Usually in the gulf region, tertiary sector work e.g. doctors, lawyers etc... is reserved for nationals of the country unless there is need to hire non-nationals. This mostly forces immigrants from less economically developed countries to work primary or secondary sector jobs e.g. in factories, industrial companies etc. These industries are the ones that utilise labour camps as cheap housing for their employees.
- Poor government spending: National governments may allocate more of their funding on education, healthcare, and infrastructure development projects that contribute to economic growth on the front, instead of investing it to provide suitable housing and ensuring the provision of proper food and shelter for labourers. Governments often fail to realise that the health and well-being of workers is essential to a productive working economy.

**4. What other factors cause this issue?** The pandemic may have significantly increased the inequality between the rich and the poor in some gulf countries. This is because the distribution of vaccines and other healthcare equipment may be more



available to the upper and middle class citizens than labourers and industry workers.

This could be the result of biased distribution and inefficient awareness strategies that fail to educate everyone about the necessity of vaccines. All of this would contribute to poor health of the workers in labour camps, and with communicable diseases like COVID-19, this could be a widespread problem.

- Moreover, Gulf Countries are constantly looking for ways to grow and expand their economies. For example, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have a vision for 2030 that they are currently striving to achieve. To do this, several immigrant workers are hired every year and their rights are exploited, sometimes even unknowingly. These workers are often not rewarded for their hard work for long periods of time.

#### **5. How long has this issue been a problem?**

- This issue has been around ever since the first populations began settling in the Gulf. Gradually, the amount of immigrant workers hired increased and the need for labour camps grew more intense. As economic growth started to become more and more popular, Gulf countries began to aim for the most growth with the least government spending to save more money. This led to the poor conditions in labour camps as not enough money was given to maintain them.

#### **6. Why is this issue a problem? Why does it need to be solved at all?**

- This issue is a problem because the people that work in labour camps have families and lives beyond just their work. It is ethically necessary to ensure that their wellbeing and



standards of living are maintained so they can support themselves and people they are working so hard for.

- Racism and classism is a hidden yet widespread part of life in the Gulf Region. It is tremendously important to ensure that governments treat every part of a country's population fairly and equally. If some people are treated better than others, a country's overall workforce becomes weaker and draws the economy backwards by limiting its productive capacity.
- If this issue is not resolved in a few countries where it is more common, it will become a practice in other countries in the Gulf. forcing people to live under poor circumstances will no longer be seen as a problem but as a solution to save funding. Therefore , resolving this issue is necessary to prevent future human rights violations on a larger scale.

### **7. Which organisations benefit from the status quo?**

- Organisations such as industrial corporations and infrastructural companies are usually the ones that benefit from the status quo (status quo being the current mistreatment of workers in labour camps). They benefit because they are not spending huge amounts of money by providing labourers good living standards. They put in just enough money for necessities and save the rest which adds onto their profit.
- However, the status quo can also negatively impact these companies as word of their mistreatment of workers can become public. This will ruin the reputation of the companies amongst the community and their work will start to fail as no one would want



to be associated with a company that mistreats people whilst they are completing its projects.

### **8. How does your country benefit from the status quo?**

- Countries usually don't benefit from the status quo because, just like the industrial corporations mentioned above, a country's image amongst the rest of the world can be ruined once its mistreatment of workers is exposed widely. This can result in the breaking of international ties with that country, some governments may pull out their workers that have been employed in the exposed country, and no future deals would be idealised as it would be unsure if the exposed country would be following human rights guidelines along the way.

### **9. Which countries influence this issue the most? How so?**

- All the countries in the MENA region could be the ones mostly involved in violating human rights of employees in labour camps as they are constantly growing and looking for ways to minimise governmental costs so that the money can be invested elsewhere. Researching countries that may be involved in this issue is a good step towards understanding which might influence it more than the others.
- Developed countries such as the U.S and rapidly-developing countries such as China may also have a big influence on this issue as they dominate global markets. Gulf countries may strive to be as successful at economic growth and international trade as these countries, and could be motivated to do whatever it takes to get there. Even if this means taking advantage of cheap labour.



**10. Which countries/groups are the most impacted by this issue?**

- Less Economically Developed countries (LEDC's) are usually the ones being most affected as it is their citizens that must look for jobs abroad and live under unsuitable conditions set by the country they have begun work in. Affected countries can be South or South East Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal etc... as there is a higher percentage of workers in labour camps belonging to these origins.

**11. Which countries/groups should take the lead in solving this issue?**

- The countries and organisations that have already been involved in the issue should be the ones striving to make change as it is important to target the root of the problem. Industrial organisations should be checked in on by state governments to ensure that labour laws are being followed. It is very important for state governments to also be monitored by human rights organisations such as the United Nations Human Right Committee (UNHRC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- A good example of countries making a change is Qatar:

“The State of Qatar has pursued a consistent policy to protect and promote human rights, on the basis of our Arab and Islamic principles that uphold human values, and are keen to honour our commitment in this respect at the national and international levels to defend individual and collective rights and respect for human rights and dignity. Qatar has made significant achievements in terms of workers' rights and work conditions in coordination with the International Labour Organization.”

**His Highness the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, September 2019**

**PART 2 of the Research Report: UN Treaties/Principles/Policies/Resolutions**

This section covers what UN action has been taken to address this issue on the agenda



**1. Which resolutions are linked to this issue that are [ratified](#)? What principles does the UN follow regarding this issue?**

- In September 2019, the General Assembly adopted a resolution named “International Labour Organisation Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work” (Document [A/73/L.117](#))
- UN Principle 6 ([Principle 6 | UN Global Compact](#))

**2. How far did this resolution solve the issue?**

- This resolution was aimed at ensuring equal work for everyone and proposed solutions with clear methods of implementation that member states could easily start introducing into their own countries.
- This principle ensures that the UN urges its member states to eliminate discrimination based on social factors such as race, religion, gender, and wellbeing.

**3. Why wasn't this resolution/principle completely effective? Was it blocked by a specific organisation/country? Were there any objections from a major organisation?**

- This resolution was effective to some extent as it did not contain factors that offend any country’s policies. However, all the solutions mentioned in the resolution were just suggested and not imposed, therefore it is difficult to ensure that they will be adopted and implemented by all member states. Furthermore, this resolution was not voted on, which means that the member states of the UN did not have much of a say in its adoption. This may mean that nations may not agree to everything the resolution calls for and may reject taking any action that the resolution recommends.



- This is just a principle of the UN which member states can work together to form resolutions on. These resolutions can be adaptable to different countries' policies if need be. Therefore making the principle itself unproblematic.

## **PART 3 of the Research Report: Possible Solutions**

### **Solution 1: Government expenditure**

- Government expenditure means the spending of a government's finances on different sectors of the economy. Usually, spending is focused on improving the country's overall infrastructure, education provision and strengthening healthcare systems. It is very important to ensure that all the governments of member states, especially those in the Gulf, set aside a sufficient budget for providing immigrant workers with proper accommodation, keep them updated with advancements in healthcare, and try as far as possible to give them the same benefits and opportunities as the local citizens. Lastly, the UN and relevant organisations such as the ILO must be monitoring state governments to guarantee the success of this solution.
  - Pros:
    - Countries in the Gulf with the highest levels of inequality are usually well-developed and fully capable of setting this budget aside, therefore the implementation of this issue should not be a problem. Moreover, if a country does struggle to provide this fund, the UN and its relevant organisations can always help.

- Cons:



- Even with external monitoring, the proper implementation of this solution is flawed as several countries will be monitored at the same time and it is difficult to eliminate all kinds of governmental bias. This could mean that governments still focus funding on touristic areas or only spend enough money on labour camps to provide the most basic necessities which are insufficient to good living standards.

### **Solution 2: Creation of policies & guidelines for companies**

- Sometimes, even with sufficient government expenditure to improve living standards on labour camps, the labourers are not able to access their intended benefits. This is because of the companies/employers of the labourers who save the money given to them and use it as profit to reinvest into the company, or give themselves higher wages. Therefore, it is vital for the government to introduce strict guidelines that these companies must follow to certify that they are rightly spending the money the government gives them. Punishments such as fines can also be incurred to have the companies oblige.

- Pros:

- This solution does not involve external interference and the control of its implementation is solely up to the government. Therefore making this solution very adaptable to each member state's own policies.
- The governments can take many approaches to encourage the companies to create change; such as subsidies, which are sums of money given to a company to increase the production of their products or services. Another approach could be public appraisal which boosts the company's reputation.



- Cons:
  - If a government suffers from corruption or is inefficient with the implementation of its policies, it cannot be guaranteed that it will bother to force companies to follow the guidelines that it creates.
  - It is difficult for the government to monitor if every single company in the country is adapting the new guidelines

## **PART 4 of the Research Report: Bibliography**

[Political factors - External factors - National 5 Business management Revision - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Income Inequality](#)

[State of Qatar: Labour Law](#)

[What Is International/Global Trade?](#)

[Labour Reform - Government Communications Office](#)

[General Assembly Advocates Labour Rights](#)

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/social/labour>

[Inequality and Its Discontents in the Middle East](#)

## **PART 5 of the Research Report (Video): Guiding Questions**

- Guiding questions is where you pose questions to delegates to help them approach the issue
- Make sure your questions are not complicated and are easily comprehensible



- Have up to 3-5 guiding questions- make sure they are relevant.
- These questions should ensure that delegates consider all the aspects of the given issue